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SAI SANDESH

The official monthly newsletter of

OM SAI MANDIR

A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION



Love All. Serve All.

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Image Credit: <http://www.hanumanchalisa.org/telugu/>

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.



"SEE HOW I HAVE TO SUFFER FOR MY DEVOTEES; THEIR DIFFICULTIES ARE MINE" --BABA BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

Saints -- and even God -- always ease the suffering of their devotees by taking their burdens over themselves. In process, they willingly subject themselves to untold pain, often neglecting their own welfare, and even sacrificing their physical bodies when necessary.

"I bear the love of a thousand mothers," says Sri Sai Baba, and what is it if not motherly love that compels Sai to heal the pain of millions without the slightest trace of selfishness, expectation, or recognition. His *butter-soft* heart melts with the warmth of sincere prayers and, unasked, He gives all that is to be given -- and more. When helping His followers, Swami employs a number of means, seen and unseen. In many instances, and when necessary, He takes on Himself their physical ailments to grant instant relief from otherwise incurable diseases.

Once, Mrs. Khaparde, wife of Dadasaheb Khaparde of Amraoti, was staying at Shirdi. She heard that her young son had developed high fever and subsequently Bubonic Plague. The terrified mother accosted Baba to seek permission for her Amraoti trip, at which the merciful Master spoke kindly to her, saying, "The sky is beset with clouds, but they will melt and pass off; everything will be smooth and clear." On saying this, He lifted his robe and showed four fully-developed bubos, adding, "See how I have to suffer for My devotees; their difficulties are Mine."

On another occasion, Shirdi Baba suddenly thrust His hand in a fire. A devotee who witnessed this incidence rushed there and pulled Baba away. Much later, Baba explained that a blacksmith's wife, who was working near a furnace, accidentally dropped her child into the fire while in a hurry to respond to her husband's call. Not minding the scorching flames, Baba had willingly burnt His hand to save the innocent child.

Granting relief to suffering devotees is a never ending saga for Divinity.

A student of Sathya Sai Baba was a chronic asthmatic and would frequently suffer from severe attacks. Frustrated, he once put a piece of cloth around the nose of Swami's picture and said, "See how it feels." During the darshan, that day, Swami came straight to the boy and caught his hand firmly. Almost immediately, the merciful Sainath took on

Himself the devotee's asthma attack. Seeing his beloved Lord in pain, the young lad tried to free himself from Sai's grip, but failed. Much to his relief, Baba resumed normal breathing within a few minutes and explained that what would have taken the lad almost two decades as a process of elimination of karma, could be mitigated in a matter of a few minutes if undergone by Divinity instead. True to these words, the boy never suffered from the debilitating attacks ever again.

With utmost happiness, divine embodiments go to great extents to make even the ultimate sacrifice for their devotees. It is said that Shirdi Sai Baba had predicted the death of his devotee, Tatyia, in 1916. When the appointed hour came, Tatyia became severely ill and was expected to die any moment, but events took a strange turn, and the Lord of Shirdi gave up His mortal form instead.

Benevolent Baba is ever lightening our burdens, whether we realize it or not.

Conducive to our spiritual growth and catalyzing our progress toward God, what little pain we experience in our lives is really the leftover, condensed version, of our original destiny.

SAI WISDOM

How ignorant man is! He does not realise that the five elements present in him are the very forms of Divine. It is foolishness on his part to look for God outside ignoring his innate divinity. Divinity is present in every being. The life principle that flows through each and every nerve of the body is verily divine. The life Principle that sustains our body is Prajnana. Hence, it is said, Prajnanam Brahma (Consciousness is God).

Source: Thought for the day, Prashanti Nilayam, April 28, 2007

MIND BOGGLING MIRACLES OF SAI BABA: HOW SAI SAVED THE PRIEST

A priest was once traveling to a distant location. On the way, his flight experienced sudden turbulence and caused instant panic in the hearts of the travelers. A “danger” warning was immediately issued to the passengers.

