



Shraddha. Saburi.

# SAI SANDESH

The Official Monthly Newsletter of

## OM SAI MANDIR

A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION

45-11 Smart Street \* Flushing, NY 11355 \* Tel. (718) 461-0454

[www.omsaimandir.org](http://www.omsaimandir.org) \* [info@omsaimandir.org](mailto:info@omsaimandir.org)

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Love All. Serve All.

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## Baba is Always Watching Us!

By The Sai Sandesh Team

In the Sai Satcharita, Baba has declared the following words:

*"Be wherever you like, do whatever you choose. Remember this well that all that you do is known to me. Seated in your hearts, I am the inner ruler of all. I envelope all the creatures, the movable and immovable world. I am the controller, the wirepuller of the show of this universe. I am the mother, origin of all beings-the harmony of three gunas, the propeller of all senses, the creator, preserver, and destroyer. Nothing will harm him, who turns his attention toward Me, but maya will lash or whip him who forgets Me. All the insects, ants, the visible, movable, and immovable world are My body or form."*

The truth of these words has been experienced by countless devotees who have benefited from Baba's constant protection and grace.

It is easy to be misled into performing wrong actions by assuming that Baba is not physically present and is hence not watching, but this mis-perception is soon proven wrong when Baba manifests His glory. Once, a devotee was visiting Shirdi. After taking Baba's leave, he was misguided by some village rebels into visiting a woman whose morals and reputation were questionable. The meeting started with conversations behind closeted doors but as soon as the man was about to fall into moral perdition, the doors flung open and Baba stood there warning the devotee not to indulge in the immoral act. Baba's timely warning had saved the devotee from what was to be a sure downfall.

A student in Swami's school in Puttparthi was deluded similarly and he gave in to the temptation of smoking. According to the school's code of conduct and Swami's teachings, drinking, smoking, gambling, and other immoral activities are strictly prohibited so this student went to another village and hid behind thick bushes to smoke a cigarette. He came out thinking no one had seen this and joined school as if nothing had happened. When he was attending classes that afternoon, Swami suddenly walked into his class and without losing any time, He said that someone in that class had smoked that day. Everyone was dumbfounded. Swami then looked straight into the eyes of the boy who was guilty and asked him why he had smoked. Out of fear and embarrassment, he denied the allegation. Swami then waved His divine hand and on the blackboard a visual appeared miraculously.

As if watching a movie, all could see in precise detail the

course of events that had occurred that day. Swami waved His hand again and the visual vanished as mysteriously as it appeared. The student was remorseful and immediately fell at Swami's feet. The merciful Lord granted forgiveness but warned everyone that none could escape his all-pervading eyes. Needless to say the warning was well-taken.

Baba uses different ways and means to warn each of us. One gentleman from South India, Bhaskar, for example, was in New York for some official business. He was a staunch devotee of Krishna but one day he, too, was momentarily led astray and decided to visit an unholy place. Just as he was about to enter the place, he saw saffron-clad devotees chanting the holy name "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna". This was enough to help him regain his senses and he realized what a disastrous mistake he was about to perpetrate. This awakening sent chills through his spine and he left the area immediately.

The truth is that Baba is constantly watching us. Through our inner voice, He is constantly asking us to refrain from following bad ways. Unfortunately, most of us prefer to shut this voice out or ignore it completely. Instead of following Baba's guidance, we choose to pursue the whims of our never-ending desires, only to suffer undesirable and often harmful consequences later in life. If we pay attention to God's principles, however, our lives will be filled with bliss and happiness.

### DIVINE WISDOM

All are children of God. He is the sole Lord of mankind. People may seem to differ in their names and forms and in their beliefs and practices. But the source is the One alone. Recognition of this basic truth of oneness is Brahmajnana (Knowledge of the Absolute). This knowledge cannot be gained by merely studying the scriptures and holding metaphysical discussions. What has to be recognised is the truth that every being in the universe is an embodiment of the Supreme. Awareness of the unity that subsumes the diversity is the highest knowledge. -- Baba

Thought for the Day, Prashanti Nilayam, Oct. 01, 2008



## Swami Knows but He Waits for the Right Time!

By The Sai Sandesh Team

It is sheer ignorance to praise ourselves for achievements that materialize on account of God's grace and even greater ignorance to blame God for events that occur due to our mistakes and mis-steps. It is very easy to blame God whom we conceive as hiding behind the curtain of maya. Little do we realize that it is in our hands to raise this curtain and behold the Great Lord of this universe. Yet, we prefer to play helpless victims and lazily await someone else to do it for us. When we are surrounded by difficulties, we pray for succor. God's heart is like a big call center operation. All our requests and prayers are registered instantly but the response manifests when the time is "right". Don't doubt it.

