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June 2007

# SAI SANDESH

The official monthly newsletter of

## OM SAI MANDIR

A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION



Love All. Serve All.

Volume 4, Issue 6



## 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.



## YOU ARE NOT WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

The quest to understand the secrets of the universe--and hopefully get a glimpse of the divine glory thereby--has been an eternal one. From the very beginning of time, the human race has made countless attempts to understand the purpose and origin of creation.

Yet, after the collective inquiry of billions, man does not have the answer to a simple question: Who am I? When asked, most give vague answers, such as "I am Tom," or "I am Lakshmi," or "I am a doctor," or "I am a father" .... The truth, however, is that all of these answers fall short and do not offer a plausible explanation or describe man's true identity. If I am Tom, what happens to me after death? Do I cease to exist? Am I erased from the canvas of the universe? If I am a doctor, what happens to me when I retire? Do I cease to be? If I am a father, what happens when my son disowns me? Do I lose identity? No, the role of a father was relative and identified me only as long as the son was in existence, but that's not who I really am. The true "I" does not change based on temporary associations we bring upon ourselves.

Earthly associations often mislead us into identifying ourselves with bodies, professions, roles, or emotions. When faced with emotions (disappointment, fear, defeat, etc.), we call ourselves "failures," "sinners," "disappointments" and what not. We place such strong faith in our own judgment that these labels soon transform into a belief of what we perceive as our own reality. The truth is that we are none of these. When we make a statement like "this is my book," we are essentially declaring that the book is separate from us. Similarly, when we say "this is my body," who is the "my" we are referring to. It is obvious that the "my" is different from the body. So, if I am not my body or one of the temporary states, who exactly am I?

An ocean's wave appears to take on a form, but the reality of the wave is its original constitution: water. As the wave approaches the shore, its form slowly dissolves and it becomes one with the ocean. Our perceptions about ourselves and others can be likened to the forms assumed by waves. They are temporary illusions. As these "form waves" approach the shore of Divinity, false egos and imaginary personalities disappear and reveal their real pristine nature, the true self--God's own image.

Another example: If we fill a red bottle with water, does the water become red? What if the same were filled in a blue

bottle? Nay, the composition of water, its essence, will not change no matter what container is used to hold it. Our true being is like that. It may be molded in different bodies, but its reality is unchanged, unaffected, and untainted. As long as the bottle is closed with the seal of body-consciousness, one is limited to being a little self. The moment the ignorance is removed, the space within the bottle becomes one with the universal space. Self realization is like that. It is the realization that our spirit is one with God.

During the process of life, our bodies undergo numerous changes and we are subjected to processes like childhood, youth, and old age, and opposites, such as pain, pleasure, health, disease, heat, cold, etc. While the body is experiencing these changes, the spirit remains unchanged. It is like a movie screen. Many images are projected on the screen, but the screen itself does not undergo any change. If we learn to identify ourselves with the spirit and disassociate with the body, we, too, will not feel any sorrow. Take the example of Prahlada. When he was tortured at the hands of terrifying demons, he resorted to the ceaseless chanting of the divine name. The result was that he could enjoy bliss despite the pain he was being subjected to.

Unfortunately, we often sway like a pendulum from joy to sorrow. If only we keep steady and hold on to our own reality, external circumstances will cease to hold power over us. We are not helpless or weak. Within us is a vast storehouse of power: God. Why should we give room to weakness or sorrow when our *true self* is all-powerful. If only we were to tap into our inner strength, we could actually control situations and not vice versa.

So, if we are nothing but God, why aren't we able to realize it? Swami often answers this with an illustration: A man lost a needle in his own house, but went outside to search for it. Our search for our true identity is like that. We attempt to find happiness outside, when all bliss is within us. It is only when we undertake *sādhanā* (spiritual practices) and turn our vision Godward (inward) that we can discover our true identity.

Our body is like a wave in the ocean of God. So long as it retains individuality, it remains insignificant, but the moment it merges with the ocean, it becomes a mighty power. Oh children of God, wake up! You are not any of the imaginary labels you have painted on your real self. You are a child of God, His own image.