While the rest of the passengers were frantically conceiving ways and means to save their lives, the priest resorted to prayers. From the bottom of his heart, he prayed for the safety of his fellow-passengers. The prayers drew an immediate response.

Out of thin air, an elderly man clad in white robes and donning a white beard appeared near the priest’s seat. The saintly figure gave a packet of vibhuti and a picture to the priest and vanished as mysteriously as he had appeared. The priest had never seen this person before but thought him to be a saintly figure whose very appearance had quelled the impending danger.

On returning to his church, the priest got the picture enlarged and kept it for display with the fond hope that someone would help him identify his benefactor. Baba had arranged for this as well. An Indian lady soon visited the church and explained to the priest that the mysterious stranger was none other than Shirdi Sai Baba.

DEVOTEES’ EXPERIENCES: MAHASHIVARATRI BLESSINGS

On the auspicious occasion of Mahashivaratri in 1999, I had spent my entire day in prayers. As the night approached, I sat in my meditation room and offered heartfelt prayers, requesting Sai to come and visit me.

Although I had an intense desire to do an all-night vigil, I succumbed to sleep around midnight. When I woke up the next morning, I took myself to task for losing a golden opportunity to spend the night in prayer and reflection.

I also chided Baba for not visiting me as requested. Just as I was chiding Baba, I noticed a big brown drop emerging from the picture of Sathya Sai Baba.

The manifestation of honey was ample proof that Swami had indeed visited me that night.

Little did I realize then that Swami doesn’t need to visit anyone for He is always everywhere at all times, residing in the hearts of one and all.

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. 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

May 2007

Sun., May 06: Easwaramma Day
Sat., May 12: Hanuman Jayanti
Sun., May 13: Mother’s Day

June 2007

Sun., June 17: Father’s Day

July 2007

Sun., July 29: Guru Poornima/Vyasa Poornima

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LORD HANUMAN, THE CHOSEN MESSENGER By The Sai Sandesh Team

In the epic *Ramayana*, there is one hero who is at once endearing, valorous, intelligent, humble, and the very epitome of devotion and loyalty. He, the life-breath of Lord Rama, is none other than Hanuman.

Brihaspati, the preceptor of gods, had an attendant by the name of Punjikasthala. She was cursed to assume the form of a female monkey. The nature of the curse was such that it could be nullified only when she gave birth to an incarnation of Lord Shiva. In accordance with the curse, she was born as Anjana, the wife of Kesari (named for being brave as a lion). As Anjana, she performed intense austerities to appease Lord Shiva. Pleased with her devotion and piety, He granted her the rare boon of being His mother.

The birth

Dashratha, the King of Ayodhya, was given the sacred *payasa* (pudding) by Agni Deva (The God of Fire) in response to his plea for children. The *payasa* was of a divine sort and with its blessings, Lord Rama, along with Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna incarnated in the family of Dashratha. In accordance with divine will, a portion of the *payasa* was snatched by a bird. On its way, the bird dropped the pudding, and Pavana Dev (The God of Wind), delivered this pudding in the hands of Anjana Devi, who was then engaged in worship. As a result of this, Lord Shiva incarnated as Hanuman. As Pavana Dev was instrumental in this birth, he is also known as the god-father of Hanuman. On Anjaneya's (another name for Hanuman) birth, Anjana was freed from her curse and was immediately restored to her heavenly form. As she was leaving, Vayu Putra (the son of wind) questioned her about his future. She assured him that he would never be destroyed and that fruits as ripe as the rising sun would be his food.

Thinking that the glowing sun was his food, the divine child leapt across the sky. As he was nearing the sun, the planet Rahu, who was well-known for causing troubles, complained to Indra about a child trying to eclipse the sun. Hanumanji had almost devoured the sun, when Indra (the King of Devas) struck the child's jaw with a thunderbolt, causing him to fall earthward. Pavana Dev was infuriated on learning of the treatment his god-son had received. With Hanuman on his lap, he immediately retreated to the nether region. As wind departed from the earth, all the creatures were unable to breathe. In order to pacify Pavana Dev, all the gods and goddesses conferred great boons, including the

boon of immortality, on baby Hanuman. The blessings of all the divine dieties made Hanuman invincible and more powerful than any other being.

