



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.

Jan 2008

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Scriptures had proclaimed 2007 to be Sarvajith (all-conquering year). During His Ugadi discourse on March 21, 2007, Swami declared that all of humanity's noble aspirations and divine undertakings could be easily fulfilled during 2007, and all activities initiated during the year were bound to be successful. How prophetic! 2007 was indeed the year during which Om Sai Mandir was able to successfully accomplish many divine projects.

Babas' statues have arrived!

After more than four years of intense efforts and numerous visits to India, two life-size statues of Shirdi Sai Baba and Sathya Sai Baba have finally been installed at the temple. The prana prathistha/sthapna and unveiling ceremonies were performed on a grand scale on November 23, 2007, Swami's 82nd birthday. Their beauty and radiance surpasses all human description and cannot be adequately put into words. All are welcome to take Sai's darshan and blessings.

Rudra Abhishekam

Yet another divine task was initiated on June 11, 2007. On this holy Ekadashi day (eleventh day of Hindu calendar), we started performing Rudra Abhishekam eleven times daily. The prayer was initially scheduled for a period of 121 days, but after experiencing intense energy, divine vibrations, miracles, and devotees' enthusiasm and participation, we have decided to continue performing the abhishekam indefinitely. It is being performed from 8.30 AM to 11.30 AM every single day.

Sri Viswamji's divine visit

His Holiness, Sri, Sri Viswayogi Viswamji Maharaj, who is considered to be the ninth incarnation of Lord Dattatreya visited the temple in 2007. During his visit he blessed the gathering.

Baba performed the balloon miracle again!

Devotees may recall that last year Swami had performed a balloon miracle at Om Sai Mandir. A similar miracle happened this year as well. On November 23, Swami's 82nd birthday, we had decorated the temple's hall with 82 Helium balloons. During the performance of Rudra Abhishekam and during the prana prathistha puja, the balloons started descending and circling around the altar. After circling around the altar (as if doing a reverential pradakshina), of their own accord, the balloons started moving toward Swami's feet. This happened a number of times. Many devotees were present on the occasion and were fortunate to witness and record the miracle. I would like to convey my special thanks to the ITV team, specifically Rene Lobo and Ashok Vyas, for covering the balloon miracle and unveiling ceremonies on their ITV programs.

Swami's blessings find ample expression through the tireless service of our dedicated team of volunteers, a taskforce that has grown remarkably well during 2007. We are thankful to them. I would like to thank our beloved devotees for their continued support.

I cannot but convey special thanks to Sharatchandra and Tulasi Pankanti, Dr. Gabriel Letizia, Ratan Singh, Ravi Vemulapalli, Vijay Komar, and Dr. Sona Bhatnagar for their kind support.

We are very eager to unwrap all the blessings Swami has in store for all of us in 2008. Many exciting initiatives are being planned. For regular updates, be sure to check omsaimandir.org. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Very Happy New Year. May Sai's blessings fill your lives, and the lives of your loved ones, with ever lasting bliss. Jai Sai Ram.

- Gangadhar Rao Chalasani, M.D., President

Om Sai Mandir's 2008 Festival Calendar

January

Tuesday, Jan. 01: New Year's Day Celebrations
 Sunday, Jan. 13: Lodhi/Lohri
 Tuesday, Jan. 15: Makara Sankranti/Pongal
 Saturday, Jan. 26: India's Republic Day

February

Thursday, Feb. 14: Valentine's Day

March

Thursday, Mar. 06: Mahashivaratri
 Friday, Mar. 21: Holi/Holika Poornima

April

Monday, Apr. 07: Ugadi/Gudi Padwa/Cheti Chand
 Sunday, Apr. 13: Tamil New Year
 Monday, Apr. 14:
 1. Sri Ram Navami
 2. Baisakhi
 3. Vishu (Malayali New Year)

May

Tuesday, May. 06: Eshwaramma Day
 Sunday, May. 11: Mother's day
 Friday, May 30: Hanuman Jayanthi

June

Sunday, Jun. 15: Father's Day

July

Friday, Jul. 04: America's Independence Day
 Friday, Jul. 18: Guru Poornima/Vyasa Poornima

August

Friday, Aug. 15: India's Independence Day
 Saturday, Aug. 16: Raksha Bandhan/Rakhi Poornima
 Sunday, Aug. 24: Sri Krishna Janmashtami/Gokulashtami

September

Wednesday, Sept. 03: Ganesh Chaturthi/Siddhi Vinayak Chouthi
 Friday, Sept. 12: Onam
 Sunday, Sept. 28: Shirdi Sai Baba's Birthday
 Tuesday, Sept. 30: Devi Navarathri Begins