One of Swami's students was suffering from severe asthma. He would often suffer from attacks that would leave him lifeless for hours at a stretch. The student would pray for relief every single day, but to no avail. Swami would just smile and walk away as if He didn't know what the child was asking for. One day, the suffering became unbearable. He was so angry at what he thought was Baba's indifference that he decided to teach Baba a lesson. When he was experiencing an asthmatic attack, he took a piece of cloth and forcefully held it against Baba's portrait. He angrily said, "See how it feels." That day, Baba came straight to the boy and held his hand very tightly. Suddenly, Swami started experiencing an asthma attack. The boy realized that the Lord had taken the illness upon Himself but couldn't do anything to release himself from Baba's grip. (Who can?) He helplessly watched his Lord suffer. Tears rolled from his eyes. Finally, after two minutes, Baba resumed his normal state and smiled. According to the boy's karmas, he was destined to suffer for two decades but since Baba had suffered the pain on his behalf for two minutes, the asthma would never bother him again.

The truth is that Baba knows our pain and suffering, but He waits for the right moment to accomplish ten things at one time. There was a very devoted husband and wife team who came to realize this truth. The wife had taken to a serious illness and was confined to bed in a vegetable-like condition. Despite their grief, they had faith in Baba. One day, Baba told the husband, "I will heal her just like that." Baba then snapped His fingers. The wife's condition did not show any immediate improvement but they did not lose hope. The husband was working a full time job and also managed housework. One morning, he was awakened by some noises from the kitchen. He rushed to see and was surprised to find his wife making coffee. She explained that Baba had appeared in their house that day and He snapped his fingers. With the snap, she was cured. Their patience had paid.

Speaking of patience, I recall the experience of one devotee who was paralyzed for eight long years. This person was so faithful to Baba, he would come for darshan every single day and sit quietly until Swami would leave the hall. For eight years, Swami did not speak with Him nor give Him any assurance or benediction. This did not bother the gentleman, however, for he loved Baba dearly. One day, a group of visitors from the devotee's country arrived to see Swami. Baba invited them for an interview and asked this gentleman to walk to the interview room as well. Some people tried to explain Baba that the devotee was paralyzed and could not move. Baba insisted, however, and ordered sternly, "Get up, walk, and go to the interview room." These words were enough to work out a miracle. For the first time in eight years, the man mustered enough courage to move his legs. He slowly rose from the chair that had almost become a part of his body for eight years and paced a little with fumbling steps. Within seconds he felt as if he had regained his lost vitality and he walked to the interview room like a normal person would. Baba had cured him in the wink of an eye.

Sometimes, Baba's instant response may not serve our best interests so Baba waits for the appropriate moment. There was an ardent follower of Baba who wanted to invite Swami for his daughter's wedding. With a beautifully decorated invitation card, this devotee waited for Swami to come out that day. Much to his disappointment, Baba ignored him cold and walked away as if He had not seen the devotee at all. This indifference was enough to break the tender heart of this innocent man and he burst into uncontrollable grief. "How could my Lord ignore me?" That was the uppermost thought in his mind. After some time, as he was about to leave a volunteer came running to him and said, "Swami is calling you." When he approached Baba, the Lord held his hands and said, "You want me to attend your daughter's wedding, right? Swami knows. Swami knows. Don't lose heart, I did not accept your invitation earlier because at that time it was Rahu Kalam (inauspicious time). Had I accepted, there would be obstacles in the wedding. Now, the time is right."

We have become so accustomed to instant dinners and to the fallacy of making things happen at the push of a button, we have lost the virtue of patience. Our vision is very narrow and we often fail to grasp the big picture that is known only to God. God waits for the right time for a reason, for our own good, for our long-term happiness. Shradha (faith) and Saburi (patience) are the twin foundations of spiritual discipline that Sai Baba advised his followers to practice. The joy is in the journey, not the destination. Have faith, be patient.

## THE ROYAL ROAD TO GOD

### BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

An average man consumes about four meals a day and a minimum of ten to twenty gallons of water every single day. Over a period of one year that would be 1,440 meals and 3,600 to 7,200 gallons of water. Multiply that by the average lifespan of man and the figure becomes astonishingly large. Add to that so many other resources that man uses for the purpose of his daily existence. Yet, in return for all these gifts from God, man does nothing for the welfare of others, and continues living for the fulfillment of his own desires.

Even an earthworm fertilizes the soil in which it lives and thus makes the job of the farmer easier. A tree, though inert, provides shade and fruits to one and all without any distinction or favoritism. Imagine, if these lower forms of life can do so much for others, how much more can man, the true acme of God's creation, do. The glory of selfless service is illustrated by the following story.

