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September 2007

SAI SANDESH

The official monthly newsletter of

OM SAI MANDIR

A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION



Love All. Serve All.

Volume 4, Issue 9



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.



THE POWER OF BABA'S WORDS BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

Nature is nothing but the manifestation of a minute fraction of God's infinite glory, and billions of ever-expanding universes are mere atoms when compared to the all-powerful Lord. When such a powerful Lord commands His creation on a course of action, it cannot but fulfill that order with all humility and reverence.

The might and majesty of an avatar cannot be comprehended by human intelligence; it can only be experienced. During their physical incarnation, avatars perform countless deeds that are considered miracles in the mortal realm, but in reality they are visible manifestations of divine sankalpa (will). This will is so powerful it can alter even the writ of providence and, when necessary, overrule otherwise unalterable cosmic laws. The warmth of sincere devotion can melt God's butter-soft heart in an instant, and in response to a devotee's plea the Lord becomes like a servitor, willing to extend any service possible. When the call is sincere, He will alter even destiny and rescue devotees from sorrow. This has been the experience of innumerable devotees.

Once, a mother-in-law was fortunate enough to experience this grace. She was a pious lady who had a big family with many sons and daughter-in-laws. Despite experiencing all forms of happiness, she was not at peace, for none of her children were able to become parents. She visited Puttapparthi with utmost reverence and placed her sorrow at the feet of the Lord of Parthi. He heard her request with compassion but explained that none of her family members were destined to become parents-that was their fate. She was disheartened but she firmly held Sai's feet and with tear-filled eyes begged Him to intercede. Swami was moved and asked if she believed in Him. She calmly said that His will was supreme and that He could alter destiny itself, if He so willed. Swami was touched by her faith and blessed her. The following year, she came with beautiful grand children.

During the Shirdi Sai Avatar, a devotee brought several seeds to Shirdi. It was his intense desire to plant trees near Dwarakamai. Baba was reluctant, however, and refused to accede. As time passed, the seeds dried and became incapable of germinating. The devotee was unable to bear his beloved Sai's refusal. Day and night, he was suffering in anguish. Sainath was unable to see His devotee suffer in this manner and called him to His presence. Baba asked him to quit worrying and also ordered him to plant the dried seeds with faith. He declared that even though the seeds had dried, they would germinate into beautiful plants-and they did.

During another instance, Baba's devotee, Shama, was bitten by a snake. Frightened by the imminent danger, Shama immediately rushed to His beloved Sai who uttered the following words: "Oh vile bhaturdya (priest), do not climb up. Beware if you do so. Go get away, come down." Shama was disheartened to think that the words were uttered at him, but in reality they were Sai's antidote to the poison. It was a direct command ordering the poison to stop rising. Shama recovered completely. On another occasion, Shirdi witnessed a terrifying storm that threatened to devour the entire village. All its inhabitants rushed to their beloved Lord Sai, who in His utmost mercy came to their rescue. His simple words, "Oh, stop; calm your fury," were sufficient to quell the furious storm in moments.

God is so merciful, He cannot but run for His devotees. He is like the hard-working mother who is always busy performing routine household-in His case, cosmic-duties. Despite her burdens, the mother always provides for the children's needs and keeps a watchful eye on them. The children may not know or realize this. When they are safe or at play, she continues performing her chores, but if a child starts crying inconsolably, she will leave everything and run to console her darling. Similarly, God, who bears the love of a thousand mothers, rushes to respond to His children's calls. His simple words will allay all fears and fulfill devotees' wishes.

SAI WISDOM

When one's inner reactions and agitations are sublimated, all that one experiences through the senses, the mind and the intellect take on a divine lustre and reveal their divine core. When man's heart is full of love, he can be in the world and yet be unaffected by it. All activity will then be for the Almighty, for His Grace, and through His will.

