



Shraddha. Saburi.

# SAI SANDESH

The Official Monthly Newsletter of

## OM SAI MANDIR

A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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Love All. Serve All.

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## Attach Yourself to the Lord, Not to the World

By The Sai Sandesh Team

A remote forest was the habitat for millions of animals, birds, and beasts. It was nature's oasis in the midst of human civilization and it was here that God's creation was thriving to its fullest potential. In that paradise, there was a family of pigeons living with extreme attachment to each other. Their bonds were so strong, the slightest of separation from each other appeared unbearable. The mother would exert herself to the fullest in order to feed her little ones and the father, too, spared no pain in finding the choicest of foods for his family. At night, the father bird would lovingly watch over the mother bird and her little ones as they slept.

When there is abundance of wealth in any form, however, there will always be the notorious few who want to capitalize on the resources and make the best profit possible. A hunter accidentally discovered this otherwise undisturbed forest-it was almost as if he found a gold mine that his competitors had no access to. He lost no time in laying traps and made a lot of profit in doing so.

One day, he came across the tree where these pigeons were spending their time joyously. He laid a cunning trap all over the place and caused a huge fire. The little ones had never seen the bright orange light before and jumped into it out of their curiosity. Much like their human counterparts, they did not heed to their mother's warnings and hastily proceeded to pursue their exploits. Within moments, they were consumed to ashes. This was too much for the mother bird and she, too, jumped into the fire to join her young ones. The father had just returned from the woods, only to find his family to be a heap of ashes. Out of extreme attachment, he, too, jumped into the fire and ended his life.

Attachment is perhaps the most difficult knot to untie when one is on the spiritual path. From people to possessions, we burden ourselves with heavy luggage that makes our spiritual journey harder than it should be. In this constant pursuit to fulfill our desires, we forget the real purpose of life (self realization) and end up as ashes just as the pigeon family did.

King Bharata (the ancestral protagonist from Mahabharata) realized this lesson in his last days. This great king after accomplishing the most impossible of feats, decided to retire in solitude and spend his last days in constant contemplation of God. As he dedicated himself to untiring devotion and ceaseless meditation on God, he started making rapid spiritual progress. Numerous miracles started manifesting in his surroundings and he quickly progressed to higher spiritual realms. Once, this king was passing through a lake when he found an infant deer trapped in an extreme-

ly powerful current of water. Unable to bear this sight, the compassionate sage jumped into the water and rescued the infant deer, whose mother had just died.

He brought it to his hermitage and started nursing it with utmost care. From feeding to bathing, the sage assumed responsibility for all aspects of the deer's welfare. In no time, this king became so fond of his new-found child, he forgot everything about God and the purpose of human life. Meditation had taken a backseat and all he could think of was the deer's welfare. The wheel of time spares none, however, and the all the king could think about was the little deer that he considered to be his precious one. Even when death was approaching the king, who had renounced his family and given up his kingdom, would be engrossed in worrisome thoughts: "What will happen to my little deer?" "Ah, his sweet smile." "Who will give him food and watch over his welfare." "Alas, he will become an orphan!"

Lord Krishna has taught in the Gita that "Whatsoever a man contemplates on during his last moments, he shall reach to that state." All saints and sages therefore advise us to detach from this world and constantly contemplate on God all through our lives. It is only then can we expect to think about Him during our last moments.

Unfortunately, this great sage had disregarded this truth and allowed himself to be deluded by worldly bonds and as he thought about this deer so intensely during his last moments, in the next life he was reborn as a deer. Due to God's grace, he retained the memory of his previous life and continued pursuing his spiritual exercises without attachment to anyone. In the next life, he was reborn as Jada Bharata and went on to become a great sage, a self-realized soul who finally realized the ultimate goal of life.

Swami often illustrates the principle of detachment with the help of a handkerchief. He says to hold the handkerchief for long periods of time takes a lot effort and causes intense pain in the fingers, but to let it go is very easy and painless. In the same way, clinging to attachments and past memories causes us pain but to let go of them is very easy and painless-as easy as dropping the handkerchief.

Baba never advises His devotees to leave family and work and retire to forests. His maxim is "Hands in the society, heads in the forest." We must continue performing our worldly duties and take care of one another. Only the mind must be detached and focused on God as we continuously walk toward the true goal of human life: God realization.

