



Sabka Maalik Ek

SAI SANDESH

The Monthly Newsletter of Om Sai Mandir
July 2004; Volume 1, Issue 1
Guru Poornima/First Anniversary Special Edition
saisandesh@omsaimandir.org



Love All, Serve All

OM SAI MANDIR
45-11 Smart Street
Flushing, NY 11355
Tel. (718) 461-0454
info@omsaimandir.org
www.omsaimandir.org

Thought for the Month

“With Sai there is endless hope; without Sai there is a hopeless end.” – Baba

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Readers are requested to send articles, experiences, and suggestions to:
saisandesh@omsaimandir.org
OR: Call the temple at: (718) 461-0454

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY

Friday, July 2: Guru Poornima/First Anniversary Celebrations

Sunday, July 4: America's Independence Day

AUGUST

Sunday, August 15: India's Independence Day

Saturday, August 28: Onam



From the Editor's Desk

Sai Ram,

With humble prostrations to the Lord's lotus feet, we welcome you to the first issue of Sai Sandesh—the monthly newsletter of Om Sai Mandir.

Call it sheer coincidence or the Lord's divine play, the publication of the first issue of Sai Sandesh coincides with the first anniversary of the temple's foundation.

The Sanskrit word “sandesh” literally means message. Sai Sandesh, with all humility, cherishes the lofty desire to serve as a humble instrument in spreading the message of our beloved Sai Baba.

As we embark on this illuminating journey of articles, messages, announcements, and updates, we seek the blessings and contributions of readers in the form of articles, pictures, poems, experiences, ideas, suggestions, and volunteer services.

Once again we welcome you to the first issue of Sai Sandesh and pray for the peace and happiness of all.

Humbly yours,
The Sai Sandesh Team

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

With great pleasure, I take this opportunity to thank devotees for the overwhelming love and affection given to us since the humble beginning of this temple on Guru Poornima, 2003.

A Brief History

As we celebrate the first year of our journey in service to Baba, I would like to take this opportunity to share with devotees, a brief history and inspiration that motivated us to undertake this momentous task.

As firm believers in righteous conduct and with a strong belief that a temple is a persuasive means to shape and nurture the ideals, aspirations, and conduct of individuals—especially young children—for generations to come, my wife, Padmavathy Chalsani, my Godson, and me, embarked on this mission of constructing a temple in the service of Baba—and humanity at large.

Our desire was transformed into a strong determination by the blessings of our beloved Gururji, Late Dr. K.V. Raghava Rao. His holy blessings found expression through the foundation of Om Sai Mandir. With God's grace and Gururji's blessings, the temple has the distinction of being the first mandir in the world dedicated to both Shirdi Sai Baba and Sathya Sai Baba—essentially the same supreme Lord in 2 different forms.

A beautiful house was purchased—on Thursday, June 26, 2003—with close access to all the key amenities, including transportation, schools, medical facilities, religious institutions, and a thickly populated community of devotees. The temple's activities began with group bhajans on Guru Poornima, 2003.

Extensive renovation, spanning over 5 months, was undertaken to transform the place and render it suitable for spiritual activities. On Datta Jayanti, 2003, "Gruh Pravesh" puja was performed and bhajans were conducted on: November 23rd, Christmas, and December 31st. Finally, on Saturday, January 03, 2004, the auspicious day of Vaikuntha Ekadashi—when the gates of heaven are unlocked for devotees—the gates of Om Sai Mandir were also opened for regular temple activities. Beautiful, life-sized pictures of Shirdi Sai Baba and Sathya Sai Baba, placed adjacent to each other, now adorn the temple's altar.

The Present

Devotees from all walks of life, and from diverse backgrounds, now throng to this temple to seek Baba's blessings and grace. The mandir is open 7 days a week and conducts devotional programs that include: aratis, bhajans, regular pujas, naam smaranam, and annadan [food service]. Devotees' prayers and a vibrant spiritual ambience have made this temple a veritable Shirdi and Parthi in New York.

The mandir's website (www.omsaimandir.org) serves as a comprehensive source of information and direction to several Internet users. In addition to the website, Baba's message is being spread using several means, such as word of mouth, newsletters, flyers, and spiritual gatherings.

The Future

Efforts are now being undertaken to bring life-sized statues of both Shirdi Sai Baba and Sathya Sai Baba from India. Extensive plans are also in progress for the overall development and expansion of the mandir. Needless to mention, with Baba's blessings, the temple is headed toward unprecedented growth.