Source: Thought for the day, Prashanti Nilayam, September 03, 2007

MIND BOGGLING MIRACLES OF SAI BABA: BABA GIVES BALAJI DARSHAN TO ARCHAKAS AT TIRUPATHI

The Archakas of Tirupati have the habit of looking at the feet of Balaji Bhagwan and taking Padanamaskar before Suprabhatam (where God is woken up). They open their eyes only after this procedure.

One of the senior most archakas suddenly had a feeling one day that even after having served the Lord for 40 years, he was not fortunate enough to have his darshan. He prayed emotionally that if he had been sincere in his duty towards the lord, then the Lord must some day grant His darshan.

The next day, as usual when the archakas went into the sanctum sanctorum for padanamaskar, the senior most archaka went in first. As he reached for the feet of the idol, his hands could feel the moist feet of a human body.

(Continued on Page 7)

DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES: WHY FEAR WHEN I AM HERE

An old knee injury had resulted in a serious tear of my left knee's cartilage (Meniscus). A surgery was recommended but due to some lapse at my end, I had not undergone the treatment. The excruciating pain from the injury relapsed after a period of ten years and I fell to the ground, unable to stand or move. It was almost as if I had lost one leg.

I wasn't covered under a health insurance plan and Sai's grace was the only insurance I could rely on. As I helplessly looked at Swami's picture, He diverted my eyes to a car sticker that had the picture of Shirdi Sai Baba with abhaya hasta mudra (the blessing hand gesture granting freedom from fear). I could distinctly read what was written under the picture. The words were "Why fear when I am here."

As soon as I saw the sticker a miracle happened and as I tried to stand back on my feet I did not experience the slightest pain or discomfort. I have been pain free ever since.

Sri Rudra Abhishekam - Daily

For the welfare of humanity, Sri Rudra Abhishekam is being performed eleven times a day for a period of 121 days. The prayers start at 8.00 A.M. and continue until 11.30 A.M. All are welcome to participate.

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

September 2007

Tue., September 04: Sri Krishna Janmashtami/Krishnashtami
Sat., September 15: Ganesh Chaturthi/Siddhivinayak Chowthi
Fri., September 28: Shirdi Sai Baba's Birthday

October 2007

Fri., October 12: Devi Navaratri Begins
Fri., October 19: Durgashtami
Sun., October 21: Vijaydashmi/Dussehra
Mon., October 29: Karwa Chauth

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SRI RAGHAVENDRA SWAMI OF MANTRALAYA BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM



The downfall of the Vijayanagar kingdom was responsible for the southward migration of many scholars and Vedic experts, who until then were thriving on the royal treasury. Thimmanna Bhatta was one such scholar who was forced to migrate.

Within a short period of time, Thimmanna married Gopikamba and the couple had two children. The third was born in 1595 and was named Venkatanatha (Venkanna Bhatta). He was a child prodigy, a brilliant student from the very beginning. Elders would often be dumbfounded when the little boy would ask questions of profound spiritual significance. He impressed even his scholarly father by asking questions such as how a small object like OM could capture the infinite greatness of God.

While the lad was still very young, his father died and his brother assumed responsibility for his upbringing. Venkatanatha's initial schooling was under the care of his brother-in-law Lakshminarasimhacharya of Madurai. Venkatanatha was soon married to the pious Saraswati.

During the course of his studies under Sundhindra Tirtha, Venkatanatha attained proficiency in Dvaita Vedanta, advanced grammar, and other shastras. With his astute intelligence, the young lad would often impress scholars of the time and vanquish them in intense debates. In 1620, the sage defeated Venkatesvara Dikshita, a famous scholar of the Tanjoure court. Impressed by his rare scholarship and debating skills, the guru aptly named him Mahabhashya Ventanathacharya.