October

Tuesday, Oct. 07: Durgashtami
 Thursday, Oct. 09: Vijayadashami/Dussehra/Shirdi Sai Baba's Samadhi Utsav
 Saturday, Oct. 18: Karwa Chouth
 Sunday, Oct 26: Dhanteras
 Tuesday, Oct. 28: Diwali/Deepavali Amaavasya
 Wednesday, Oct. 29: Gujarati New Year
 Thursday, Oct. 30: Bhai Duj/Bhav Big/Bhai Phota

November

Saturday, Nov. 08, 6pm to Sunday, Nov.09, 6pm: Akhanda Bhajans for World Peace
 Thursday, Nov. 13: Karthika Poornima
 Sunday, Nov 16: Ladies' Day
 Sunday, Nov. 23: Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Birthday Celebrations

December

Friday, Dec. 12: Datta Jayanthi
 Wednesday, Dec. 24: Christmas Eve
 Thursday, Dec. 25: Christmas Day Celebrations
 Wednesday, Dec. 31: New Year's Eve Celebrations

Despite our best attempts, events may sometimes not proceed as planned. It is advisable to reconfirm with the temple before scheduling your plans.

THE TWIN QUALITIES OF SHRADDHA (FAITH) & SABURI (PATIENCE)

BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

Sai Baba of Shirdi advocated adherence to what are often considered the twin pillars of spirituality: shraddha and saburi. These qualities are pillars indeed, for, once cultivated, they attract God's grace and ensure a strong foundation for both spiritual and material aspirations.

The power of faith

Sage Narada was once on a quest to test who had the most faith. While on his journey, he came across a very learned pundit. On seeing the divine sage, the pundit asked him what God was doing at that moment. Narada responded by saying that God was passing an elephant through a needle's eye. The learned pundit burst into laughter and ridiculed Narada for making such a naive statement. The sage was unruffled but left the place immediately. During his journeys, he met one great person after another and each ridiculed the sage when he described God's actions.

Finally, the sage met an illiterate cobbler. The latter received his divine guest with utmost reverence. On seeing a sage of such a high order, the host asked him what the Lord was doing at that moment. When Narada recounted God's act of passing a gigantic elephant through a needle's eye, the cobbler burst into tears of joy. He was not educated, but he had intense faith that God could accomplish even the most impossible of feats. Why an elephant, he knew God could pass the entire universe through a needle's eye. Faith can--and does--move mountains, as it happened in the case of Meera.

The devotee-saint Mother Meera was offered a bowl of consecrated pudding, which had been secretly poisoned. With intense faith in the power of God, she drank the pudding and, lo, the poison turned into divine ambrosia. Such was the power of her faith.

The virtue of patience

Mother Sita, Lord Rama's consort, was tested for fourteen long years during their journey through the forests. During her stay in the forest, she was tormented by demons and monsters, subjected to unbearable heat and cold, kidnapped by the demon-king Ravana, and even subjected to the severe test of passing through fire-live. Yet, she did not lose faith in her Lord. It was the result of her intense faith that she could quietly endure unbearable hardships that were thrown her way.

Vivekananda once said that a devotee should be like a mat at the guru's door. Whether or not the guru pours his blessings, the devotee must exhibit utmost surrender and wait on the guru patiently. Baba's own story where he resorted to His guru for a period of twelve years is an excellent example. During these twelve years, the guru did not blow any mantra in Baba's ears nor did he give any instruction in the physical sense, yet, Baba served the guru with all humility and reverence and, though an avatar, performed even the most menial tasks in the service of His guru.

Baba desired that his devotees, too, should practice patience even during trying circumstances.

Harishchandra Pitale came with his wife and ailing son to seek Baba's blessings. The son would often get fits of a very severe intensity. As soon as the lad was brought in Baba's presence, he experienced a severe fit and fell unconscious. The mother of the boy started wailing inconsolably. Baba addressed the mother with kind words: "Wait, have patience. Do not weep like this. Go to your lodging; the boy will regain consciousness soon."

True to Baba's words, the boy regained consciousness within thirty minutes--he was completely cured. When the family came to express gratitude, Baba said, "Shri Hari (God) will always protect the one who has faith and patience."

With faith and patience, one is certain to achieve success in any undertaking. Though sounding like two independent entities, faith and patience, in reality, depend on each other--one cannot survive without the other. A person who has real faith is bound to develop patience and vice versa. One who practices both these qualities will develop many more virtues that will elevate him to the highest level.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 2008

Tuesday, Jan. 01: New Year's Day Celebrations
Sunday, Jan. 13: Lodhi/Lohri
Tuesday, Jan. 15: Makara Sankranti/Pongal
Saturday, Jan. 26: India's Republic Day

February

Thursday, Feb. 14: Valentine's Day

EKADASHA RUDRA ABHISHEKAM

Daily from 8.30 AM to 11.30 AM

Rudra Abhishekam - Daily

For the welfare of humanity, Ekadash Rudra Abhishekam is being performed daily (eleven times) from 8.00 AM to 11.30 AM. All are welcome to attend this historic event.