Volunteers

A dedicated team of volunteers form the very backbone of this organization and it is their service that makes the running of this temple seem effortless. While thanking this dedicated team, I would like to make a request to all devotees to come forward and volunteer services in the best possible manner.

An Appeal

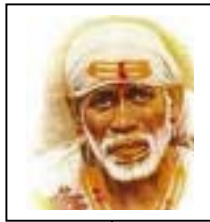
A service of this magnitude cannot be accomplished without the collective participation of devotees. At this juncture, I would like to make a humble appeal to all devotees to generously contribute toward this noble cause and render services in every possible way. Several projects are being planned in the near future; these include purchase of murtis [idols] and an overall expansion of the mandir. Your contributions will go a long way in ensuring the success of these projects.

As we embark on this spiritual journey, I would like to once again thank everyone for their affection and seek Baba's blessings to grant us strength and to ensure the welfare of one and all. Sai Ram.

- Gangadhar Rao Chalasani, President

GURU – THE ETERNAL GUIDE

*“Manasa Bhajore Guru Charanam,
Dustara Bhavasagara Taranam.”*



Oh mankind, worship and install in the mind the feet of the Guru; it is very difficult to cross the ocean of life and death, but the Guru can safely carry you to the shore of divinity. This was the first bhajan sung by Baba himself. Baba was calling all those suffering in the endless rounds of births and deaths to worship the feet of the Guru, who was announcing Himself, and who had come again for taking upon Himself the burden of those who sought refuge in Him. (Vijayadashmi Discourse, 1953).

Once, Emperor Shivaji and his minister were going on an evening stroll. On the way, they came across a Buddhist monk. Immediately, Shivaji removed his crown and prostrated at the monk's feet. The minister thought Shivaji demeaned his stature by this act. The righteous emperor at once sensed these feelings and wanted to teach the minister a lesson.

One day, he asked the minister to bring the head of a goat, a sheep, and a human being. The minister collected the goat and sheep heads. He went to a burial ground and cut the head of a dead person. Shivaji commanded him to sell them in the market. The heads of the sheep and goat were sold in no time, but none came forward to buy the human head. When the emperor was informed, he ordered the human head to be given at no cost.

The minister took the human head to the market and waited there for a couple of days. Despite his best efforts, nobody was willing to accept it. When this was conveyed to the emperor, he said, “Oh minister, you felt sad when I placed my head at the feet of a monk. Do you realize that the same would be the fate of our heads too, when we leave our mortal coils? Hence, we should sanctify our lives by serving noble souls.” Material wealth is momentary. Only truth and right conduct will remain with man and redeem his life. (Guru Poornima Discourse, 2002).

What is the significance of Guru Poornima? “Gu” means darkness and “ru” means light [the act of removal of darkness]. Guru is thus the one who illumines the path to divinity. Poornima stands for the

cool full moon light. Full moon symbolizes a mind with total illumination. It is spotless. (Guru Poornima Discourse, 2002).

Shankaracharya had five disciples. One of them, Padmapada, was pure-hearted and always engaged in the service of his Guru. He considered himself as a Dasa [servant] of the Guru. While others would be engaged in studying scriptures and other sacred texts, Padmapada would busy himself in serving the Guru. No task in his Guru's service was menial to him. He would regularly wash the Guru's clothes and attend to his every need.

Once, on his way back from the other bank of the river, he did not realize that the Ganga was in spate. As he was crossing the river, it rose up to the level of his neck. He looked around, but had no fear whether he would be washed away by the swelling waters. His only worry was how to take the clothes to the Guru even at the cost of his life. Placing the clothes on his head and chanting the word, “Guruji, Guruji,” he continued wading through the river.

Because of his intense devotion, at every step he took there was a lotus-shaped stone on which he could place his foot. He thereby earned the appellation “Padmapada.” Shankaracharya called him and imparted his teachings to him. He told Padmapada: “Service to the Guru is a great virtue. You have adored the Guru as God. Guru represents the Divine Trinity and is the Supreme Self.” Then, he imparted to Padmapada the sacred truth. The other four disciples used to treat Padmapada previously as an ignoramus. After receiving the teachings from Sankaracharya, Padmapada could repeat the entire Vedic texts at one stroke. He became a good exponent of Vedanta. (Guru Poornima Discourse, 1998). This story illustrates the power of a real Guru.