The scholar-saint was soon blessed with a beautiful son who was named Lakshminarayana. Even though he was bearing the burden of his growing family, Venkatanatha chose to subsist only on what came to him unasked and unsought, and despite his musical prowess and unmatched scholarship, the saint spent most of his life in poverty. Their state was such that they could not afford even a drop of oil and new clothes were not adorned for years at a stretch. Yet, despite abject poverty the family never lost equanimity and continued worshipping God with utmost zeal. Venkatanatha was indeed the epitome of true devotion and sacrifice.

Once, Venkatanatha happened to attend a wedding. Seeing

his simple dress, his hosts thought him to be poor and did not treat him with the customary respect that is due to a guest, especially one of his spiritual stature. Thinking that he had come to feast on free food, they asked him to earn the meal by grinding sandalwood paste. Equanimity and complete surrender are the hallmark of devotion and Venkatanatha readily allowed his hosts to treat him as they pleased. He started to grind the paste while reciting Vedic hymns. When the paste was applied by brahmins attending the function, they experienced an intense burning sensation.

When the matter was investigated they discovered that Venkatanatha was unknowingly chanting the Agni Sukta, a Vedic hymn invoking the Lord of Fire. The hosts soon realized their folly and apologized to the compassionate saint. They also requested him to make new paste by chanting Varuna Sukta (invoking the God of Water). This gave immediate relief to the brahmins. Such was the power of mantras chanted by Venkatanatha.

Venkatanatha fell into further poverty as a result of a theft that took place in his house. The thieves looted what little was left in the house and in order to support his family, Venkatanatha was left with no option but to return to Sudhindra Tirtha's care. The guru was at the time seeking out a suitable heir who would run the famed ashram after him. His wise eyes found a suitable successor in Venkatanatha. When the matter was proposed, the latter was torn apart as he had a young wife and a growing family to support. The dilemma was between choosing the welfare of his family and respecting the words of his preceptor. After serious thought, he politely refused to accept the responsibility. The guru knew the power of divine will and was confident that one day the young sage would willingly accept the proposal.

That night Venkatanatha had a divine dream. Vidya Lakshmi (Goddess of Learning) commanded him to continue the glorious tradition of his gurus and the lineage of acharyas to which he belonged. She asked him to shed all material bonds and dedicate himself to the cause of the Lord. The dream also gave hints of him being a divine being who had descended to provide succor to millions of devotees. The dream had resolved his dilemma and Venkatanatha managed to convince his wife about his desire to become an ascetic.

The ceremony for sanyasa was to take place on the second day of the bright half of Phalguna Masa in the year Durmati (1621). During the ceremony, Saraswati was required to stay at home. At the last minute, however, she was seized by an intense desire to see her beloved for the last time before he would relinquish all worldly attachments. In a hurry to see her beloved, she did not notice an old and unused well. She fell into it and died instantly but as a result of an untimely death, her spirit became a ghost. Even in that form she rushed to see her husband. On arriving at Tanjore, however, the ceremony was over and Venkatanatha had become a sanyasi, and he had adopted the name of Raghavendra Tirtha. Sri Raghavendra sensed the presence of her spirit even though she was not visible to human eyes. With extreme, but non-attached, compassion he sprinkled some holy water on her. Due the power of his penance and her selfless and dedicated life, she was immediately granted liberation (moksha) from the cycle of births and deaths.

In 1623, Sudhindra Tirtha shed his mortal coil at Anegondi and Raghavendra Tirtha was chosen as the successor for his capable guru's divine mission. He started imparting the right knowledge to one and all and composed numerous works for the benefit of future generations. Apart from his ashram duties, Raghavendra also undertook numerous pilgrimages and visited many centers of learning and religion. At every seat of learning, he spread the message of his beloved Srimadacharya and defeated numerous scholars of opposing doctrines.