In an ancient land, a single mother and her children were living amidst unbearable material hardships. The mother would toil day and night to provide for the little ones and would not hesitate to sacrifice even her blood for the sake of her children. Most of her children would busy themselves in play and merriment and pay very little attention to the mother's hardships. The youngest child, though little in years, could perceive the sincerity of his mother's service and would often try to help her with his little hands. Carrying small pebbles for her, dusting off a few sheets, nursing his siblings—he would perform whatever small tasks he could. The mother would often ask him to go and join other children but he would insist on helping her and say, "My sweet mother, let me to do this small service for your sake. I know it may not be much, but it is my humble effort to be useful."

Even without his help, the mother was capable of fulfilling her obligations, but the little boy's sincere love touched her heart and she would often caress him with utmost affection. Their bond became stronger and due to her blessings, he developed wonderful qualities and gained fair renown worldwide. All his progress was the fruit of his sincerity and selfless service.

This entire creation is like God's home and Sai is like the selfless mother He is forever engaged in taking care of all of us. Despite all the troubles of maintaining the creation (trouble, when viewed from the author's limited vision), He continues to selflessly serve all of us. There is so much work in His house, so many children who need help, so many problems plaguing an otherwise beautiful planet. If we

could just learn something from the little boy and do our bit to serve God, wouldn't He be so touched with these little attempts. They need not be big works or gigantic enterprises; whatever little we can do with our limited capacities. It is the noble feeling that touches God's heart.

It was because of such noble feelings that an old villager, though illiterate, was able to win Vivekananda's grace. Vivekananda would often undertake long and arduous journeys in order to spread the message of God. During one of his tours, he was discoursing in a village. Masses would gather to hear what the young saint had to say and people would often be spellbound for hours together. Vivekananda, too, would discourse tirelessly from dawn to dusk. This went on for several days.

Once, when everyone had left after the discourse, an old man approached Vivekananda and said, "Son, I have been noticing that for the past few days you have been exerting so much energy for our sake. You speak for so many hours so that we may benefit, yet none in the village offered you either food or water. You must be hungry, my child. I may not have much to offer because I am very poor but if you will accept even a few crumbs from me, I would be very grateful to you." It was true. Vivekananda had not eaten for days together and he was quietly suffering for the sake of others. Yet, none could notice this sacrifice except this villager, who was labeled "illiterate". Despite his lack of worldly learning, he was suffused with the spirit of service. Vivekananda was very touched by the man's humble request and accepted his hospitality with utmost reverence. How blessed was the old man to have the opportunity to serve none other than Vivekananda. It was truly the man's spirit of selflessness and service that had won him the rare opportunity to be blessed by such a great saint.

Great saints and sages after years of intense penance and enlightenment often come down to the world of ordinary men to perform selfless service. After all their penance they come to the conclusion that we are all one and that service to man is service to God. How much more fortunate are those individuals who undertake selfless service from the very beginning itself. Such selfless service is indeed the highest form of penance.

Other forms of prayer and sacrifice may or may not win God's grace. May or may not secure enlightenment but selfless acts, no matter how small, will surely win God's grace. Seva is the royal road to God and how fortunate are we that Swami, though his own life, has taught us this maxim. Even God, as Sai Baba, is serving fellow man. What a wonderful lesson for us, what a beautiful royal road to reach God and win His highest grace.

## 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

#### 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

### 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.

## Ganges Worships Baba!

On one occasion, streams of water suddenly started rushing through the streets of Puttaparthi. The water was flowing in an orderly fashion, as if directed by an invisible force. The scared villagers rushed to the gates of Prashanti Nilayam and sought protection from their beloved Lord. Would the Lord ignore a sincere heartfelt plea? Never! Out came the Lord who was smiling and offering abhaya hasta mudra (blessing hand posture assuring fearlessness and protection). He immediately climbed on the rooftop and made signs as if ordering the waters to retract quickly.

He then came to the gates of the ashram and stood there waiting for something to happen. The stream quickly touched His lotus feet at which Swami said, "My Dear Ganga, I hope you are satisfied to have my padnamaskar (rare opportunity to touch God's feet). Now, return quickly. My children are scared." No sooner had Swami said these words, the water began to reverse its path and water levels receded immediately. How glorious is the Lord.

## How Das Ganu was Accepted

Das Ganu was one of the foremost apostles of Shirdi Sai Baba. Through him, Baba's message was spread to countless devotees across several states in India. On one occasion, Das Ganu wanted to visit Prayag, the confluence of holy rivers. Before leaving, Ganu paid a visit to his master, Sai Baba, in order to seek his permission and blessings.

