



Sabka Maalik Ek

SAI SANDESH

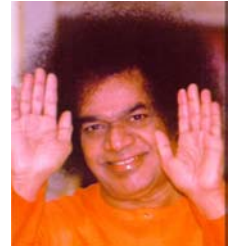
The Monthly Newsletter of Om Sai Mandir

November 2005; Volume 2, Issue 11

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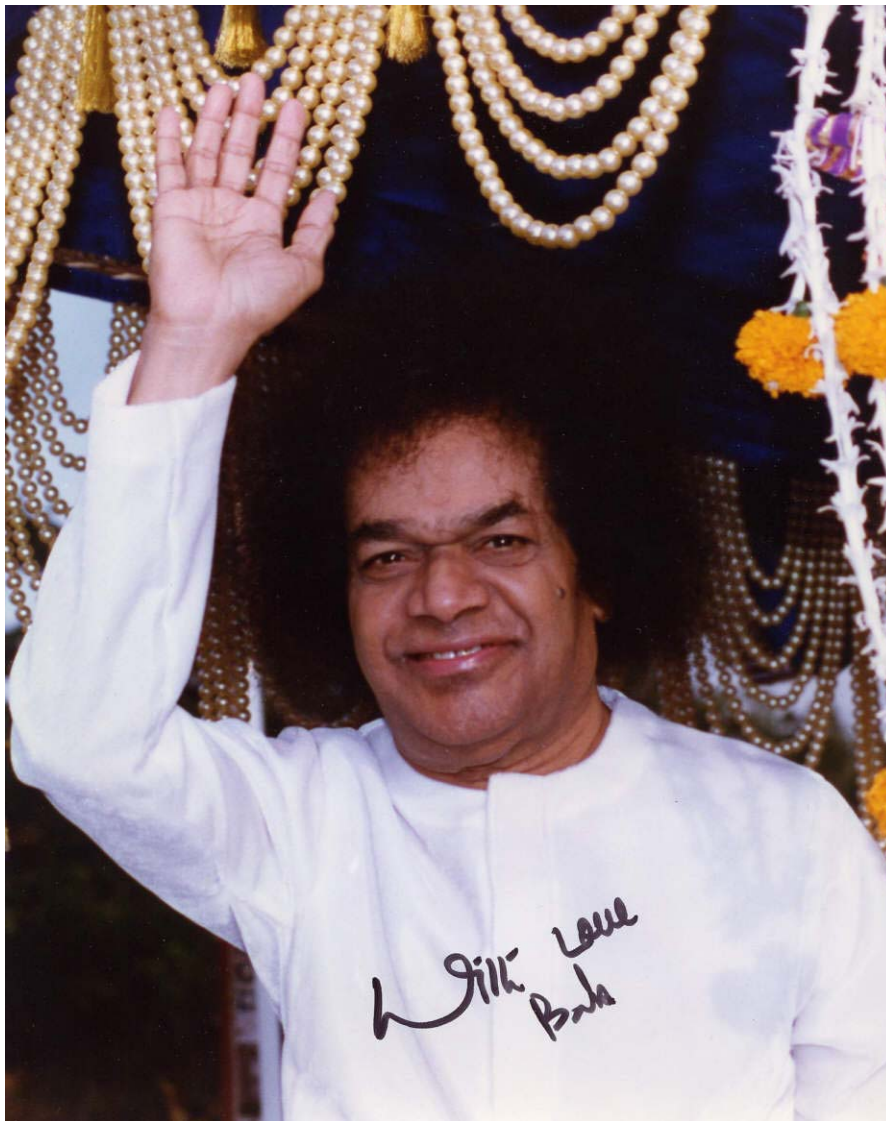
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Love All, Serve All

Diwali and Swami's 80th Birthday Special Issue



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MY LIFE IS MY MESSAGE...

“Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya
Glanirva Bhavathi Bharatha,
Abhyuthanam Adharmasya
Tadatmanam Srijami Aham.”
- Bhagawad Gita

“Whenever there is decay
of righteousness O! Bharatha
And a rise of unrighteousness
then I manifest Myself!”