***“In today's time,
God alone is the
real Guru.”***

Although a true Guru can lead the disciple to enlightenment, in modern times there is a scarcity of such perfected beings. **In today's time, God alone is the real Guru.** What greater proof of this than the fact that Baba himself has come as the world's divine teacher and is imparting his teachings to one and all. One only needs to look inside and the inner Guru will safely lead us to the shore of divinity.



SHORT STORIES BY BABA

Your Bhakthi is Greater than my Shakthi

In South India, in Tamil Nadu, there was a certain Adigal [servant], in a village, Thangalur by name. He had heard of the spiritual grandeur of Saint Appar and developed great admiration for him.

He built rest-houses in his name; named his children after him so that they might grow up in the halo of his glory; and donated lands and houses, all in the name of the Saint he had never seen.

See how faith preceded experience here. There are others who require experience before they fix their faith. The first path is more thrilling and lasting.

Well, one day by chance Appar himself walked into Thangalur for he had missed his way and had to deviate. He noticed everywhere in the town "Appar Rest-houses" and "Appar Charities," and wondered how his name had preceded him.

Then Adigal ran forward to His Guru, took him home, and prepared a grand feast for him. When his eldest son went to his garden to cut a few plantain leaves for dinner, a snake bit him and he died on the spot.

Adigal, however, was not affected in the least; he covered up the corpse with dry leaves and proceeded with the formalities of hospitality for the long-sought Guru.

The Guru, however, insisted on all the children of Adigal sitting around him during the meal, and he ordered the father, "Go and call every one here."

Adigal did as he was commanded. He called and the dead son rose. He too came and sat for dinner with the rest. When he knew what had happened, Appar said, "Your Bhakthi is greater than my Shakthi."

- Adapted from Oka Chinna Katha by N. Kasturi

DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES

Severe Case of Jaundice Healed Miraculously - Sunil and Renu Batra, New York

My brother was recently diagnosed with a serious case of Jaundice. His Bilirubin levels had reached a life-threatening threshold. With very little hope from doctors, my wife, Renu, and a few close friends visited the temple to offer prayers to Baba. The group continuously chanted Hanuman Chalisa 108 times and spent the whole day, and the following several days, in fervent prayers.

The Lord accepted our prayers and the patient's Bilirubin levels dropped to safe levels. The doctors were amazed at this inexplicable miracle. The patient, though healing, is now out of danger and attributes his cure to the divine grace of God.

Swami appears in Colombia - Victoria and Hugo Vasquez, New York

Several years ago, when we were still new to Swami, my sister experienced a phenomenal act of Swami's grace. At that time, the Colombian economy was in turmoil and unemployment rates had reached record numbers.

Under those trying circumstances, one night, a queer-looking visitor knocked at my sister's door. He requested her to give him 50 Peso [Colombian currency] for traveling to another city. The stranger claimed to be penniless. My sister's heart melted and she wanted to help. Unfortunately, that was the only money left in her house and was to serve as the sole means of sustenance for several weeks to come.

Despite her daughter's reasoning, she decided to oblige the visitor; she gave the money and closed the door. Almost instantly, she realized that the visitor was none other than Baba himself and she at once re-opened the door. To her amazement, Baba had vanished. The turn of events that took place in the coming days, further proved the identity of the visitor. In the next few days, she found unexpected money (for an amount that was sufficient to provide basic necessities for several weeks). Strangely, her husband was also re-employed and the family troubles ended miraculously. Baba's timely intervention had averted a serious crisis.

(Devotees Experiences continued)

Incense Miraculously Forms OM in Baba's Picture

- Inder Sharma, California

In July 2002, a friend of mine sent this picture of Swami from Puttaparthi. I reverently offered flowers, diya, and incense.

Intuitively, I took a photograph of the picture with my digital camera, stored it on my computer's hard drive, and unknowingly forgot about it.

On Dussera day, a distant friend requested me to send a new picture to replace the old one which I had gifted him last year. I accessed the folder "Baba" on my computer and decided to send the picture I had taken in July.

I emailed the picture to him with a note: "I like this picture very much; find out for yourself why this picture is so SPECIAL." I wrote this without knowing anything about the picture as I had not seen it since the past 4-5 months.

After sending it to him, I felt a strong urge to save this picture as a screen saver on my computer. As soon as I did, I noticed a fuzzy OM made from the smoke of incense—as if it was drawn by a paint brush.

Though surprised, on detailed observation, I realized that Swami had blessed me on Dussera Day. Coincidentally, around the same time I was painting a portrait of OM.