## MIND BOGGLING MIRACLES OF SAI BABA: SAI'S OMNIPRESENCE

An enthusiastic group of youth-devotees approached Swami to request His presence at a function that was to be held millions of miles away from Puttapparthi. The merciful Lord agreed and asked the youth to continue with the preparations.

As the day of the function arrived, there was rising anxiety about Swami's arrival and all wondered how and when He would come. The performance had started and yet Swami was nowhere to be seen. They were disappointed but continued with the program as they had already dedicated the same to Swami.

After the event, when they were browsing through the pictures that had been taken on that day, they found not one but seven gigantic forms of Swami all across the hall. The miracle brought tears to their eyes and they realized Swami's power and omnipresence.

### DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES: HOW SAI HELPS HIS CHILDREN

When I was a student, Thursdays and Sundays were always reserved for Sai. One chilly Thursday, despite a serious illness, I visited the temple to perform seva. A group of devotees were discussing Baba's stories after the bhajans and I couldn't resist the temptation of joining in. It was almost 11.00 PM and my roommate who happened to visit the temple that day took me to task for neglecting my health. I asked him to have faith in Baba.

The winter was at its peak and there was hardly anyone on the road that night. My friend chided me yet again for being so careless with my health, especially since the buses were not running on schedule that night. While we were waiting for our bus, a white car suddenly came to a screeching halt. The occupant of the car, a young man in his early 20's, approached us and asked us if we wanted a ride. My roommate was so shocked to hear the offer, he almost fainted. We had traveled through that route almost every single day and no one had ever offered us a ride. Why that night?

The young man was wearing a saffron tilak, a holy mark worn by devotees of God. We hesitatingly agreed to accept the ride but were pleasantly surprised to learn that he was a fellow-student at our university. It was a strange coincidence considering the fact that we had never met each other before--even stranger was the fact that we never saw him after that day. Sai leelas are very strange indeed.

## 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

#### June 2007

Sun., June 17: Father's Day

#### July 2007

Sun., July 29: Guru Poornima/Vyasa Poornima

#### August 2007

Mon., August 27: Onam  
Tue., August 28: Raksha Bandhan/Rakhi Poornima

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## THE DIVINE LIFE OF SRI CHAITANYA MÄHÄPRABHU BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

Lord Krishna, in the form of Sri Chaitanya Mähäprabhuji, ushered *Kaliyugä* (Age of Darkness) into an age where the divine nectar of God's name would be sufficient to grant liberation even to the most sinful of men. Chaitanya initiated mankind into the easiest and most potent of all *sädhanäs* (spiritual practices): *näma smarana* (contemplation of the divine name).

On the full moon night of February 04, 1486 A.D., Sri Mähäprabhuji was born to holy parents, Jagannäth Misrä (Purandar Misrä) and Sachi Devi, both pious Brahmins residing at Nadia (Nabadwip), seventy five miles north of Calcutta. The divine qualities of the newborn child were not hidden from great men of the village and he was named Viswambar. He was also known as Nimai (derived from the Neem tree), Gaur, and Gaurangä (fair-complexioned). The child would cry ceaselessly but would stop if the name of Sri Hari was chanted with devotion. For this reason, the house of Gaurangä would constantly reverberate with the recitation of Hari's name.

Gaurangä was a child prodigy. Within a short time of his schooling under Vasudev Sarvabhauma, he mastered all forms of learning. At the age of sixteen, he had gained recognition as a scholar par excellence and his intellectual powers were feared and admired by scholars far and wide. During the course of his education, Chaitanya lost his father. He married the daughter of Vallabhächäryä but lost her to a snake bite. He was then forced to marry Vishnupriyä.

While on a pilgrimage to Gayä, the young saint was initiated into the divine path by Isvar Puri, a *sänyäsin* of the Mädhavächärya order. This was a turning point in the lad's life and all his time was now spent in the chanting of Krishna's divine name. While constantly chanting the divine name, he would often swoon in ecstasy or dance with tear-filled eyes. In the blissful, God-intoxicated state, Chaitanya would urge his guru to initiate him into the mysteries of the *prema rasa* (divine love) of Rädhä.