In the battle of Kurukshetra, while expounding the precious teachings of Gita, Lord Krishna had revealed not only the secret knowledge of the soul, but also the mystery behind the advent of His various incarnations. The purpose of His descent has always been for the spiritual upliftment of humanity. In every age the Lord assumes a different form. The forms though of the same essence, differ in their external appearances and conduct, based on the circumstances and the task at hand.

In this present age, the Lord has chosen to manifest through not one, but a series of Sai incarnations. The first, Sri Shirdi Sai Baba (1838–1918); the present, Sri Sathya Sai Baba (1926–2022); and Prema Sai Baba (2030–2126). The three though appearing at different times are in reality the same divine Lord.



The Lord’s Descent. Sri Sathya Sai Baba, lovingly addressed as Swami by millions of devotees worldwide, incarnated in a small hamlet, Puttaparthi, in the Southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. The parents of this incarnation were a pious couple, Sri Pedda Venkama Raju and Mother Easwaramma.



The Conception. The event of conception is one of great wonder as well. Once Easwaramma was drawing water at a well when a divine light of great effulgence entered her womb, causing her to faint momentarily. In the following days she discovered about her impending motherhood.

Mysterious events manifested in the house where the Lord was to sport His form. Just preceding the advent, musical instruments would start playing of their own accord, as if being played by an invisible expert to welcome the divine. On November 23, 1926, Swami incarnated in this world. The time of His incarnation was auspicious in many respects. It was the time of sunrise, the villagers were chanting the names of Shiva, the day

was Kartikha Somavara—a Monday of holy month of Karthika, devoted to the puja and worship of Shiva; the day was made even more auspicious for Shiva worship because the ascendant star was Arda, and a rare occasion when the month, the day, and the star coincided. Further, the year was Akshaya, the never-declining, the ever-full. The divine child was christened Sathyanarayana Raju as He had taken birth the very minute Easwaramma partook of the prasada from Sathyanarayana Puja. Immediately upon His birth, the sun rose above the horizon.

The little baby charmed all by His loving glances and exhibited super-human powers even while in the cradle. Swami was once lying in a room. Unnoticed by anyone, a snake was covering Swami’s head, just the way a snake bed serves as Lord Vishnu’s prop. All were dazed to witness this marvelous feat and gazed in amazement as the child laughed as if nothing had happened.

The Early Years. Swami’s divinity, like the fragrance of a rose, could not be concealed. The entire village fell in love with this divine child. His laughter, His sweet lisp, His divine glow, His naughty tricks—enamored one and all in the entire village, transporting Puttaparthi to a Dwapara Yuga like semblance when the divine had incarnated as the charming Krishna. Compassion is the



very nature of the Lord. Even as a child, Swami kept away from places where animals and birds were tortured. Even at that age, the villagers recognized Him as a divine embodiment and addressed Him as “bhramajnani” (God-realized soul).

Education. What can one teach to the one who is omniscience incarnate? Yet, out of sheer obedience and to set an example for other children, the young Swami would visit the village’s primary school. Academic progress was a child’s play for the young Raju. He progressed so quickly that He could utter, much to the amazement of all, extremely difficult prayers and scriptures as if He knew them since a long time.

The Bhajan Group. At the tender age of eight, Sathya was selected to proceed to a higher elementary school at Bukkapatnam, about two and a half miles from Puttaparthi. Sathya would often charm his fellow-students by producing sweets and objects miraculously. When He was merely ten, Sathya formed a “Pandhari

Bhajan” group comprised of about eighteen boys dressed in orange clothes, holding a flag in the hand, and wearing bell-anklets. They would all dance to the tune of the picturesque folk songs and ballads devoted to God. Sathya was the leader of this group and taught all the other children devotional songs and directed the lads with the same ease with which He directs the show of this entire universe. The divine child would often use the group to describe places of pilgrimage that none had previously heard about in Puttaparthi—Shirdi being a perfect example.

