



Shraddha. Saburi.

SAI SANDESH

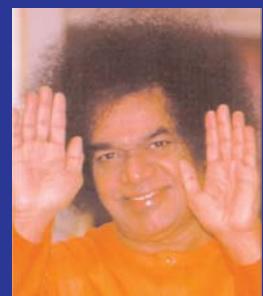
The Official Monthly Newsletter of
OM SAI MANDIR

A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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Love All. Serve All.

September & October 2006

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HIS SANKALPA ALWAYS BEARS FRUIT

BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

"At my will, I can change earth into sky and sky into earth," is what our beloved Baba has declared on many occasions. The statement is not empty rhetoric but a divine declaration that has proven its validity on countless occasions and has been expressed through innumerable miracles.

Even during the Shirdi Sai avatar, Baba performed the most unimaginable feats. He was very fond of lighting oil lamps and would often ask the local store owners to supply oil for the same. The store owners were unaware of the Divinity that had disguised itself in the human garb and decided to play a trick on the Lord Himself. One night, they collectively refused to supply oil to Baba. Sainath was unperturbed by their arrogance and returned to His dwelling place. The thrill-seeking retailers quietly followed Baba but were caught by surprise when Baba lit lamps the entire night with water instead of oil.

God's will is very powerful and even nature obeys His command the way a pet dog would obey its master.

One evening Shirdi witnessed the most powerful storm in its history. Recklessly destroying property and life on its way, rain water gushed through the entire village. The concerned villagers were very disturbed by nature's fury and ran to Baba for help. In the midst of the raging storm, Baba roared, "Stop! Calm your fury!" No sooner were these words uttered, the storm subsided and the water cleared out.

Baba not only demonstrated His control over the elements, but also proved that the entire universe was contained within Him. Once, Das Ganu, an apostle of Baba, expressed his desire to visit Prayag (the confluence of holy rivers). No sooner did Das Ganu prostrate in front of Baba in act of reverence, holy water started emanating from Baba's feet, as if hinting to the fact that all holy places-the entire creation as a matter of fact-were contained within Him.

An Australian devotee experienced the inexplicable might of God the same way. The devotee's wife was severely ill. Since doctors had not given much hope, he left her in the hospital and rushed to seek Baba's blessings. As soon as he arrived in Puttaparthi, the omniscient Lord chided him for leaving his ill wife alone. Swami also ordered him to leave immediately. The devotee was perplexed as there was no transportation available immediately. The compassionate Swami, however, came to his rescue; Baba drew a map of Australia on the wall and asked the devotee to close his

eyes. Swami knocked on his head thrice and at the third knock asked him to open his eyes. The devotee was most surprised to find himself by the bed of his ailing wife. In the wink of an eye, Sai had transported the devotee from India to Australia.

On another occasion, a politician was visiting Baba. He had recently lost his wife, an ardent devotee of Sai. As soon as he entered the interview room, Swami expressed His dissatisfaction at the way he had treated his wife. Apparently, she had one last unfulfilled wish to see Swami and the husband, due to his busy schedule, had refused to take her to Parthi. The bereaved husband broke down in front of Swami and begged for forgiveness. Almost immediately, he saw his late wife emerge from Sai's body. She spoke to him lovingly and consoled him. After conversing for a few minutes, she merged into Swami's body. The devotee was perplexed to see the phenomenon but understood that his wife's supreme devotion had given her the chance of merging with the Lord.



Physical phenomena are bound by the laws of space and time, but the Lord transcends both space and time and what appears to be a miracle to humans is a minute fraction of God's infinite glory-the glory of the very Lord who created the entire universe.

SAI WISDOM

You need not go anywhere searching for God. Divinity is within you. Just as there are many limbs in the body which are kept alive by one heart, the same God is the life-force for all beings. The entire universe is the reflection of the Supreme Being. Dhrishti (vision) determines your view of Shrishti (Creation). When you see the world through coloured glasses, you will see everything in the colour of the glasses you are wearing. Whatever happens, you should take it as a gift of God. Love is God. Live in Love. This is the proper way of worshipping God.

—BABA

Source: Thought For The Day, August 13, 2006

LIFE SIZE STATUES OF SAI BABA

Two life size, marble statues of Sai Baba will soon be adorning the temple's altar. Devotees interested in contributing toward this cause may contact the temple's management at 1.718.461.0454.