# I Want You to Live for Me By The Sai Sandesh Team

## DIVINE WISDOM

God is no partial benefactor. He gives the fruit from every tree according to the seed. If you had planted the seed of a sour variety of mango, then why lament that the fruit that you got is not sweet? Do good and aspire to get the fruit of goodness - that is pardonable. At least, it is not as bad as doing evil deeds and blaming God for its consequences.

-- Baba

Thought for the Day:

November 30, 2008, Prashanti Nilayam

In times of trials and tribulations, it is natural for us feel dejected and weak. Baba, however, teaches His devotees to be brave despite the worst of odds and battle even the most trying circumstances all the way through.

A devotee of Shirdi Baba, Gopal Narayan Ambedkar, Poona, was suffering from unbearable circumstances. His life had become extremely painful and no matter what he tried, extreme sorrow just did not appear to leave his life. He tried many remedies and would visit Baba every year to seek His divine intervention. Every time he would plead his tale, The Lord would urge him to have faith and to be patient.

In 1916, however, his cup of sorrow was overflowing and unable to bear the pangs of suffering, he decided to end his life in Baba's holy presence. With this intention he visited Shirdi and just when he was about to throw himself into a local well, Sagun Meru Naik, a devotee of Baba, came to the scene and asked him, "Did you ever read this Akkalkotkar Maharaj's life?" Ambedkar casually took the book and as soon as he opened it there was the story of a devotee of Akkalkotkar Maharaj who suffered from an incurable ailment. With the intention of ending his misery, he decided to end his life and just as he was about to do so, the Holy Maharaj rescued him and said, "You must enjoy the fruit (good or bad) of your past actions; if the enjoyment be incomplete, suicide won't help you. You have to take another birth and suffer again. So, instead of killing yourself, why

not suffer for some more time and finish the store of your past deeds and be done with them once and for all?" Why suffer repeatedly?

Ambedkar was moved by this timely warning and decided to cancel his cowardly act. He had understood Baba's hint through this story and his faith in Baba was confirmed. This time, Ambedkar decided to be brave and with re-doubled faith he started worshipping God and concentrated on improving his prospects. He gained fair renown as an astrologer and was soon able to improve his financial circumstances and lead a happy existence thereafter.

Had Ambedkar followed through with his plan, he would have never been able to enjoy the happy moments that were in store for him.

Swami has a unique way of handling circumstances and teaching life-changing lessons through the most unexpected of circumstances. Once, Swami called one of his young students and said, "What can you do for my sake?" This little child was very innocent and said, "Swami, anything. I will even sacrifice my life for your sake."

The young lad never expected Swami to capitalize on this comment, though. Swami, however, looked at him and said, "Can you go to the top floor of this tall building and jump down for my sake?" The student was shocked. He loved Swami more than anything in this world and had just given his word that he would unhesitatingly sacrifice his life for the Lord. Now that the Lord had requested that sacrifice what could he do? He mustered all the courage he could and said, "Yes Swami!" No sooner had he said that, he started walking toward the stairs.

Would our sweet Lord ever allow His innocent children to fall in this manner? Nay! Never! Swami immediately ran to His beloved child, hugged him and said, "My sweet child, I don't want you to die for Me. I want you to live for Me!"

"I want you to live for Me!"-what a profound message Swami gave that day, not just to that student, but to all of us. He wants us to live selfless lives and do good to one and all.

## GOD WILL PROVIDE

BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

Nanasaheb Chandorkar was a staunch devotee of Baba. He had enjoyed numerous experiences and miracles due to the extreme compassion of Lord Sainath. Once, the daughter of Nanasaheb, Maintai, was in the terminal stages of her pregnancy. On the day of delivery, she experienced unbearable pain and it appeared as if her very life was in danger. What could Nana do? He called out his beloved Lord Sai in this hour of danger. Could the Lord ignore any devotee's call? That can never happen.

Mainatai was suffering in Jamner, but Baba had divined this situation one hundred miles away at Shirdi and He immediately called one devotee, Bapugir, who was on his way to Khandesh and directed him to visit Nana's village, Jamner, instead. Bapugir was apprehensive because he had merely Rs. 2 in his possession and that would be insufficient to take him all the way to Jamner. When he raised this concern, Baba said, "God will provide."

Hearing these words of assurance, the devotee embarked on his journey. He reached a station called Jalgaon and as he was wondering about the remaining portion of his journey, a well-dressed peon called out his name and offered to drive him in a horse cart to the residence of Nanasaheb. The peon also explained that he was sent by none other than Nanasaheb himself.