Narasimha Avatar. Once while playing to the tune of a song dedicated to Lord Narasimha of Kadiri, as the Lord had jumped out of the steel pillar then, out jumped the little Sathya, much to the astonishment of all. The young Raju assumed a ferocious form that intimidated all. None of their efforts could pacify the boy. Finally, prayers were offered to the deity who had incarnated as Sathya. This calmed the boy and He resumed the role He had assumed on the stage of this world. After this incidence the group’s fame spread far and wide in all the neighboring villages. Another miraculous event occurred at this time. Cholera was spreading like wild fire in all the surrounding areas, but it could not be found anywhere in Puttaparthi.

The Scout Camp. On observing the intellectual prowess of the young boy, the elders in the family desired to give Him a college education and unwillingly allowed Him to proceed for further studies near Kamalapur, where His brother, Seshamma Raju was residing. Sathya continued His studies in Kamalapur, despite being challenged with numerous hardships. Once Baba was compelled to attend a scout camp that was to be held in Pushpagiri. The boys were to serve huge crowds at Pushpagiri, attending to tasks such as supplying drinking water to the pilgrims, supervising sanitation, and providing basic first aid. The camp fee was fixed at ten rupees per person, of which Baba did not have a pie.

In order to set an example to all other students, and to demonstrate the ideal of service, Sathya walked all the way to Pushpagiri, in an attempt to save bus fare. In order to come up with the balance amount of rupees five, Sathya gave the set of His previous year’s books to a boy. Although offered rupees twelve, Baba only accept five rupees, the exact amount needed for the camp. Facing numerous hardships and being much exhausted with the walk, Sathya took rest and slept on the sand of the river. His determination set an ideal for all to follow when embarking on any service project.

The Scorpion Bite. On March 8, 1940, the whole town was shocked to hear that a big black scorpion had stung Sathya. It was about seven o’clock at dusk, and Sathya leaped with a shriek, holding the right toe. No scorpion was discovered and everyone felt relieved. At 7 p.m. the next day, Sathya became unconscious and became stiff. Everyone assumed that Sathya was unconscious and visited the village deity in order to offer prayers for the boy’s quick recovery. At the temple, the devotees broke a coconut that split into three pieces. At the same time Sathya loudly exclaimed that the coconut broke into three pieces. When the volunteers returned everyone was amazed to discover three pieces of coconut, and not the expected two. Sathya recovered in a day or two and started behaving in strange ways. He would often speak of highly spiritual topics that even the most scholarly person in the village could not grasp, or describe distant places that He had never physically visited.

Seshamma Raju, Sathya’s elder brother, was worried at the state of affairs. At times Sathya would appear silent, while at others He would recite poems or complex slokas from the Veda. Seshamma Raju wrote a letter to His parents at Puttaparthi, requesting them to visit the boy. Due to unforeseen delays the parents did not reach Kamalapur for over a week. The worried Seshamma decided to send a messenger to escort the parents. Much to his surprise, however, Sathya declared that there was no need for this as His parents would be arriving in half hour. True to His words, they arrived exactly in thirty minutes. The parents were also surprised at the behavior of Swami, who appeared to leave His body and visit distant places. It was strange to watch a young lad declare the innermost feelings of one and all.

Swami, the Embodiment of Equanimity. Some villagers advised the worried parents to take the boy in the presence of a Shakti worshipper, who was renowned to have cured cases related to evil spirits—making a foolish assumption that Swami was behaving strangely under the influence of some evil spirit. The Shakti worshipper was a terrifying personality. In vain, he tried all his techniques on Swami, subjecting the Lord to torments that even adults would not be able to bear. He tonsured Swami’s head and with a sharp instrument made three incisions on the scalp, all the way up to the forehead. Sathya sat through these and many more ordeals—all of which failed to shake the young boy’s peaceful smile to the slightest degree. Through His own example, Swami wanted to set an example to the world as to how one must be able to bear both happiness and sorrow with unshakable equanimity.

