



Shraddha. Saburi.

SAI SANDESH

The Official Monthly Newsletter of
OM SAI MANDIR

A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION
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The newsletter can be read online at www.omsaimandir.org



Love All. Serve All.

November & December 2006

Volume 3, Issue 11 & 12

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2006 ISSUE



Loka Samastha...Sukhino Bhavantu...

LIFE SIZE STATUES OF SAI BABA

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Checks could be made in the name of Om Sai Mandir and mailed to 45-11 Smart Street, Flushing, NY 11355.

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LIVE IN SEVA

By THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

Seva (selfless service), Swami's supreme teaching, is the lifeblood of every Sai devotee. "Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray," is what Sai Baba often preaches and *always* practices. The teaching has found a special place in the hearts of millions of His followers, who have dedicated their lives to the cause of serving humanity. Free hospitals, universities, soup kitchens, drinking water facilities, vocational training centers, shelters, old age homes—these are just a few of the countless undertakings inspired by Baba. Despite the magnanimity, all work is done quietly without the least desire for publicity or self-aggrandizement.

Seva benefits the benefactor and the society

Manava seva is *Madhava seva* (service to man amounts to service to God). Truly speaking one serves oneself through service to others, for selfless service is the easiest path to salvation and the most potent means to secure God's grace.

Man being a social animal, society for man is like water for fish. All our accomplishments are made possible only through contributions made by individual members of society. Millionaires have earned their millions because thousands of individuals have served as customers for their enterprises; academicians gain more knowledge by studying works collectively produced by many others; a president gains honor and power because billions vote in favor of her or his candidacy; a student gains knowledge because parents, friends, and teachers have collectively contributed to the student's development. Society is thus responsible for the success and growth of any individual. We should therefore be forever grateful to society. Nothing is impossible if an organized society is bent on achieving it. Even *moksha* (liberation from material entanglement) can be won through serving and promoting the progress of society. It is for this reason Swami wants His devotees to focus on service.³

Live in seva

It is not enough to proclaim one's involvement in rendering seva once a month or once a week. Hunger is not appeased by eating sporadically. In the same manner, spiritual hunger can be appeased only through frequent *seva*²—one must essentially live in seva. Countless hours are wasted in gossip, scandal-mongering, and sloth-filled, self-centered activities. It would be so much better if these were utilized for the betterment of society. Sai's own life is an example of how one could live in continuous seva. Every moment of His life is spent for benefiting others. Even His thoughts are selfless. We can learn from His example and

take advantage of opportunities for selfless service that exist everywhere and at all times. Even simple acts like giving up one's bus seat for the physically weak constitute *seva*.

The type of activity

Projects undertaken should complement one's physical, mental, and spiritual capabilities, and most importantly solve a local need or problem. In poor areas, for example, serving food would benefit the local population, while in urban neighborhoods it would be more important to educate the youth and keep them on the right path. In Baba's own words: "Do not crave for publicity, but for the joy that shines in the faces of the people whom you help. *Seva* brings you nearer to Me. The flower that is your heart gets fragrance by means of the *seva* you do, and so it becomes more acceptable to Me. Love is the essence." Once a project is undertaken with zeal, Swami always inspires many different ways of doing good.

The body has to be utilized for service to others. Krishna says, "I have no need to be engaged in work, but I work to activate the world." More *aanandha* (bliss) can be won by serving others than by merely serving oneself. The acts need not be big; they could even be small and unnoticed by others. All acts have to be done to please the God within us.³

Ideal seva

Genuine *seva* is characterized by compassion and willingness to sacrifice.¹ Compassionate acts done as an offering to God (without selfish motives) will eradicate the ego, rapidly advance the cleansing process, and slowly, but surely, raise a person's awareness to higher realms of spirituality. The flower is *karma* (work), the emerging fruit is *bhakti* (worship), and the ripe sweet fruit is *jnaana* (wisdom). They are like childhood, youth, and old age, each imperceptibly growing into the succeeding stage.¹

Even Krishna—the almighty, omniscient, all-encompassing Lord—enthusiastically desired to participate in seva when Dharmaraja, the eldest of Pandava brothers, was performing a *yagna* (holy rite). Krishna went to the extent of expressing a desire to clean the dining hall after the guests had partaken of the feast. Even during the battle of Mahabharata, Krishna served as the driver of Arjuna's chariot. From dawn to dusk, the Lord cheerfully performed what we would consider menial tasks. He went about driving the horses, leading them to the river, giving them a refreshing bath, applying healing balms to their wounds,

repairing reins and harnesses, and so much more.³ Krishna was teaching the entire human race that any act of service done to any living being is essentially an offering to God and is accepted by Him most cheerfully. Such acts must be performed as *sadbana* (spiritual effort), and not just social service. Truly speaking, God is the one who is always serving us, for He is listening to our prayers, fulfilling our needs, and protecting us, while running the show of the entire universe.