Devotees can send their experiences to:
saisandesh@omsaimandir.org

An online version of the newsletter is available at:
www.omsaimandir.org

OM SAI MANDIR'S DAILY ACTIVITIES

DAILY ARATIS

Kakad Arati	8.00 A.M.
Madhyana Arati	12.00 P.M.
Dhoop Arati	6.00 P.M.
Sheja Arati	8.00 P.M.

SPECIAL BHAJANS

Every Thursday	6.30 P.M. – 8.00 P.M.
Every Sunday	2.00 P.M. – 3.00 P.M.

SAI NAAM JAP (CHANTING BABA'S HOLY NAME)

First Saturday of Every Month 8.30 A.M. – 8.30 P.M.

STOTRAS (CHANTING VISHNU SAHASRANAM, LALITA SAHASRANAM, BABA'S 108 NAMES, ETC.)

Daily 12.30 P.M. and 6.30 P.M.

ANNADAN [FOOD SERVICE] – Daily



DID YOU KNOW?

- Hindu Dharma is the world's oldest living dharma [religious philosophy and way of life].
- Hindu Dharma is also called Sanatana Dharma [Eternal Religion]—one which always existed; or Vaidika Dharma—the religion of the Vedas.
- Hinduism symbolizes "universalism"; it is tolerant, resilient, and peace-loving.
- A true Hindu respects all faiths and is tolerant to others' beliefs and values. All are treated as children of the same God.
- Truth, Righteousness, Peace, and Love—the four pillars (taught by Baba) form the core foundation of Hinduism.

(Adapted from hindunet.org)

Have a question, idea, or suggestion? Email us at: saisandesh@omsaimandir.org

TEMPLE JOURNAL

January 2004

New Year Celebrations (Thursday, January 1)

On New Year's Eve (Dec. 31), devotees gathered at the mandir for extended bhajans that continued until the stroke of midnight. Finally, arati was offered to Baba followed by prasad. The occasion also marked the first New Year for the temple.

Vaikuntha Ekadashi (Saturday, January 3)

Special pujas were performed for Lord Vishnu. Vishnu Sahasranam was chanted several times throughout the day.

Makara Sankranti (Thursday, January 15)

After the morning arati, special pujas were performed. Pongal, a traditional prasad, was offered to Baba. A large congregation of devotees attended the pujas on this special day and offered their prayers to Baba.

February 2004

Mahashivaratri (Wednesday, February 18)

Mahashivaratri is one of the most important festivals in Hindu dharma. On this auspicious day, four phases of Shiva Abhishekam were performed from 6 p.m. until 6 a.m., the next day. At the end of each phase, special alankar was offered to Lord Shiva. At the end of the first phase, the Shivalingam was decorated with vibhuti alankar; after the second phase, chandan alankar; third phase, kumkum alankar; and the final phase, rudraksh alankar. Throughout the day, Rudram and Chamakam were chanted. Akhanda Bhajans were also conducted throughout the 4 phases. Devotees came in large numbers to observe an "all night vigil."

March 2004

Holi Festival (Saturday, March 6)

Holi, the festival of colors was celebrated in the temple by devotees. Devotees applied color on Baba and on each other.

Ugadi/Gudi Padva (Sunday, March 21)

Ugadi, also known as Gudi Padwa, is celebrated as the New Year in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. Devotees, in large numbers, came to offer prayers.

Tuesday, March 30 - Sri Ram Navami

Ramayan parayan was performed from March 21 to March 30 to celebrate the birth of Lord Rama. Sita Ram Kalyan was performed in observance of the marriage of Lord Rama and Sita; soulful bhajans were sung by several devotees.

April 2004

Baisakhi/Tamil New Year (Tuesday, April 13)

"North meets South" was the main theme of this day. This day was celebrated as New Year by people in the states of Tamilnadu and as Baisakhi in Punjab.

Vishu (Wednesday, April 14)

Vishu is celebrated as New Year in Kerala. On this day, traditional sweets were prepared and offered to Baba.

May 2004

Eshwaramma Day (Thursday, May 6)

Mother Eshwaramma's birthday was celebrated on May 6th. The day began with arati and regular pujas.



In the evening, a cultural program was organized. This included a dance performance by students.

The girls delivered an outstanding performance with songs like *Eshwaramma Priya Nandana*. Following the dance program, special bhajans were conducted. The bhajans session started with Ashtotra [108 names of Sri Sai Baba], and continued for about an hour and a half; finally, arati was offered with prasad.