The sorcerer did not stop. He continued pouring on the open wound, concoctions of lime, garlic, and other acid fruit juices. As 108 pots of cold water were poured on the markings, the elders who were watching this procedure could take it no longer. The witch doctor watched helplessly as he found no sign of the evil spirit giving up in any way. Finally, he decided to use the most potent acidic mixtures on Swami's eyes. Sathya's eyes became red with burning sensation and His entire body shook under the impact of the pain. Despite all this, Sathya's peaceful smile did not diminish to the slightest degree. Those accompanying Sathya now wept uncontrollably but gained courage when Sathya gave them a signal. The witch doctor could not brook this behavior and fumed with fury as all his attempts at exorcism seemed to have failed—as if Swami was possessed. Under some pretext, the parents took Sathya away from the atmosphere.

The Divine Declaration: I am Sai Baba.



Events continued in a similar manner when on May 23, 1940, Sathya rose from bed as usual but started distributing sugar-candy and flowers as if from nowhere. Sathya continued distributing miraculously produced eatables to all the neighbors. At this, Venkama Raju entered, squeezing through the crowd with a stick

in hand, and accosted the boy, saying, "Are you a God, or a ghost of a madcap? Tell me! He shouted." Prompt came the declaration, "I am Sai Baba. I belong to the Apashtamba Sutra; I am of the Bharadwaja Gotra. I have come to ward off all your troubles. Keep your houses clean and pure." At this, He threw Jasmine flowers on the ground; the flowers automatically fell in the shape of Telugu letters, 'Sai Baba'. At that time none in the village had heard of Sai Baba, so Seshama Raju went near Him and asked, "What do you mean by Sai Baba?" At which, Swami replied, "Your Venkavadhoota prayed that I be born in your family, so I came." In the Raju family there was a great guru who had predicted the birth of the Lord in that family. The father further questioned, "What are we to do with you?" Prompt came the answer, "Worship Me!" "When?" Asked the father again. "Every Thursday! Keep your minds and houses pure."

Baba is Virupaksha. Some town dwellers of Hospet invited Seshamma Raju to bring Sathya to the place, a few miles from the ruins of Hampo. On reaching there they visited the temple of Lord Virupaksha. All the visitors (except Sathya) entered the Shrine; they noticed no Virupaksha, but Sathya in place of the Lord. Seshamma Raju was dumbfounded at this sight and ran

outside to verify if Sathya had escaped. To his amazement, he found Sathya just the way He had left Him. Seshamma immediately ran in again and was confused to find the boy still standing in place of the Lord.

The Mission Unfolds. On 20th October, 1940, Sathyanarayana was on His way to school. The Excise Inspector of the region was very devoted to Baba and could see a halo around Baba's face. Within a few minutes Baba returned to the house and declared at the doorstep, "I am no longer your Sathya. I am Sai." The sister-in-law, who was in the kitchen, could not bear the splendor of the halo that shone around Baba's head. Baba addressed her, saying, "I am going. I don't belong to you. Maya has gone; my bhaktas are calling me; I have my work; I can't stay any longer." So saying, He left despite her numerous pleadings. He told his brother, "Give up all your efforts to 'cure' me. I am Sai. I do not consider myself related to you." Seshamma Raju was at a shock to hear these words from a lad, all of fourteen. He immediately thought of informing his parents and requested the lad to wait until their arrival, but Sathya would not step into that building again.

He moved into the garden of the Excise Inspector's bungalow and sat on a rock. People came into the garden from all directions, bringing flowers and fruits. Hundreds of devotees flocked to where Baba was seated. The first bhajan that Baba sang was:

"Manasa bhajore Guru charanam
dusthara bhava sagara taranam."

"Meditate in thy mind on the feet of the Guru,
that can take you across the difficult sea of samsara."

The Image of Shirdi Sai. Constant bhajans and naama sankirtan resounded across the entire area. A photographer came with a camera to the spot where Swami was seated. In order to get a good picture he wanted a crude stone that was in front of Swami, removed, but Baba did not agree. He clicked the picture and in place of the stone, appeared an image of Shirdi Sai Baba. After a few days, Baba left Uravakonda to Puttaparthi and shifted to the house of Karnam Subbamma. She attended to the needs of Swami and devotees with utmost love and affection.