On seeing Ganu, the omniscient Sai said, "Our Prayag is right here." Unable to understand the significance of these words, Das Ganu quietly prostrated at Baba's feet. As soon as he touched Baba's feet, a marvelous miracle manifested. From Baba's toes, streams of water started flowing profusely. The emanating water bathed both Ganu's body and soul and he immediately burst forth into a poetic recitation. This was a mighty miracle, one that none had witnessed before. All were astounded. The realization sunk in that all holy rivers, holy places of pilgrimage, all incarnations and saints, reside constitute but a tiny fraction of Baba's feet. The real greatness of Sai is unknown to us, but we are all very fortunate to have the opportunity to worship and follow Him.

## Share!

**Devotees are requested to share their experiences and stories for the benefit of other individuals. Please e-mail your experiences, articles, and other contributions for Sai Sandesh to [saisandesh@omsaimandir.org](mailto:saisandesh@omsaimandir.org)**

## MY RECENT EXPERIENCES WITH BABA

### By MAYANK SAXENA, NY

A few nights back Baba literally saved our family's home. I put some food in the toaster oven, and went to watch some television. I usually come every two to three minutes to check and make sure the food would not be overcooked or burned. However, this time I fell asleep.

It must have been no more than five minutes. I immediately sprang to my feet and rushed to the kitchen. Just like they show on TV shows, the entire top half of my kitchen was filled with dark-gray smoke. Glancing over towards the toaster oven, to my horror, I saw it was on fire. I rushed towards it, opened it, and gave one blow and the flamed subsided.

I then opened all the doors and windows, and inspected to make sure no damage was done. It took me a good few moments to realize the severity of what had just happened. The toaster oven was on fire. The kitchen was full of dark, poisonous smoke. There was a window drapery just adjacent to the toaster oven. All these were the recipe for the ultimate disaster. And to top it off, I foolishly blew onto the fire, when I should have used our emergency fire extinguisher to combat the blaze.

Then I realized - it was Baba who calmed the fire. The flame was not so grand in size, but not negligible either. It was a good one-half to one feet high. My mere blowing on it instantaneously extinguished the fire. It shrunk in a matter of two seconds, without threatening to flare up. I recalled the incidence in the Sat Charita of how Baba calmed the storm in Shirdi which terrorized and frightened the villagers. The turbulent storm dissipated more and more as Shirdi Baba struck his stick onto the ground - ordering the rain and thunder to disperse.

Baba need not appear in human form to save His devotees. Though He requires no medium nor instrument to help His devotees, His lodge in my heart and home elucidated to me how Baba can pull His devotees out from the jaws of death. Such is the power of Baba. Another experience.

Just two weeks back was the beginning of the new semester at my college. I was anxious as this was my very last semester before graduating, and I wanted to make sure I was enrolled in the final classes required to file for my graduation audit. As with many people's summer - I was involved in traveling overseas and entertaining relatives from abroad. Because of that, I registered late for my classes, but with

Baba's grace, I was accepted into all the classes I needed in order to graduate.

Right before college started, I glanced down at my schedule and realized I had made a terrible mistake. Though I was registered and accepted into all the required classes, I foolishly chose an Economics course for Thursday evening... the day I usually come to volunteer for Baba at the Om Sai Mandir.

I realized how difficult it would be to change to another class. The Economics Department at my college is known for being very bureaucratic and strict in policies, especially to class registration. All my friends said to give up and just take this one class and get done with it.

But how could I? Up to four months or more without serving Baba, it was unfathomable for me.

The next morning I called the Economics Department, and they said I would have to come in next week during advising hours. However, I did not have much time. Each day was another class I would miss. In a desperate attempt, I e-mailed one adviser, hoping they would grant me permission to change.

"Sorry, you have to wait until next semester." I was disheartened. I tried the second. Same response. I tried my luck with the third and last adviser, and came to the same road block. Perhaps Baba destined for me to take this class at this time - after all, everything He does is for our benefit.

Before retreating to my laborious studies, I copied and pasted my desperate plea to the Chair of the Department. I looked towards Baba's picture, sighed, and simply left it to His loving hands. I did not mind - I could always return when I graduated.

When I returned to check my e-mail in a few hours - lo and behold! An expedient response from the Chair! Unbeknown to me, I read the e-mail in utter astonishment. A simple sentence "Okay, you have been granted permission."

The head of one of the most bureaucratic and stringent departments in my college casually granted me permission! It was unheard of!

I laughed. I laughed and looked towards Baba and smiled. He has His own way in aiding His devotees. Though we may think of one means to an end, it is His will that ultimately decides. I could now return and serve my Baba. How happy Baba made me feel. He is always with His devotees.



## 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 ear-ring 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.

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**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](mailto:saisandesh@omsaimandir.org)

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