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

Om Sai Mandir is a Non Profit Organization.



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

September 2006

Tuesday, Sept. 05: Onam
Saturday, Sept. 23: Devi Navarathri Begins
Thursday, Sept. 28: Shirdi Sai Jayanti
Saturday, Sept. 30: Durgashtami

October 2006

Monday, Oct. 02: Vijayadashami/Dussehra
Thursday, Oct. 19: Dhanteras
Saturday, Oct. 21: Deepavali
Sunday, Oct. 22: Gujarati New Year
Monday, Oct. 23: Bhai Duj

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BLESSED WITH A SCHOLARSHIP

BY A SAI DEVOTEE, NEW YORK

In order to gain admission to the MBA program, I was required to take the GMAT. The minimum score required for a full scholarship was 650 (90th percentile). It was a tough task considering my involvement in numerous activities.

As always I resorted to Baba and performed a special abhishekam for the purpose. During the final days of the test, I was also reading the Satcharita. As days were passing by I found myself more involved in prayers than studies--an act that was ridiculed by my peers.

I would visit Baba's local temple very often, and much to my surprise everyday some strange person or other (ahead of me) would deposit my fare in the bus--as if Baba was arranging for my visits.

One night I fell very sick but the day being a Thursday I decided to visit Baba's bhajans. As I was very sick my roommate dissuaded me from the attempt but finally relented. After the bhajans I was doing satsang with some devotees, an act that infuriated my roommate (out of concern for my health). It was a very cold night and buses were running infrequently. When we went to the bus stop, a white car suddenly screeched in front of us and we were offered a ride. Since there was no other option, we accepted the offer and reached home safely. My friend was shocked to see Baba's timely help through a stranger.

The day of my GMAT finally arrived. All went well but I could finish the entire test and missed out one important section. This was a sure disaster as I could never have achieved my score with an incomplete test. I was disappointed that all my prayers had been wasted.

Baba, however, has His own ways. When I called in to check my results, the score was an exact "650." This was the very number I had prayed for and Baba had fulfilled my request despite the odds. Needless to say I secured a full scholarship and completed my MBA with flying colors.

Jai Sai Ram!

THE LIFE & TEACHINGS OF SRI SHIRDI SAI BABA

BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

Sai Baba of Shirdi (1838-1918), by far the most revered avatar (incarnation) in the Indian peninsula, is now considered a towering global phenomenon, lighting the spiritual history of mankind. At a very early age, this mysterious fakir, clad in torn rags, embarked on a pre-ordained mission that was to shape the spiritual destiny of mankind. The charismatic avatar transformed what was once an unrecognized, remote hamlet in Maharashtra to the fastest growing spiritual destination, visited by millions.

The early years. The Upanishads speak of a period in the Kaliyuga (the Iron Age) spanning 250 years that would witness the regeneration of a widespread spiritual awakening, the likes of which has never been witnessed in the history of mankind. The birth of Shirdi Sai Baba marked the beginning of this golden era. During this time the Lord in the form of Shiva and Shakti is to incarnate thrice; Shiva as Shirdi Sai Baba (1838-1918); Shiva-Shakti as Sathya Sai Baba (1926-2022); and Shakti as Prema Sai Baba (2030-2126). Devotees often identify Shirdi Baba as an avatar of Dattatreya, and rightly so. For, Datta symbolizes the omnipresent Lord who oversees the creation, preservation, and dissolution of this universe. Baba, while living allowed this identification-and gave darshan, not only as Dattatreya, but as every incarnation or divine symbolism attributed to the supreme overlord. In essence, confirming His identity as God.

While in flesh, Baba never revealed His antecedents to anyone. What little is known about His birth is through the work of researchers and revelations given during Sathya Sai Baba's discourses. Baba was born in village called Pathri in Maharashtra State to a poor Hindu couple, Ganga Bhavadya and Devagiramma. The mother, a pious lady, was blessed with a divine vision of Shiva and His consort Parvathi; she was graced with the much coveted boon of mothering Shirdi Sai Baba. Just before the divine birth, however, the father developed an intense dispassion for the material world, and in his quest for enlightenment, abandoned his family. The mother, in adherence to her vow of a dutiful wife, followed him to the forest. On the way she gave birth to the divine child. Unable to keep pace with her God-intoxicated husband, she wrapped the new-born child in a blanket of leaves and abandoned Him to the care of destiny. A childless Muslim couple and his wife happened to pass that way and took home the abandoned child, rather excitedly. In due time the husband passed away, leaving Baba in the care of his widowed wife. She raised the child with much affection. While still four, the young avatar cre-

ated a stir in the community by praising Allah in the local Hindu temples and by singing bhajans in mosques. Even at that young age, He was challenging the hatred that had created a huge rift between the two communities.