Miracles. Mind boggling miracles are an everyday occurrence for Swami's devotees. Miracles, although considered incomprehensible phenomena by ordinary

humans, constitute the very nature of an avatar. What appears to be a miracle to ordinary eyes is actually the mere manifestation of an avatar's sankalpa (will). Swami from his very birth has been performing innumerable miracles. His leelas are so vast that they are impossible to cover even in an ocean full of books. Millions of books have been written by individuals whose lives were totally transformed after coming into Swami's fold. This transformation of lost souls is really what the author considers to be Swami's biggest miracle. Yet, what can be a miracle for the one who created the entire universe as a manifestation of His will. Swami, however, warns His devotees to not get too attached to the miracles, and, instead, concentrate on the goal of human life: God realization.



Tons of vibhuti (holy ash) has been produced through Baba's palm. These appearances are not limited to His physical frame. Swami often reiterates that He is omnipresent and the indweller of the human heart. Manifestations such as vibhuti, amrita (nectar), and various

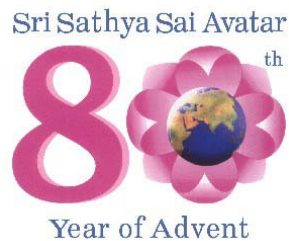
(Image Credit: srisathyasai.org.in) objects appear through Sai Baba's images and pictures across the globe. Millions of devotees' homes stand testimony to these acts of grace. Several recorded incidences exist where Swami has resurrected individuals from the dead. Healings of diseases such as cancer have been accomplished by Swami using simple words, such as "I canceled your cancer." Sathya Sai Baba's godly deeds, innumerable to list, include, to wit a few, resurrection from death of Arthur Cowan (an elderly American who died suddenly in 1971 in Madras, India), transporting, in the wink of an eye, an Australian devotee from Baba's interview room in Puttaparthi to his home in New South Wales, Australia (to be with his ailing family member), and performing countless acts that reveal, beyond doubt, his omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. These divine deeds, performed across boundaries of space and time, are beyond the limited physical and intellectual realms of human understanding.

Teachings. Sathya Sai Baba's teachings are not at all complex. In fact, His teachings could be summarized in a few words like "Love All, Serve All," "Help Ever, Hurt Never." Contrary to ordinary teachers, Swami has through His own life demonstrated the practical

application of these teachings. Millions of devotees in over 150 countries, illumined by the Sun (Baba), appear as countless stars practicing these wonderful gospels in their own lives. Baba does not limit his followers in their religious practices. Hindus are urged to become better Hindus; Muslims, better Muslims; Christians, better Christians; Jews, better Jews.

The Works. Mammoth projects which could not be accomplished by even large government organizations have been achieved by Baba, single-handedly. With extensive facilities for comprehensive education (from primary to doctorate level), and a Super Specialties Hospital, Puttaparthi has become, and continues to grow beyond imagination, a reputed international center for learning and healing. These services are provided absolutely free of cost! Sathya Sai Baba's water project has quenched the thirst of millions of individuals in thousands of drought-affected villages.

As the avatar embarks on the eightieth year of His physical body, the Sai Sandesh team and Om Sai Mandir, with all its well-wishers and devotees, salute the Lord in all humility and reverence. Over the past eight decades Swami has been working for the sake of humanity twenty-four hours, seven days a week, without a rest or break. How can the Lord of the universe ever crave for rest. To him, the happiness of His children is the only goal. The Sai Saga continues as many miracles continue occurring every day, and will continue with even more intensity, each passing moment. The author with extreme regret apologizes for his incapacity to cover the entire life of the Lord in detail. A vast library of books on, and a treasure house of music composed and being sung in praise of Sai Baba are no more than a candle light to the SUN. How, then, can a mere article do justice to the life that serves as a beacon light to millions. We would like to end this article with Swami's own words: "My life is my message."



(Image Credit: <http://aumsairam.250free.com/Mumbai-80/80-1.htm>)

Humble Pranams on the eve of the Avatar's 80th Year.