When the duo reached their destination, Bapugir alighted to answer nature's call. When he returned to thank the driver for the timely ride, the driver and the horse cart disappeared in front of his very eyes. On making further inquiries with Nanasaheb, he was told that Nana never knew about his arrival then how could he have sent a horse cart to receive him? It was then that Bapugir realized the significance of Baba's words: "God will provide."

A devotee of Swami was once kidnapped and held captive in some remote forest. Due to Swami's immense grace, the devotee was able to escape from his captors but lost his way in the dense forest and was cut off from all sources of sustenance. The concerned family members visited Puttaparthi and sought the divine intervention of the Lord of Lords. Swami broke into a mysterious smile and said that He had already freed the devotee from the captors.

The family members were relieved but raised concerns about the number of days since which the devotee may not have eaten. At this, Swami broke into another naughty smile

and said, "My angels are feeding and taking care of him."

In our daily lives, we so often forget that there is a Higher Power who nurtures us and looks after both our physical

and spiritual needs. Not realizing this, we worry and assume needless burdens on our heads. When we learn to trust this power, however, He will unfailingly demonstrate His constant protection and care.

Vivekananda had experienced this truth on numerous occasions. Once, Vivekananda was traveling by train. He had not eaten for days but still looked fresh and energetic, as if he derived nutrition from a completely different source. Just opposite Vivekananda's seat, a father was sitting with his children. He had just bought delicacies to feed his little children.

When the father saw Vivekananda, he mocked him for his tattered clothes and said harsh words about how he was unwilling to feed someone who appeared to be so lazy and unwilling to work that he had adopted the path of renunciation. Vivekananda, being the great saint he was, merely smiled at this ridicule.

Just then, a man rushed to Vivekananda and said that he had seen a divine dream vision in which he was asked to feed a great guru. The stranger also explained how the beneficiary he had seen in his dream was none other than Vivekananda himself.

The father was astonished to see this miracle and not only did he realize his foolishness, he also realized the truth that God does provide for the welfare of His children and that he unfailingly nurtures and takes care of even the minutest needs of every one of us-whether we realize it or not.

## 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

#### 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

### 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.

## Do Not Be Afraid. I am With You A Sai Devotee, NY

Swami has a strange way of communicating with His children. At times, he grants visions while at other times he communicates via thoughts, books, or any other form He may deem appropriate. One thing that is sure about these communications, though, is that the devotee will always recognize these communications as direct hints from Swami. The heart just knows when that happens.

During a recent visit to India, I had the opportunity to experience Swami's omnipresence. A strange characteristic of this journey was that every time I would worry about some impending danger, I would somehow come across a picture of Akkalkot Maharaj (an incarnation of Lord Dattatreya) with the following words written underneath: "Do not be afraid. I am with you." Almost immediately after seeing any such picture, the trouble would just vanish in thin air. I experienced this concurrence numerous times and was convinced that it was Swami who was communicating with me in that manner.

Just one day before my return to US, my father suddenly developed a heart ailment. Most tests run the previous night were not conclusive and were indicative of something abnormal. I was not sure if I could leave him in that condition. My return was necessary, however, and I was in a dilemma. We decided to rush him to the hospital for a final test and while we were on our way I kept hoping that if I could somehow see that picture of Akkalkot Maharaj, it would be a sure sign that everything will be well. It was very early in the morning and since all shops were closed, the chances of that happening appeared to negligible, if not impossible.

God does not need to depend on human instruments, however. Just as I was thinking in this manner, a taxi overtook us, rather unexpectedly. At first, we were shocked at the way the cab driver maneuvered his vehicle ahead of ours-it was very, very abnormal. But my initial shock was soon transformed into relief because the back window of the car had a painting of the very picture I was looking for and the very words I wanted to hear: "Do not be afraid. I am with you." It was almost as if Swami had made the driver act in the rash manner only so that He could fulfill my heartfelt desire and reassure me.

Needless to say, all the tests suddenly changed from the results that had come out the previous night and my father was given a clean bill of health.

## OPEN THE THIRD EYE BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

At the dawn of creation, the universe was constantly plagued by wars between good and evil forces-devas (demigods) and asuras (demons). Each side was equipped with the most ferocious of missiles, weapons that could be produced by mere thought as opposed to lab techniques prevalent today. All living beings felt harassed by the fear of powerful missiles released by each of these forces.