He surprised His mother-and other villagers-on many an occasion. Once He opened His mouth wide open and revealed the entire creation (to a village lady) in His seemingly small mouth. Overwhelmed by this behavior, yet being aware of His spiritual stature, she decided to leave Baba in the care of Gopal Rao Deshmukh (Venkusa), Baba's chosen Guru. The night before this arrival, Shiva appeared in Venkusa's dream and revealed that He himself would visit him the next day.

Sainath stayed with Venkusa until the age of 16 (a period spanning 12 years). Venkusa was extremely fond of the boy and would openly express his love for the young disciple. Unable to bear this special treatment, the other students in Venkusa's ashram, with the intention of hurting the young Baba hurled a brick at Baba. Venkusa immediately appeared on the scene and, using his yogic powers, suspended the brick mid-air. He later took the injury upon Himself.

The perpetrator died immediately but was revived by Baba's sankalpa (will). The guru, as his parting gift, offered this brick to the young Baba and requested Him to move westward [apparently Shirdi]. This brick was treasured by Sainath as His lifelong companion.

At the age of 16, Baba visited Shirdi and meditated under a local Neem tree. Baba suddenly disappeared from Shirdi and was later discovered by Chandbhaji Patil, who was then searching for his lost mare. Baba using His miraculous powers traced the mare for the Patil and also miraculously produced fire and water, much to the amazement of the Patil. The grateful Patil spontaneously developed a deep reverence for Baba and requested His company in the marriage party (of his nephew) that was soon to leave for Shirdi. Baba arrived in Shirdi when He was about 20 years of age, and remained there for the rest of His life, a period spanning roughly 60 years. Baba's stay during this period in Shirdi remains well-documented through the popular Satcharita.

Miracles. Miracles, though a source of wonder for human beings, constitute the very nature of God. What appears to be a miracle to the human eye is purely a manifestation of divine will.

THE LIFE & TEACHINGS OF SRI SHIRDI SAI BABA CONTINUED ...

BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

Sai Baba of Shirdi had all the powers at His command, and He often utilized these powers for the benefit of His devotees, never for self-gratification though. Millions were healed by a mere glance from Baba. His protecting grace prevented many an accident, averted several untimely deaths, and miraculously benefited the devotees, both spiritually and materially. It was often the experience of devotees that Baba read their minds and without their asking, fulfilled long-cherished desires.

Shirdi Baba, as was the way of sanyasis of the time, would beg for food. He was very fond of lighting lamps and would often request the village shopkeepers for the oil required to light lamps. (It has always been the experience of devotees that Baba often returned tenfold of what He asked. His asking, it appears, was merely an excuse to bless.) On one occasion the villagers conspired against Baba and refused to give oil. Unperturbed, Baba returned to his dwelling place, added water to the few drops of oil that remained in His tumbler, and spat it out as if in act of sanctification. The village grocers were watching all this intently. Much to their astonishment, Baba lighted lamps (that lasted all night).

What is impossible for the Lord! On another occasion, Das Ganu, one of Baba's chosen apostles, wished to bathe in Prayag (confluence of holy rivers). That very minute, streams of water manifested from Baba's feet, fulfilling the devotee's wish. Another devotee once found Himself in serious danger in the middle of an ocean. As the ships around him sank, he helplessly sought Baba's protection. He appeared on the scene and pulled the ship to safety. At that very moment, devotees in Shirdi found Baba soaked in an unexplained pool of water.

Innumerable miracles were performed by Baba-and are being performed even today. There are several recorded instances where Baba quelled storms, miraculously produced or extinguished fire, and demonstrated total control over nature. Sai's benevolence is often experienced by devotees in times of distress or need, even in mundane matters. Ask any Sai devotee and she/he would have a book of his own to narrate.

Teachings. Communal harmony, love and respect for fellow-beings, adherence to one's prescribed duty, and devotion to God and one's guru, formed the pillar-stones of Baba's teachings. Baba rarely lectured; most of His teach-

ings were imparted silently, by example or on a one-on-one basis. Shraddha (faith) and Saburi (patience) formed the cornerstone of what Baba wanted His devotees to follow. Faith backed by patience forms a strong foundation for spiritual progress, and even success in routine life.