A TRIBUTE TO SWAMI'S WORKS



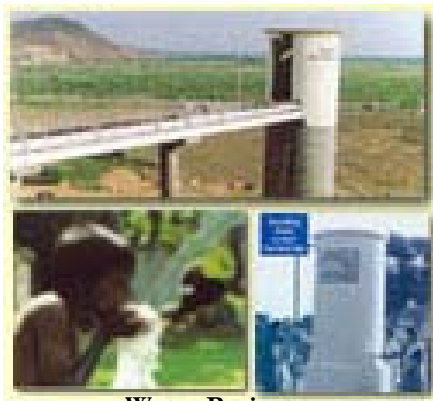
Educational Institutions



Narayan Seva



Free Superspecialty Hospitals



Water Project



Narayan Seva

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 2005

Tuesday, Nov. 01: Deepavali

Thursday, Nov. 03, Bhai Duj

Saturday, Nov. 12, 6pm to Sunday, Nov.13, 6pm:
Akhanda Bhajans (24 hour bhajans for world peace)

Tuesday, Nov. 15: Guru Nanakji's Jayanthi

Saturday, Nov. 19: Ladies' Day Celebrations

Wednesday, Nov. 23: Sathya Sai Baba's 80th Birthday

December 2005

Thursday, December 15: Datta Jayanti

Saturday, December 24: Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 25: Christmas Day Celebrations

Saturday, December 31: New Year's Eve Celebration

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	7.00 P.M. – 8.30 P.M.
Every Sunday	2.00 P.M. – 3.00 P.M.

SAI NAAM JAP (CHANTING BABA'S HOLY NAME):

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

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

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

ANNADAN [FOOD SERVICE]: Daily at the Temple

ANNADAN [FOOD SERVICE] FOR HOMELESS

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Every Saturday at 1 p.m 29th and 1st Ave. For more information, call the temple at: (718) 461-0454.

PUJA SPONSORSHIP

Archana.....	\$11
Abishekam.....	\$51
Satyanarayana Vrata.....	\$81
Vahana Puja.....	\$15
Annadan.....	\$251

To sponsor pujas, call: (718) 461-0454.

THE ACCIDENT

Students are tender hearted, full of noble feelings and love for Swami. They planned various programs to please Me. I was very well aware of the impending danger, but the students were not receptive to My words. I felt there was no point in advising them in such a situation. Only when they face the consequences of disobeying My command do they realise the value of My words. Until this moment nobody is aware of exactly what happened on the 11th morning. They said that the sports meet was a grand success. I am also happy when you are successful. The students performed extremely well. Each contributed to the success of this event based on his or her capacities and capabilities. That morning as I entered the stadium, I spotted two lorries. Immediately I could visualise the danger lurking in the future. I saw the lorries with huge scaffoldings placed over them. The boys planned to perform a few acrobatic feats on them. I knew that one of the ropes was not fitted properly and was about to give in. If that were to happen the boy would suffer a major head injury and his spinal column would break. I willed that the boy should be saved and decided to take the future accident upon Myself.

Prior to this, one boy suffered a spinal injury and had been admitted to the Manipal Hospital in Bangalore. I willed that such an untoward incident should not recur. Once the spinal column breaks it is impossible to set it right. Immediately I arranged for an ambulance to shift the boy to the hospital in Bangalore and gave ten thousand rupees to defray the immediate expenditure. I also ensured that our doctor accompanied him. The parents shed tears of gratitude when they came to know of the love showered by Swami on their son. The doctor said that the boy would not be able to sit or lie down as his spinal column was badly damaged. I said to him, "Do not entertain any misgivings. Do as I say!" By the time the boy reached the hospital he could miraculously sit up! He entered the hospital and sat down on the bed. He regained sensation in all his limbs which were numb till then. No danger whatsoever. He was protected because of My infinite mercy and boundless grace. All students should be safe and secure. I have repeatedly declared that students are My property. I consider students welfare as My welfare, and their happiness, My happiness. I never think of My happiness and My comfort. My only concern was that the students should not be disappointed or put to any inconvenience. A day prior to that I had instructed four boys to surround the chariot and keep a vigil. They are also full of love and devotion for Swami. But I noticed that none of them were present at that spot.