According to the universe's destiny, it was Lord Shiva and Mother Parvati's child, Subramanya, who was to lead the gods to victory and end this terrifying war once and for all. How could that happen, though? Lord Shiva is known to be the Supreme Ascetic, forever detached and ever at one-ment with the universal supreme. Would He ever give up his austerities and marry the Divine Mother? None thought that to be possible. The gods were desperate, however, and decided to dispatch Kamadeva (God of Desire) on a mission to disturb Lord Shiva's meditation.

Kamadeva was terrified at the mere thought of disturbing Lord Shiva, but conceded to the gods' demands by thinking that it was far better to sacrifice oneself if it benefits a greater cause. He knew his end was near but embarked to perform his duty with a detached spirit. When he arrived at the abode of Shiva, he was surprised by the holiness of the environment and the pure spiritual bliss that appeared to envelop every atom in His surroundings. Even birds and beasts appeared to be in meditation there.

Kamadeva started working on his most challenging assignment, ever. Within moments, he held sway over the entire universe and everyone, from princes to priests were overcome by passion. Lord Shiva, however, was unperturbed. It was as if desire had no effect on Him. His face radiated the same peace and serenity despite all of Cupid's attempts. Finally, Kamadeva with the help of his wife, Rati, released the most powerful arrow of desire. This arrow scratched Lord Shiva's heart but failed to disturb the Supreme One.

Desire had played enough havoc on all beings, thought Shiva, and so He opened His divine eye, His third eye. The fiery radiance that emanated was enough to consume Kamadeva to ashes and the very desire that attempted to burn Lord Shiva, was itself consumed to ashes. All the devas who were witnessing this scene were disappointed. Some attempted to pacify the Great Shiva, while others decided to flee.

The Compassionate Shiva, divined their intentions, however, and decided to grant life to Kamadeva. He also assured the devas that He was aware of their plight and would soon take steps to assuage their concerns.

Many may have read this wonderful piece of spiritual history, but what is its significance for us as human beings? We, as humans, are constantly fighting an inner war, the fight between good and evil that resides within each of us. As we are doing so, desires constantly make room in our hearts and attempt to disturb our serenity. If, however, we take lessons from Lord Shiva and open up our intellect (the third eye or the eye of wisdom) and discriminate between right and wrong, these desires will be burnt to ashes in no time and we will be able to make rapid spiritual progress.

In the process, we can wed Supreme Knowledge or the Knowledge of the Self (as symbolized by the Divine Goddess). The child that would be born as a result would be the bliss of self realization and this will ultimately rescue us from our worldly bondage and take us Godward.

## New Year's Eve Special Bhajans

It has always been a tradition at Om Sai Mandir to welcome the New Year with special bhajans. Special bhajans will be held on December 31, 2008 from 10.00 PM to 12.01 AM

## The best gift to ask from God

### Source: Chinna Katha I

Our faith diminishes because our ambitions are limitless. There was a rich person who had a daughter with a flat nose. The father wanted to get this girl married. Every person who came and looked at the girl used to go away, although they were tempted by the wealth.

In those days, persons who could perform plastic surgery were not available. In desperation, he announced that he would give plenty of money to anyone who would marry his daughter. The marriage was performed, and thereafter the couple developed considerable faith in God. They visited many temples, went on many pilgrimages and bathed in many sacred rivers.

They met a saint who advised them that he, who created the nose, alone, could bring it back to normal. Although they had lot of wealth, they were not happy at all. The girl used to feel others were looking at her and making fun. She suggested to her husband that they should both go to the lonely Himalayas and spend a month there in that manner. He agreed and they did go.

The girl had a great desire to get back her nose, so she began to pray to God in great earnestness. God appeared, due to her good luck, and asked her what she wanted. As soon as God appeared, she asked for the grant of a good looking big nose. God said, so shall it be and granted her the boon. As soon as God disappeared, she looked at her face. She looked at the big nose and felt that she had become uglier than before.

She prayed again more earnestly and God appeared again and asked her what she wanted. She said that she did not want that big nose. God said, so shall it be and granted her the boon. She immediately found that her nose had completely disappeared. The moral of this story is that although God is present before you, playing with you and talking with you, you do not know what to ask.

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Sai Sandesh welcomes literary contributions in the form of articles, devotees experiences, poems, feedback, suggestions, and other Sai-related material.

For details, please write to the editor's attention:

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