Apart from his scholarly feats, Sri Raghavendra Swami had acquired immense spiritual perfection. Once, Swami was on his way from a pilgrimage when he decided to rest under the shade of a tree at Krishnapuram. There he was accosted by a grief-stricken nawab who said he had come to him as a last resort. The nawab had heard of Raghavendra Swami's miracles and had come to seek his help. He had recently lost his young son who had died from a poisonous snake bite. The boy had been buried at a tomb nearby. Guru Raghavendra visited the site and sprinkled holy water from his kamandalu (holy vessel used by mendicants). The boy woke up from the tomb as if he had just woken up from sleep. There are also other recorded instances where the young guru revived the dead.

Once, some scholars were on their way to meet Guru Raghavendra. On the way they noticed a washerman with a load of clothes on his head. They were in need for directions but before asking him for help they debated amongst themselves in Sanskrit whether it would be appropriate to ask for directions from an ignorant person. Surprisingly, the washerman intervened in the conversation and spoke the following words in pure Sanskrit: "If all you want to know

is directions to meet the guru, then I should be able to help you." He then proceeded to give detailed directions in Sanskrit. The scholars were humbled by this phenomenon and proceeded to a river to perform their afternoon sandhya. There, they saw the same washerman and politely asked him in Sanskrit whether the spot was appropriate for the performance of sandhya. The washerman replied, rather crudely, saying, "If you want to speak with me, then use a language that I can understand." It was clear from his response that the man was completely ignorant, let alone a knower of Sanskrit. The conflicting behaviors surprised the scholars but they dismissed them as acts of insanity. After traversing some distance, they again met the same washerman who accosted them and spoke in fluent Sanskrit. He inquired if they needed further help with directions. The scholars were perplexed and ran from the place. When they reached the guru's ashram, they requested a devotee to shed light on what they had just experienced. The latter burst into laughter and asked whether the washerman had the load of clothes on his head when he spoke in Sanskrit. The scholars replied in the affirmative. The devotee then explained that it wasn't the power of the washerman, but rather the power of the clothes that had been discarded by the guru. Even his clothes, though inanimate, had acquired a certain degree of spiritual potency due to their constant association with the saint. The washerman's knowledge of Sanskrit was a direct result of these clothes.

The power of Sri Raghavendra was demonstrated on another occasion as well when Venkanna, an illiterate brahmin boy, came to seek his blessings. Once, when accompanied by his disciples, Raghavendra Swami passed by the lad's village he rushed to the palanquin and fell at the guru's feet. When the guru heard about the boy's pitiable financial condition, he gave him some sacred rice and said, "When you are in real distress and need my help, put this on your head and think of me." The boy tied the blessed rice into a cloth and always carried it with him. Once, Venkanna was relaxing under a tree when he saw a nawab pass by. A stranger came and handed a note to the nawab; unfortunately, both of them were illiterate and needed help reading the letter. Seeing a brahmin boy in the vicinity, they requested him to read the message for them. The boy was in a dilemma. He could not refuse the nawab's order but at the same time, he did not know how to read or write. Finding himself in such an unsolvable predicament, he remembered the consecrated rice and the guru's divine promise. As directed by the saint, Venkanna placed the rice on his head and invoked Sri Raghavendra's grace. With full faith in the divine assurance, he opened the scroll and wonder of wonders, the letters became very clear to him. It was a message to the nawab conveying the news that his wife had delivered a baby boy.

The nawab was thrilled to hear the news and gave the brahmin boy a pearl necklace as a gift. Raghavendra Swami who was then controlling Venkanna's mind was not satisfied with that gift alone and requested the nawab to grant him (Venkanna) a job in his administration. The request pleased the nawab and he granted the requested. Venkanna worked hard and soon rose to the position of the nawab's prime minister.

After performing many miraculous feats, the divine guru decided that it was time for him to take live samadhi. He conveyed the news to his close disciples, who were naturally very devastated. While Raghavendra Swami was waiting for the appropriate time, he once looked at the sky and folded his hands in reverence. Surprised by this act, the disciples requested him to explain the significance of the gesture. Just at that moment, a divine tulsi garland fell around the guru's neck. He then explained that he had seen Sri Krishna Dvaipayana (Veda Vyasa) going in an astral chariot to Vaikuntha. When Raghavendra questioned the heavenly being about when his time would come, the latter held up his index and middle finger three times. This signified two years, two months, and two days. Based on calculations the day happened to be the second day in the dark half of the moon in the Hindu year Virodhikruth.