Nobody is to be blamed. No one does this deliberately. Swami is the very life-breath of the students.

I asked for the chariot to be stopped. A senior devotee was driving the chariot, with all sincerity, love and devotion. He stopped the vehicle in accordance with My command. Just when I was about to speak to the Vice-Chancellor, the driver accidentally put his foot on the clutch instead of applying the brake. That resulted in a jerk and I fell down in the chariot. I suffered injuries on My head and arm and My spinal column was badly damaged. What the boys had to face, I took it upon Myself. Many men and women were seated in the gallery, but I took care that none should notice My injuries. I pretended as though nothing had happened. The Vice-Chancellor was worried thinking that Swami was unable to get up. I knew that any further delay would cause anxiety in the minds of devotees. So I immediately got up, forgetting the excruciating pain and started blessing the devotees, waving My hands. The pain was intense, and the cut on My arm so deep that it appeared to have been caused by a knife. But the sleeve on the robe covering My hand was intact. This incident gives you a glimpse of the infinite power of Divinity.

I found Myself in an awkward situation. I had to walk to the dais without My injuries being noticed. So I willed that no one should notice My injuries, lest they become anxious. I walked up to the dais and took My seat. But in the meanwhile the dhoti below My robe was drenched in blood. Concerned that the devotees may get to know of this, I discreetly walked into the bathroom. The available towels were insufficient to wipe the oozing blood. I did not want to leave the blood stained towels in the bathroom, lest some one notice them. Though there was excruciating pain, I washed the towels Myself with soap, squeezed them and put them up for drying. Under no circumstances do I reveal My suffering, pain and fatigue. Some boys were curious to know why I went to the bathroom repeatedly. I replied, "Why are you concerned? It is my job." Usually I go to the bathroom only twice a day, morning and evening. Since the injury was bleeding profusely, I had to go to the bathroom five or six times in that short duration. Just then two students came and prayed that the institute flag could be hoisted. When I got down from the chair it felt as if I had an electric shock. Reflecting on the incident I feel like laughing to Myself. I could not stand firmly on the ground. I thought I should not be deluded by the attachment to the body and walked forward smilingly to hoist the flag. Then I lighted the lamp. I again found Myself in an embarrassing situation. I could not sit in any posture comfortably. When I exhort all devotees to give up body attachment, I

should set an example Myself. Speaking to Myself in this manner, I conducted myself accordingly. The Primary School children performed extremely well and desired to have a photograph with Me. Acceding to their prayers I walked up to them and posed for a photograph, as I did not want to disappoint them. Subsequently I had to walk up to the playing field five more times to have photographs taken with the remaining students. In this manner I detached Myself from the body. My body was numb. There was no sensation whatsoever. My head was reeling. I resolved to make the students happy no matter what happened to the body. I decided to keep this to Myself. Concerned that the bloodstains may be visible while returning to the dais from the playground, I ascended the steps leading directly to My seat. Is it possible for human beings to conceal such a major injury from the public gaze for such a long time amidst such a huge gathering? No. I was seated on the chair for five long hours. I am relating all this so that students and devotees may comprehend the nature of Divinity. Anyone in My predicament would not have been able to sit in the chair even for a second. It would have been impossible even to put a step forward. It was as though electric shocks were piercing My body. The electric current gives shock: but when I am the current Myself, where is the question of Myself being subjected to shock? With this feeling I sat through the whole proceedings and returned to the Mandir.