The curse

As a young child, Hanuman was as naughty as other children, with the exception that his naughtiness was often accompanied by an exhibition of vast powers. Hanumanji would throw mountains as if they were mere pebbles. He would swell to the size of the universe and perform feats that no being could ever dream of. In childish pranks, he would create whirlwinds and disturb the penance of sages. In fear of his great powers, the sages, in collaboration with Lord Brahma, devised a plan. They cursed Hanuman to forget his powers; his powers were to be restored to him only when someone would remind him about his might.

Education

Anjaneya mentally chose the Sun God as his preceptor. He reverently approached the deity with a request to learn scriptures. Surya, the Sun God, agreed but pointed to the fact that it was not possible for him to stop his journey across the sky as that would cause chaos in the world. Hanumanji, the ocean of intelligence, however did not see this as a problem. He assumed a mighty form and concentrated on his lessons while traversing backward. In a record time of sixty hours, Hanumanji had mastered all the scriptures. Pleased with the progress of his divine disciple, Surya declared the period of preceptorship as complete. On being pressed for accepting fees, Surya requested Hanumanji to assist his son, Sugriva, the Monkey King, as a minister and constant companion.

At the feet of Rama

As Hanumanji was passing his days with Sugriva, he once met Lord Rama, when the latter was in a period of exile and was searching for Mother Sita, who was abducted by Ravana. During their search for Sita, Rama and Lakshmana visited the vicinity of Pampa Lake situated at the base of the mountain Risyamukha. Sugriva, along with his ministers was hiding in this region in fear of his brother, Bali. When Rama and Lakshmana arrived, Sugriva suspected that they were sent by his enemy Bali. To ascertain their intent, Sugriva sent Hanuman in the guise of a brahmin. Lord Rama immediately recognized the brahmin as his chosen devotee. Hanuman too reverentially clasped Rama's feet and was overjoyed.

Rama dispatched the monkey army, headed by Hanuman, to search for Sita. In order to find Mother Sita, Hanuman had to cross the Indian Ocean. For the sake of his master, Hanuman assumed a mighty form and leapt across the entire Indian Ocean, as if in child's play. On reaching Lanka, he created havoc in the demon city, uprooted trees, destroyed demons, consoled Mother Sita, and burnt the entire city of Lanka. Undaunted by the demon hosts, Hanuman returned in the service of his master with a message from the divine mother.

In the days that followed, there was a terrifying war between Lord Rama and the demons. Hanumanji played a major role in this war and destroyed the demons, as if they were mere flies. His exploits in the holy war are so expansive that millions of books have not been able to recite his glory in all completeness.

On one occasion Lakshmana, Rama's younger brother, was wounded by a poisonous spear that rendered him unconscious. The antidote to this injury was a herb that could be found only in the Himalayan region.

Hanumanji flew from Lanka to the Himalayas in search of the herb; on reaching the Himalayas, he located the mountain but could not find the right herb. In order to save time, he lifted the entire mountain and brought it to Lakshmana's rescue. It was with Hanuman's help that Rama overcame the terrifying demons of Lanka and ultimately succeeded in rescuing Mother Sita. Mother Sita was so pleased with his loyalty that she blessed him with infinite powers.

His devotion

There has never been a devotee as devoted and dear to the Lord as Anjaneya. Ceaslessly chanting Rama's name, Hanuman accomplished the most impossible feats. His devotion was so great that the Lord himself used to feel indebted to him. Hanuman's entire life is an offering to his master.

Once, Hanuman witnessed Mother Sita wearing the sacred saffron mark on her forehead. He immediately questioned her about the practice. The mother indicated that she wore the mark so that her husband could enjoy a long and healthy life.

Hanumanji immediately smeared his entire body with saffron powder. When Rama questioned Hanuman about this, he responded saying that if the mother's little mark could give Rama a long life, smearing the same all over his body

would give Rama a much, much longer life. Anjaneya's child-like devotion brought tears to the Lord's eye.