On the appointed day, Raghavendra Swami called his closest disciples and announced that he would take his Samadhi at Manchale, the spot chosen for his live Brindavana in Mantralaya. This was the same spot where Prahlada had performed a great yagna as a result of which it was sanctified forever. Sri Raghavendra chose a black rock that he said was sanctified by the touch of Rama's feet. Before entering into live Samadhi, Sri Raghavendra visited Manchale's presiding deity. When he went to her temple, she immediately appeared there and urged the guru to ask for a boon. When he expressed his desire to take live samadhi, the devi expressed her concern saying once his Brindavan was established millions would visit him but her temple would then be deserted and forgotten. At this, the saint assured her that a visit to him would not be complete unless the devotees visited her first.

At the allotted hour Sri Raghavendra Swami took the Samadhi live. Thousands of devotees had gathered to witness this divine act. Even though the guru has shed his mortal coil, his presence and grace is felt by millions of devotees worldwide. Innumerable miracles and experiences provide ample testimony to the fact that he is ever-living and always willing to respond to the prayers of his sincere devotees.

(Mind Boggling Miracles of Baba ... continued from Page 4)

As he reached for the feet again and again, the same thing happened. He called out to the other Archakas and told them his experience. The other archakas too experienced the same warmth. For a moment the archakas got agitated and felt that some miscreant would be standing there but who could be so insolent to stand on the lord's idol and that too when the sanctorum was thoroughly checked before being locked. Who could it be? Was it an illusion?.. Just that moment the archaka remembered the prayer that came out of him the day before. A thought flashed through his mind....Was it the Lord himself ?

He hurriedly removed the covering and opened his eyes. What he saw shocked him. He gave out a shriek, hearing which the other archakas also removed their coverings and opened their eyes. A sense of disbelief went through them on what they saw. The idol was gone and Sri Satya Sai Baba was standing in its place. Baba was standing in Chatur Bhuja form (with four arms). Baba was smiling. He looked at the senior most archaka and said--"You wanted to see me. I am here. What do you want?" The archaka was stunned and asked --"When did I ask to see you? In fact, I asked for darshan of my Lord Sri Balaji." Baba replied --"I am your Lord Sri Balaji." Taken aback by this reply the archakas asked again--"How can you be Lord Balaji? You have always said You are Shiva-Shakti Swarupa. How then can you say you are Vaikunthathi-pathi Balaji?" Baba softly replied--"All are one, my dear children. God is one. He manifests in different forms and man worships the form to which he is most attached. All faiths are paths leading to the same goal. Why then do you see the difference?" Baba spoke again--"I have come not to disturb any faith but to confirm everyone in his own faith. I respond to everyone with whatever name you call me. You wanted to see the Lord in form of Balaji and so here I am to fulfill your wish." So saying Bhagwan Sri Satya Sai Baba disappeared and the idol of Bhagwan Balaji was back in its place. Silence prevailed for some time. Later the archakas handed over the administration of the temple temporarily to their juniors and rushed to Puttaparthi.

The next day the they were made to sit in front and as Bhagwan Baba came out for darshan, they sat with eyes glued at Him. As Baba came nearer, their hearts leapt in excitement. Baba maintained a little distance from them, looked sharply in their eyes, and asked --"Today how have you broken the tradition. Every day morning, you look first at my feet and then at my physical frame. Today you are looking at my face first without even taking padnamaskar." As the archakas heard this, they fell at Baba's feet. Baba took them to the interview room and spoke for a long time.

Source: http://www.geocities.com/sai_ram108/mira9.htm

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