The Central Trust members followed Me, but they were not aware of what had happened to Me. The senior devotee apologized for his slip. Then I told him, "Why do you worry about the past? Past is past. I am happy. Do not worry about Me." All of them had their lunch. After lunch My back started bleeding again. The students were waiting outside for photographs, again I went into the bathroom to wipe the blood. Noticing this, Indulal Shah cried out, "Swami what is this?" I told him lovingly, "Indulal Shah, whatever had to happen to the body has happened." Saying so, I showed him My injury. All of them cried out in agony. They noticed blood all over. I told them that I would not reveal anything in future if they expressed their sorrow like this. No one knew about the injury until I reached the Mandir. Likewise, I take upon Myself the untold suffering of students and devotees many a time to protect them. No one is responsible for this mishap. You may find fault with one individual or the other, but no one is responsible for this. Whatever had to happen, happened. That's all.

- Adapted from Oka Chinna Katha

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Once there, submit your email address. It takes less than a minute to sign-up.



(Image Credit: udaipurplus.com)

**DEVOTEES ARE
REQUESTED TO
CONTRIBUTE ARTICLES,
EXPERIENCES, STORIES,
ETC. FOR PUBLICATION
IN THE FORTHCOMING
ISSUES OF SAI SANDESH**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Is it the body that derives joy from looking at a thing of beauty, or is it the Atma (soul)? What is it that relishes the good food that is consumed - the body or the spirit? What is it that enjoys fragrance or is moved by beautiful music? On enquiry, it will be found that it is the Atma that is the enjoyer, and not the physical body. The body by itself is gross and incapable of experiencing joy. It must be realized that the spirit transcends the mind and the intellect, and pervades the entire cosmos. The spirit is the basis for the cognition of the external world and experiencing the inner world.

- Baba

Sai Sandesh, on behalf of Om Sai Mandir, wishes all its devotees and readers a Very Happy Diwali and a Prosperous Year Ahead. May Swami's blessings be with all of you, always.

TEMPLE JOURNAL

NAVARATRI/DUSSEHRA CELEBRATIONS (OCTOBER 03 TO OCTOBER 12, 2005)



SRI, SRI VISWAGURU, VISWAMJI VISITS OM SAI MANDIR



DIWALI, THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS



India's most important festival, Diwali, the festival of lights, is recognized as the festival that leads us into truth and light. It symbolizes that age-old culture of a country that teaches us to vanquish ignorance that subdues humanity and to drive away darkness that engulfs the light of knowledge. The word "Diwali" is the corruption of the Sanskrit word "Deepavali" -- Deepa means light and Avali, a row. It means a row of lights. Diwali is very enthusiastically celebrated for five continuous days. Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, is also appeased during Diwali.

Light is significant in Hinduism because it signifies goodness. The significance of burning lamps during Diwali is to ward off darkness and evil. Diwali is generally celebrated on the last day of the last month of the lunar calendar. This week-long festival is a tradition in every household around the world. It is the beginning of a new year, a fresh start. The festival is celebrated for five days; each day having its own significance and ritual. Although each region celebrates Diwali

(Image Credit: udaipurplus.com) differently, the general order for these five days is: Dhanteras, the first day; Narak Chaturdashi or Choti Diwali, the second; Diwali, the third; New Year, the fourth; and finally, Bhai Duj, the fifth. Many legends and myths are also associated with each day, allowing every Indian region to add their own flavor and attach their own significance to this festive occasion.

In Northern India, Diwali is dedicated to the worship of Rama, who had returned to His kingdom after fourteen years of exile on this very day. Whereas, in Bengal, Kali, the goddess of strength is worshipped. Mother Lakshmi is also worshipped across the country as it is believed that She confers wealth and prosperity on all who worship Her during this time.

Another practice during Diwali is "Bhai Dooj" or "Bhai Beej". On this auspicious day, women receive special gifts from brothers and in-turn pray for their brothers' welfare. Married women invite their brothers for meals.

Each of the five days in the festival of Diwali symbolizes a deep cultural significance and calls for worship to specific deities in all pomp and glory. A common thread through these days, however, is the prayer, symbolized by lights, requesting the Lord to guide us from darkness to light; from mortality, to immortality.

MAY THIS DIWALI BE AN OCCASION OF JOY AND PROSPERITY IN EVERY HOUSEHOLD.

WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY DIWALI AND A PROSPEROUS YEAR AHEAD

AN APPEAL

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

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