Devotees' Experiences: Baba Comes to Me on His Own! By Mayank Saxena, New York

To facilitate my meditation and prayers, I wanted my puja room to have a big picture of Swami. I tried to purchase one online but most sites did not have it in stock. Disappointed by the prospect of not being able to procure the picture, I contacted Om Sai Mandir. A volunteer reassured me with the following words: "Maybe Baba wants to surprise you by coming on His own."

The very next day, a devotee who had recently returned from Puttaparthi called the temple. He had a few extra pictures of Swami and called to ask if someone would be interested in having one. The volunteer who answered the phone had just spoken to me the previous day and he immediately requested the devotee to drop off the pictures at the temple.

I couldn't hold my excitement when I realized that Baba had indeed come to me on His own.

As an aspiring actor, I feel as if I have won an Oscar. But this miracle of Swami has so much more significance than that--it will always remain with me.

Share your experiences, feelings, poems, and articles with the readers of Sai Sandesh. If selected, your submissions will be published in the forthcoming issues of Sai Sandesh.

Please send an e-mail to saisandesh@omsaimandir.org

BEACON LIGHTS: THE DETACHMENT OF KING JANAKA

BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

Detachment is considered to be the most important virtue for one who is keen on progressing spiritually, but many have mistaken notions of what constitutes "real" detachment. Some confuse detachment to mean living in the forests away from all worldly contact; others construe it to be an act of running away from duties, difficulties, and sorrows; while still others consider the donning of ochre robes to symbolize the spirit of detachment and renunciation.

These are foolishly-defined notions of detachment, for, real detachment has nothing to do with externals. True detachment is a very high internal state where the aspirant though acting in the world is internally like the lotus flower--not tainted in the least by its surroundings.

Swami often inspires His followers on the path of selfless service with the following words: "Hands in the society, heads in the forest." As He explains, it is not true renunciation if one resorts to the forests but still thinks about worldly things. Even though such a person may appear to have renounced everything in the physical sense, his mind is still hankering after worldly desires and enjoyments. During His lifetime in Shirdi, Baba demonstrated true detachment. He would often watch the show of things around Him without getting affected by them. Women would present dances, men would perform juggling acts, kings would come in processions, and poor folk would act in a manner befitting them. Yet, Baba would disinterestedly watch everything, remaining ever in union with His God-self.

It is very difficult to describe such a high spiritual state in human terms but a few examples from the householder King Janaka's life shed ample light on the virtue of detachment, a quality that is unanimously extolled in every scripture and religious text known to man.

Sage Suka, the son of the great saint Veda Vyasa wanted to resort to the forests to live a life of contemplation. His enlightened father, however, knew that such an act was unnecessary for one who was sincere about spiritual progress. To show him the true path, Sri Vyasa asked his illustrious son to visit Janaka who was the king of Mithila.

This King Janaka was so great that despite ruling a kingdom, he was internally a true renunciate. He once declared: "Even if half of my body were to be honored with sandalwood paste and the other half were to be slashed with a sword, both would be the same to me and I would still be in a state of constant, undisturbed bliss." Although appearing to enjoy outward pleasures, the internal state of King Janaka

was not attached to the royal treatment. He was not in the least disturbed by the six inner enemies characterized as lust, anger, greed, pride, jealousy, and attachment.

When Suka entered the kingdom, he saw pleasures of the most heavenly nature. There were beautiful nymphs, palaces of gold, treasuries filled with precious stones, armies that would put even the greatest of military powers to shame, and countless men and women waiting to serve the king. On witnessing the royal splendor, Sage Suka was disturbed and wondered how King Janaka could be a true renunciate.

Suka finally got an opportunity to meet the great king. Janaka engaged the young sage in a conversation and explained that his intention of resorting to the forest was not necessary, for, he would never be alone in the forest. Wouldn't animals be there? Wouldn't the five elements constituting the universe be present? And, wouldn't his mind ever accompany him wherever he went? The explanation had a deep impact on Sage Suka.

To drive the point further, King Janaka utilized his divine powers to create a fire that started engulfing the entire kingdom. Even though the fire was spreading, the king continued discoursing to Suka, who appeared disturbed at the sight of destruction. All the riches he had seen were being reduced to ashes, but the king was still smiling. Finally, the fire reached very close to the room where the two were seated but King Janaka was still calm. Suka finally understood the significance of the act that though ruling a great kingdom, Janaka was not in the least attached to it. The fire, which was a play of the saintly king, vanished as mysteriously as it appeared.