Baba lived His life in utter simplicity [an understatement indeed]. He wore torn rags, slept on the floor (except for a rug), and avoided material comforts of any form. Even though millions of rupees were offered to Baba, He distributed all-often more than what He received-of the money amongst the devotees and poor alike. At the end of His mortal life, a meagre 16 rupees were found in His possession.

Throughout His life, Baba did only good to others, took their diseases upon himself, and did all He could to alleviate suffering. Even during His last days, He took upon himself an ailing devotee's impending death. The devotee was cured and Baba passed in his place. "My bones shall speak with you," said Baba before passing away. The words have been proven true time and again. He is still speaking with His devotees, lovingly responding to every knock on His door.

Devotees are requested to share articles, experiences, and ideas for the forthcoming issues of Sai Sandesh.

The editor can be reached at saisandesh@omsaimandir.org

Sai Sandesh is a free newsletter.

A SPIRITUAL ASPIRANT SHOULD HAVE ...

Source: Oka Chinna Katha

A certain spiritual aspirant went to a sage and asked him to give him a mantra. The sage said that he would impart the message only if the disciple agreed to serve him for twelve years, carrying out all his injunctions. The disciple agreed and carried out his services to the preceptor with devotion for twelve years.

At the end of the period, when the sage felt that his own end was approaching, he asked the disciple to bring a palmyra leaf on which he would inscribe the mantra before his death. The disciple went in search of a palmyra leaf, but before he could return, the preceptor died. On enquiry from a boy who was there, he learnt that before dying, the sage had written something on a bed of sand, which a woman had copied and then wiped off the inscription. The disciple went in search of the woman, who was having some donkeys.

He learnt from her that she had inscribed on the palmleaf roll that she wore in her ear-lobe what she found on the sand. When she learnt from the young man that the writing on the sand was a mantra intended for him and for which he had served the sage faithfully for twelve years, the woman said that she would give him the palm leaf only if he served her dutifully for twelve years. The disciple who was determined to get the mantra at any cost, agreed to serve her.

The young man looked after the donkeys and served the woman for many years, living upon the food given by her. One day, he could not get the food from her and went about in search of food. At that time, he learnt that the king of the region had been feeding the poor for a long time and that he might be able to get food if he went to the feeding place.

On going there he learnt that the king had stopped the feeding from that day because it did not yield the result he was expecting from it. The king had started poor feeding on the advice of his preceptor who had told him that he would have a son if a truly godly man ate the food that he would serve to the poor. A bell was kept in the palace and when it rang by itself, that would be the sign that a godly man had partaken of the king's food. As the feeding had gone on for long without the bell ringing, the king decided to stop the feeding.

That was the very day when the young disciple went to the feeding place. On learning that all the vessels used for cooking the food had been sent to the river for cleaning, the young man hastened to the river bank to find out whether some food scraped from the vessels would be available for him. He found some crumbs at the spot and started eating them. At that very moment the bell in the palace started ringing.

The king was startled to hear the bell and immediately sent out messengers to find out who was the person who had eaten the food that day which made the bell ring. After enquiries, the messengers traced the young man at the river and brought him to the king. The king was overjoyed on seeing the young man because he felt that he would soon have a son. He offered the young man half his kingdom and invited him to stay with him. The young man told the king his whole story and said that he was not interested in the kingdom or anything else, but only in the mantra from his guru, which was now in the keeping of the woman with the donkeys. The young man insisted that the palmleaf earring worn by the woman should be obtained without any compulsions.

The king sent out men to trace the woman, who was brought before him. Learning that she was an acrobat, who could perform feats on a rope, the king asked her to demonstrate her skill before the queen who was now enceinte. As she was dancing on the rope, he asked her whether she could catch two diamond ear-rings he would throw at her and wear them while dancing on the rope. She readily agreed. Catching them in her hands, she took out the palmleaf rings from her ear-lobes, cast them down and wore the diamond ear-rings in their place.

As the palmleaf rings dropped down, the young man rushed towards them and eagerly read the message inscribed there in. Immediately after reading the mantra the young man secured instant illumination and liberation thereafter.

A spiritual aspirant should have such determination and preparedness for any kind of sacrifice to achieve his goal.

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

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