Nityänanda (Nitäi), a Brahmin by birth, had renounced the world at the age of twelve and was on a constant quest to find Lord Krishna. By divine providence, Gaurangä discovered Nitäi and took him under his care. Together, the duo would lead local residents in *sankirtan* (group singing of the divine name), as a result of which the area would constant-

ly resound with the sweetness of Krishna's name. It is said that the mere touch or conversation with Chaitanya was sufficient to send even the most ordinary soul into the highest state of *samädhi* (transcendental state).

At the young age of twenty-four, Gourangä resorted to *sanyäsa* and assumed the name of Krishna Chaitanya. He dedicated the rest of his life for the welfare and emancipation of humanity. This act was like a thunderbolt on the tender heart of his loving mother, but Chaitanya managed to console her and continued with his spiritual quest with an ever-increasing zeal. Her tears did not dissuade him from his undertaking, but despite adopting *sanyäsa*, Chaitanya always respected and loved his mother.

The *sanyäsa* of Gourangä was of the highest order and the extent of his dispassion was evident by the fact that he never entertained the company of women or the rich and forsook material comforts completely.

It was Chaitanya who rejuvenated the Vaishnava principles and tirelessly explained the precepts to thousands of devotees, prominent among which were Nityänanda, Sanätan, Rupa, Swarup Dämodar, Advaitächarya, Sribas, Haridäs, Muräri, Gadädhara, etc.

His compassion was not restricted to the noble ones. In the village there were two brothers, Jagai and Madhai, who were considered irreparable sinners of the worst order. These were individuals who had committed the worst of sin. Despite their heinous crimes, Chaitanya did not abandon them, but rather instructed his followers to chant the divine name near the tent of these two brothers. Nityänanda led the procession and on reaching the residence of the two brothers requested them to chant the divine name of Sri Krishna.

This inflamed Madhai who struck the renunciate, causing blood to flow profusely. As Madhai was about to make another strike, Jagai held his hand and forbade him from attacking a *sanyäsin*. The Mähäprabhu arrived on the scene immediately and with his own cloth nursed the wound of his beloved disciple. Next, he hugged Jagai for preventing the attack. Almost immediately, Jagai fell into a trance.

On seeing this miracle, Madhai realized his folly and sought forgiveness from the two bright saints. Nityānanda hugged Madhai and the latter, too, fell into a trance. The holy association, though momentary, had transformed the two brothers completely. They had transmuted to a saintly state.

The association with Chaitanya was very contagious. Everyone who came in contact with him would immediately bathe in the divine nectar of Krishna's bliss. Once, Gourangā accosted a washerman and asked him to chant "Hari Bol". Fearing that the young sage would charge for this benediction, the laborer refused. He said he was a poor man who had to continue beating the cloth, his only source of sustenance. Mahāprabhuji was adamant, however, and offered to do the washing instead. The washerman relented finally and said "Hari Bol". This was very delightful and he continued chanting the name in a divine state of ecstasy. When his wife arrived there, she was surprised to see the spectacle and thinking that her husband was possessed, she sought the help of local villagers. Most were afraid of this strange behavior but one among them made a bold move and tried to hold the washerman. This man, too, was transported to bliss and he started chanting "Hari Bol". Within moments, the entire village was chanting the name with intense fervor.

Before settling at Puri, Gaurangā had visited many holy places. At Puri, he would conduct daily bhajans and discourse on religious matters. Once, a strange miracle happened. During the car festival, the car of Jagannath did not move despite the combined effort of millions of devotees and even gigantic elephants. Just then, Chaitanya happened to come there. He touched the car with his head and, lo, wonder of wonders, the car started moving.

Chaitanya performed many such miracles. There is an instance where he healed the leprosy of a devoted Brahmin by the name of Vasudeva. Vasudeva was suffering from an advanced stage of the disease. When Chaitanya was visiting the temple of Kurma at Jagannath, this brahmin made an attempt to secure his darshan. When he arrived at the temple, however, he learnt that the master had left the place. This news broke his heart and he fainted with devotional fervor. Immediately, Chaitanya arrived on the scene and hugged this humble devotee. The leprosy vanished at once.