On another occasion, the king asked a brahmin to move about the kingdom with a pot of oil on his head. He also instructed the guards to cut off the brahmin's head if even one drop of oil were to spill. The brahmin took great care during his journey and was concentrating on the pot to prevent spillage. When he returned, the king explained that he, too, ruled the kingdom in a similar manner. All his thoughts were centered on God and if even for a fraction of a second he diverted his attention, he would be destroyed.

The mind must renounce all thoughts and desires. For the one who is truly detached, the opposite experiences of joy and sorrow, praise and blame, honor and dishonor, pain and pleasure would all appear to be the same and such a person would remain in bliss, undisturbed and unaffected by what happens around him. That is detachment.

MIND BOGGLING MIRACLES OF BABA:

BABA CONTROLS THE ELEMENTS

By The Sai Sandesh Team

Ordering a storm to stop

There was a huge storm in Shirdi at one time. As the situation became dangerous, all human beings and animals living in Shirdi rushed to Baba. The merciful Swami roared at the clouds, saying, "Stop! Calm your fury!" Lo, within a few moments the clouds passed away and things returned to normal.

Taming fire

On another occasion a fire was erupting at Baba's residence. Despite knowing this, Baba was calm and did not bother much about it, but the devotees who were witnessing this were alarmed and requested Baba to intervene. At this, Baba took his stick and started beating it on the ground. With every blow, the flames were coming down and within a few minutes things became normal.

Suspending the ceiling mid-way

Baba demonstrated His power whenever it was necessary. It was a custom in Shirdi that some devotees would sit with Baba during meals. On one such occasion, Baba suddenly looked at the ceiling of the building and said, "Wait!" The astonished devotees noticed the ceiling was collapsing but the moment Sai ordered it to wait, the fall was arrested mid-air.

Many devotees were afraid to continue eating but Baba asked them to finish their meals fearlessly. When everyone was done, Baba asked the followers to step out. He then ordered the ceiling to continue its unfinished work. Within seconds the suspended ceiling disintegrated and fell on the floor with a huge impact.

Saving a child

Once, a small girl, who often addressed Baba as her elder brother, was missing. A frantic search was made throughout the village. She was finally discovered in the village well.

She had accidentally fallen into the well but was found suspended mid-air, as if some invisible force was holding her. It was then that everyone realized that her divine elder brother had responded to her innocent faith and protected her from the crisis.

Sai Sandesh, on behalf of Om Sai Mandir, wishes all its readers a Very Happy and Prosperous New Year. May Sai's blessings always be with all of you!

SAI WISDOM

Man is basically and essentially immortal. But yet he is afraid that he will die. He is Ananda Swaroopa (Embodiment of Bliss), but he weeps and is miserable. He is Shanti Swaroopa (Embodiment of Peace), yet he is burdened with anxiety. This absurd self-deception is the root of the tragedy from which the world is suffering today. The truth has to be driven in to the consciousness of man. The human being is a composite of man, beast and God, and in the inevitable struggle between the three for supremacy, you must ensure that God wins. -- Baba

Source: Thought for the day, Prashanti Nilayam, January 09, 2008

Remembering 2007 ...

Mahashivaratri 2007: Fri, February 16, 2007



Ugadi: Tues, March 20, 2007

The new year for Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Konkani, Kashmiri, and Sindhi devotees was celebrated with a devotional fervor and, of course, traditional delicacies.

Sri Ram Navami 2007: Tue, March 27, 2007



Easwaramma Day 2007: Sun, May 06, 2007**Hanuman Jayanti: Mon, April 02, 2007**

Guru Poornima: Sun, July 29, 2007



The Balloon Miracle

Devotees may recall that last year Swami had performed a balloon miracle at Om Sai Mandir. A similar miracle happened this year as well. On November 23, Swami's 82nd birthday, we had decorated the temple's hall with 82 Helium balloons. During the performance of Rudra Abhishekam and during the prana prathistha puja, the balloons started descending and circling around the altar. After circling around the altar (as if doing a reverential pradakshina), of their own accord, the balloons started moving toward Swami's feet. This happened a number of times. Many devotees were present on the occasion and were fortunate to witness and record the miracle.

We are trying to provide a video of the miracle on our temple's website soon. Be sure to check it out at www.omsaimandir.org

Arrival of Statues: Mon, Nov 19, 2007 to Wed, Nov 21, 2007



Birthday Celebrations & Prana Prathistha/Unveiling Ceremony: Fri, Nov 23, 2007



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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or online: www.omsaimandir.org

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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