Hanuman is the perfect example of an ideal *sevak* (one who serves humbly). Despite his strength, learning, and virtues, he did not have even a trace of pride or ego. He was most pleased to be the servant of Rama and that is how he introduced himself. Through *seva saadbana*, Hanumaan attained identity with Raama, as the river attains identity with the sea.³

Responsibilities of Sai sevaks

The responsibilities of those engaged in *seva* are of a high order. Such individuals have to lead each other and the entire mankind along the path of spiritual effort, from "I" to "we".⁴ By saturating every act with love, work is transformed into worship and when such work is offered to God, it becomes a holy prayer, thus making the activity free from ego and earthly desires for success or failure. Such an attitude will make work *nish-kaama* (unattached or without desire) and will render the consciousness clear and pure.⁴

You get blessed or punished due to your own acts; it is the motive that counts

Take an ordinary postal envelope. Upon it, in golden ink, write the address of a person in very artistic calligraphy. Insert a beautifully worded letter full of amazing sentiments and then drop it into a post-box. What happens to it? It will not move even a yard from that box. Now take a mere post card, the cheap, unimpressive kind. Write the

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address with no special care. Scribble the news you like to convey. Affix a stamp and drop it into the same box. Watch what happens! The artistically ornamental envelope is inert, while this inartistic, cheap, document travels a thousand miles toward the person indicated. Therefore, whatever may be the uniqueness or importance, the furore or attractiveness, the *seva* that you do can yield no fruit if it is done without a pure *chiththa* (thought).

Seva done to a suffering being reaches the Lord

A pious person was once proceeding from Kaashi to Raameshwaram. He was carrying with him holy Ganges water to be mixed with the sea at Raameshwaram. That was to be the consummation of his long and arduous pilgrimage. While half-way through, he spotted a donkey in the last throes of life, since it was too incapacitated to move towards some source of water to quench its thirst. Its dry tongue and rolling eyes indicated the agony of extreme thirst. The pilgrim was so moved by the sight that he poured the precious Ganges water into the mouth of the distraught animal. Moments later, the donkey recovered and gained enough strength to pull itself out of the grip of death. Seeing this, the companion of the pilgrim asked him, "Master! The sacred water you brought from Kaashi had to be offered to the ocean at Raameshwaram. Why did you commit this sacrilege?" The pilgrim replied, "But I have poured the holy water in the ocean itself, don't you see?" Any *seva* done to a suffering *jeeva* (individual being) reaches the ocean of divinity, Lord Himself, and can never be a sacrilege. *Seva* to the *jeeva* (being) is *seva* to the *dheva* (divinity).

Inner cleanliness is very important

Inner cleanliness is of utmost importance to all participating in the mission of Sai. It is not enough to repair roads, clear drains, give medicines, deliver lectures, or conduct bhajans. Even the government undertakes such activities. It is far more important to find out how many families are in misery and poverty on account of evils, such as gambling, drinking, etc. Through love, persuasion, and even personal submission, such individuals must be reformed and brought back to the path of peace, prosperity, and harmony.

One whose heart melts at the suffering of others--that is a true Sai *sevak*.

1. Prashaanthi Nilayam, 21-11-1981
2. Prashaanthi Nilayam, 21-11-1981
3. Seva Dhaal Conference, 19-11-1981.
4. Brindhaavan, 6-3-1977
5. All India Seva Dhaal Conference, 22-11-1978
6. Poornachandra Auditorium, 14-11-1975

OM SAI MANDIR'S 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.
SAHASRANAM, BABA'S 108 NAMES, ETC.: Daily
ANNADAN (FOOD SERVICE): Daily at the Mandir
ANNADAN (FOOD SERVICE) FOR HOMELESS
BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Every Saturday at 1 P.M. 29th
and 1st Ave. Call 718-461-0454

PUJA SPONSORSHIP

Archana: \$11
Abishekam: \$51
Satyanarayana Vrata: \$81
Vahana Puja: \$15
Annadan: \$251
To sponsor pujas, call (718) 461-0454.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2006