There is another incidence that demonstrates Hanuman's devotion. On returning from Lanka, Rama was distributing gifts to all His subjects, to the exception of Hanuman.

Mother Sita questioned this discrimination. The all-knowing Lord responded saying that to Hanuman, these gifts were too trivial. He sought only the Lord and nothing else. Not satisfied at this, the mother gifted Hanuman with a pearl necklace.

Immediately, Hanumanji started biting the pearl into pieces and discarded them as if they were mere pebbles. All those witnessing the incidence were dumbfounded and scolded Anjaneya for wasting the precious necklace.

To their questions, Hanuman responded that he was trying to find his Rama in those pearls and without His presence those pearls were mere dust to him. Hanumanji immediately tore his chest and to the astonishment of all present, they saw in his heart the images of Rama and Sita, along with Lakshmana.

Hanumanji's role was not restricted to the Ramayana period. He was as active during the Mahabharata and even assisted Krishna and Arjuna in the war against evil forces. He is so pure and powerful that evil forces flee at the very sound of his name.

When Lord Rama was departing to His divine realm, he asked Anjaneya to stay back and protect His devotees. Hanumanji, in place of liberation, chose the boon of staying on earth till the name of God is chanted. Hanumanji is still actively assisting pure devotees of God.

Lord Hanuman symbolizes strength and victory and it is said that wherever there is Hanuman, there is victory.

***Sai Sandesh* wants to hear from you!**

Please e-mail suggestions, questions, feedback, articles, and experiences to saisandesh@omsaimandir.org

WORDS OF THE WISE ADAPTED FROM OKA CHINNA KATHA

In a king's court, ministers, pundits and artists were all seated in their respective places. The king and his ministers had earned name and fame for their wit and wisdom. One day a sage entered the court. He was given a warm welcome with all honor due to him.

The king asked him, "Oh revered one! May I know what brings you here? We are very happy on account of your presence here today." The sage replied, "Oh King, your court is reputed for its wit and wisdom. I have brought three beautiful dolls and I would like to have an assessment and evaluation of these dolls done by your ministers." He presented to the king the three dolls. The king called his senior most minister and gave him the dolls for examination and evaluation. The minister just looked once at the dolls and commanded a royal messenger to fetch him a thin steel-wire.

The minister inserted the wire into the right ear of one of the dolls. The wire came out of the left ear. He kept it aside. He took up another doll and once again passed the wire into its right ear. It came out of the mouth of the doll. He kept that doll in one place. He took up the third doll and inserted the wire, it neither came out of the other ear nor from the mouth.

The king and the courtiers were eagerly watching the scene. The minister paying his tributes to the sage said, "Oh revered one." Of the three dolls, the third one is the best. The three dolls actually are symbolic of three types of listening. There are three types of listeners, in the world. The first type listen to every word, only to pass it out from the other ear. The second type listen well, remember it well only to speak out all that they have heard. The third type listen, retain everything they have heard and treasure it up in their hearts. They are the best type of listeners." The sage congratulated the king and the minister on the successful evaluation of the dolls and blessing them both, left the court.

'Shravanam' is the first and the foremost among the nine types of devotion. Having heard the words of the wise, we should try to revolve their meaning and message in our minds and put them into practise to elevate our lives.

MAY EVENTS

EASWARAMMA DAY

Suprabhatam: 7.45 AM
Kakad Arati: 8.00 AM
Abhishekam: 9.00 AM
Sai Sahasranamavali: 10.00 AM
Madhyana Arati: 12.00 PM
Special Bhajans: 2.00 PM to 3.00 PM
Dhoop Arati: 6.00 PM
Sheja Arati: 8.00 PM

All are welcome.

HANUMAN JAYANTI

Hanuman Jayanti will be celebrated by chanting Hanuman Chalisa 108 times.

The prayers will start at 9.00 AM in the morning and will go until 6.00 PM.

All are welcome.

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feedback, articles, and experiences to
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