During his travails, Sri Chaitanya converted many non-believers into staunch devotees of the Lord. When Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, a well-known *vedāntic* scholar, witnessed Gaurangā faint in an attempt to hug the idol of Lord Krishna, he took the young saint to his own house. The *vedāntic* scholar was very proud of his learning and thought Chaitanya to be an uncontrolled young man. He

made a futile attempt to convert the great sage into a scholarly proponent of *vedānta*. Chaitanya was a patient disciple and heard all that the self-proclaimed master had to say. It was time to break the pride of false learning, however, and Māhāprabhuji surprised his preceptor by explaining Sanskrit verses in great detail. When the guru was humbled, Gaurangā hugged the scholar with love and instantly sent the guru in *samādhi*. The humbled master then fell at the feet of his great pupil and begged for his blessings. In this manner, Chaitanya humbled many scholars and initiated them to the secrets of devotion.

Chaitanya had given many hints of his divinity, including giving a vision of his six-handed form (signifying his oneness with Rama and Krishna) to many. After teaching millions of followers the treasure of chanting the divine name, Gaurangā merged with his absolute form on June 14, 1533.

## SAI WISDOM

The one effective way to conquer all sources of physical and mental disease and debility is awareness of one's atmic reality. That will bring about an upsurge of love and light, for, when one recognizes that one is the atma, one cognizes the same atma in all. He shares the joy and grief of all and partakes of the strength and weakness of all. He sees God in everyone. Every act will be a pure, sincere and sacred offering to God. When one yearns for the happiness and prosperity of all mankind, one is blessed with the wisdom and strength to mark out the way and lead men towards it.

Source: Thought for the day, Prashanti Nilayam, May 30, 2007

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

Please e-mail suggestions, questions, feedback, articles, and experiences to [saisandesh@omsaimandir.org](mailto:saisandesh@omsaimandir.org)

## THE PRACTICE OF DHARMA ADAPTED FROM CHINNA KATHA II, 143

Prahlad was not only a devotee of Lord Narayana but also a very righteous and bountiful king. He would never say no to anyone who approached him for a favor, gift, or help.

Once, Indra intending to test Prahlad, came to him in the guise of a brahmin. Prahlad offered his respects to him and asked: "What do you seek of me? How can I make you happy?" The brahmin replied, "Oh king! I want you to gift me your *sheela* (character)." Prahlad said, "So be it. Your wish is fulfilled. I am gifting away my *sheela* to you." The brahmin left the court. No sooner did the brahmin leave, then a charming young man was seen walking away from the royal court. Prahlad questioned him: "Sir! Who are you?" The young man replied, "I am fame. I cannot stay with you any longer since *sheela* has left you." Prahlad permitted him to leave.

A few seconds later, yet another handsome man was seen walking away from the court. Prahlad asked, "May I know who you are?" The man replied, "I am valor. How can I be with you without *sheela* and fame? I am therefore leaving." Prahlad permitted him to leave.

Soon, a charming lady was leaving the court in hurried steps. Prahlad asked her, "Mother, may I know who you are?" "I am *Rajyalakshmi*, the presiding deity of this kingdom." She replied and added, "I can't live here without *sheela*, fame, and valor." Then a lady was seen moving away with tears in her eyes. Prahlad ran towards her and asked, "Mother, who are you?" She said, "Son! I am *Dharma Devatha* (righteousness). I don't have a place where there is no *sheela*, fame, and valor. Even *Rajyalakshmi* has left you."

Prahlad fell at her feet and said, "Mother, I can live without *sheela*, fame, valor, and *Rajyalakshmi*, but I cannot live without you. How can I send you anywhere. It is the duty of the king to protect *dharmā*. Dharma alone is the basis of the entire world. Please stay with me. Do not forsake me."

*Dharma Devatha* agreed to stay. When *Dharma Devatha* agreed to stay, all the others also returned to the court and said: "We cannot exist without *Dharma Devatha*. Let us please be with you."

Lord Indra tested Prahlad only to illustrate to the world the greatness of Prahlad, which was founded only on his practice of *dharmā*.



**Children's Program on  
Easwaramma Day  
Sun., May 06, 2007**

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