Saturday, Dec. 02: Hanuman Jayanthi
Monday, Dec. 04: Datta Jayanthi
Sunday, Dec. 24: Christmas Eve
Monday, Dec. 25: Christmas Day Celebrations
Sunday, Dec. 31: New Year's Eve Celebrations

SAI WISDOM

"Man's duty is to sanctify his days and nights through the unbroken *smarana* (recollection) of the Name. Recollect with joy and with true yearning. If you do so, God is bound to appear before you in the Form and with the Name you have adored Him with. God is all Names and all forms, the blending of all these in harmonious beauty! The Gods worshipped in different faiths, adored by different human communities, are all various manifestations of the one Divine principle that really *is*. Just as the body is the harmonious blending of the senses and the limbs, God is the harmony of all the forms and names that mankind worships."

—BABA

Source: *Thought For The Day*, November 28, 2006

REMEMBER, HE IS OMNIPRESENT

SOURCE: OKA CHINNA KATHA

Thiruppandar was a great devotee of Lord Shiva. Once he happened to visit a famous pilgrim center dedicated to his favorite Lord. After the darshan of Shiva, he felt that he was too exhausted and weak to walk further, and therefore rested for the night in the temple itself.

Early in the morning, the priest entered the temple with a potful of water to perform abhishek to the Lingam. To his utter consternation, he found an aged man sleeping right in front of the shrine with legs stretched towards the sanctum sanctorum. He got wild at the sight and, in indignation, he sprinkled some water on the face of the old man. But, there was no sign of any movement. So, he bent down and tried to lift the old man's legs. Immediately the old man opened his eyes and said in an appealing tone, "My dear Son! Why are you pulling my legs?" The priest shouted "Oh! For your age, is it not shameful on your part to indulge in such a sacrilegious act of stretching your legs towards God?"

The old man said calmly, "My dear son, I feel a cramp in my legs and cannot get up. Will you place my two feet in a direction you like, where God is not? I shall certainly get up after a while." The priest did not want to waste time in arguing with the man, so, he held the two feet of the man, lifted them up and placed them in the opposite direction. Suddenly, there sprang out a lingam from underneath the feet! The priest tried to place the old man's feet in another position, but there again sprang up another lingam! In a minute, the place was full of lingams! The priest fell at the feet of the old man and said "Oh revered one! You must be a realised soul. Pardon me for my insulting words and actions."

The old man got up and said, "My dear son, have you not read in the scriptures that God is omnipresent? Can you limit God to a place and to an image or a picture or in a frame? Of course we have temples with idols and pictures of worship; but they only help devotees to direct their faith and devotion to God as embodiments of the various Divine *shaktis* (forces) in this vast boundless universe. The Supreme Creator, the Almighty God is only one, and remember, He is Omnipresent."

DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES: THE BALOON MIRACLE AT OM SAI MANDIR

On Thursday, November 23, 2006, Sri Sathya Sai Baba's 81st birthday was celebrated at Om Sai Mandir. To mark the special occasion, 81 helium balloons were decorated on the mandir's ceiling. As always, Swami's birthday was celebrated with great enthusiasm and pomp. The temple was closed at around 12.00 a.m. that night.

Surprisingly, the following morning when the temple was opened, none of the balloons were on the ceiling. They were all neatly arranged near the temple's altar, all at Swami's feet. Eight bunches were neatly placed at the feet of different images of Baba and one baloon was sitting by itself at the feet of Baba, as if forming the numbers 8 and 1. It is a wonder how all the Helium balloons were on the floor when they have a natural property of floating freely for days together. (Some balloons had even been taped to the ceiling.) Even more amazing was the fact that they were all at Swami's feet [it appears even balloons know where to go]. Swami has said that He can change earth into sky and sky into earth; converting the property of Helium is then a mere a trifle for Him. We will let the pictures do the talking:

Pictures taken on Thursday, November 23, 2006; balloons were floating/attached near the ceiling



Pictures taken on Friday, November 24, 2006; all balloons were neatly arranged near Swami's feet



Sri Sathya Sai Baba's 81st Birthday Celebrations: Thursday, November 23, 2006



OM SAI MANDIR
A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Om Sai Mandir is organized exclusively for charitable, religious purposes and is a non profit organization, exempt under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Contributions made to Om Sai Mandir are tax deductible and can be mailed to:

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Have a suggestion, article, or idea for *Sai Sandesh*? Please e-mail our editorial team at saisandesh@omsaimandir.org

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