Hanuman Jayanti (Thursday, May 13)

Hanuman Chalisa was continuously chanted 108 times from 8:30am – 8 pm.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Sai Ram Children,

Shirdi Sai Baba was born on September 28, 1838, in Aurangabad, India. Baba came to Shirdi at the tender age of 16. No one in Shirdi knew his name, so Mahalsapathi, a temple priest, called him Sai. Since then everybody started calling him Sai Baba. Sai Baba lived in Shirdi until he left his body in 1918.

Baba used to perform several miracles and help devotees in need. Let us listen to the story of a devotee who came to see Baba for the first time.

There was Doctor whose friend was a great



devotee of Baba. He was trying to explain to the doctor, the glories of Sai Baba.

The doctor's friend suggested that he should visit Baba.



But the doctor said that he believed in Lord Rama and will not bow before a

muslim fakir. Therefore he did not wish to go to Shirdi. The friend assured that nobody would force him to bow before Baba.

Finally, they reached Shirdi for Baba's darshan.



Suddenly, the doctor saluted Baba.

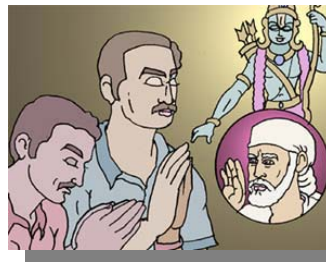
Everybody was surprised to see this.

They all asked him how he forgot his resolve and bowed before a fakir.

They all asked him



The doctor replied that he saw Lord Rama on Baba's seat, and therefore, bowed.



As the Doctor was speaking, he saw Sai Baba in front of him again and said "How could He be a

muslim?" He is a great Yogasampanna Avatar [full of yoga].

Children, the moral of the story is:

1. There is only one God.
2. All religions should be respected.
3. A pure saint is eternally one with God.

Courtesy: <http://www.shrisaibabasansthan.org>

Children can send pictures, stories, experiences, poems, and articles for Sai Sandesh. Email us at: saisandesh@omsaimandir.org

GURUJI – OUR ETERNAL INSPIRATION



Late Dr. K.V. Raghava Rao of Hyderabad, fondly known as “Guruji,” has been the primary inspiration and motivation for the establishment of Om Sai Mandir.

Dr. K.V. Raghava Rao, Hyderabad

Guruji, an ardent devotee of Baba, was initiated to Baba’s Grace on the Shivaratri Day in 1978. Baba entered his residence in the form of a gold idol just before commencement of Bhajans. He later moved to Sri Lanka on a foreign assignment in 1979. During his stay in Sri Lanka from 1979 to 1983, he further intensified his meditation. He gradually withdrew from social life and was engrossed in serving Baba.

Baba started to show His Leelas and His presence could be felt during the prayers. The Grace of Baba, through Guruji, has benefited several people and some of these were nothing short of miracles.

The most significant and completely different nature of benefit derived by Dr. Rao through the process of meditation cum prayer was the receipt of Messages of Wisdom directly from Baba for the benefit of the humanity. These experiences from 1978 to 1995 were compiled and published as several books for the benefit of Sai Devotees.

Dr. K.V. Raghava Rao gave up his mortal body and attained Samadhi on October 21, 1999. Om Sai

Mandir, on its first anniversary, humbly seeks Guruji’s eternal blessings and guidance.



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

**THE SAI SANDESH TEAM, ON
BEHALF OF ALL DEVOTEES,
CONGRATULATES
OM SAI MANDIR
ON ITS FIRST
ANNIVERSARY**

PUJA SPONSORSHIP

Archana.....\$11

Abishekam.....\$51

Satyanarayana Vrata.....\$81

Vahana Puja.....\$51

Annadan.....\$251

**To sponsor pujas, please call temple management
at: (718) 461-0454.**

AN APPEAL

Devotees are requested to generously contribute toward the development of the temple. Devotees can make their checks payable to: **Om Sai Mandir**

DONATION FORM

Donation Amount:	<input type="text" value="\$"/>	Date:	<input type="text"/>
First Name:	<input type="text"/>	Last Name:	<input type="text"/>
Email:	<input type="text"/>	Tel:	<input type="text"/>
Mobile:	<input type="text"/>	Fax:	<input type="text"/>
Address1:	<input type="text"/>	Address2:	<input type="text"/>
City:	<input type="text"/>	State:	<input type="text"/>
Zip:	<input type="text"/>	Country:	<input type="text"/>

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