



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)

The newsletter can be read online at [www.omsaimandir.org](http://www.omsaimandir.org)



Love All. Serve All.

April & May 2008

Volume 5, Issue 4 & 5



## The Divine Nectar of Rama's Life By The Sai Sandesh Team

*Pibare Rama Rasam  
Pibarey Rama Rasam Rasaney  
Dhoori Krita Pataka Samsargam  
Poorita Naanavidha Phala Vargam  
Pibarey Rama Rasam Rasaney*

*O Mind! Quench the spiritual thirst by drinking Divine nectar of chanting the name of Lord Shree Rama. It will destroy all sins. Reciting the sacred name of Lord Rama will confer immense happiness of drinking nectar of many delicious fruits.*

As the preceding bhajan describes, chanting the name of Rama is not only nectar-like, it is liberating. Avatars like Rama come to earth to uplift man from his fallen state, to show man the true way to live, and also to make man realize his innate potential: manava (man) is madhava (God). Avatars during their sojourn on earth correct the prevailing state of affairs on earth, for earth indeed is the spiritual engine of the universe, and India of the world.

During Tretayuga, about 20,000 years ago, the Lord incarnated in the form of Rama. The life of this Avatar is indeed the brightest beacon light for mankind, for in this one incarnation, the Lord showed us the ideal way of living. Not only was His life suffused with the spiritual essence of the Vedas, He also showed us the way to live in the world—like a human being. He lays before us the example of an ideal father, a model son, a perfect brother, a compassionate master, a benevolent Lord, a loving husband, a loyal friend, a just ruler, a true devotee, and more.

**His name.** Rama, the name that has liberated millions, encompasses three syllables: Ra, Aa, and Ma. Ra signifies Agni (Fire God); Aa, Surya (Sun God); and Ma, Chandra (Moon God). Fire God burns all sins, Sun God dispels darkness, and Moon God cools one's temper and produces tranquility—in essence fostering the harmony of thought, word, and deed.

**His-Story.** History is indeed His-Story and the story of the Lord's life can uplift even the worst of sinners. Reading the story of Rama's life granted liberation to many souls and for the benefit of readers it is recounted here.

**Rama's Birth.** For the Lord, birth and death are nothing more than an act. Yet for the sake of His children, God plays even this role to perfection.

Dashratha, the King of Ayodhya, had three wives. Despite enjoying the Lordship of a large kingdom, they were not happy due to the lack of children. To fulfill his desire, Dashratha arranged for a special yagna (religious rite), after the completion of which divine emissaries appeared with a pot of pudding. Dashratha divided the prasada among his wives and four beautiful princes were born to them. The charming princes were named Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna. The king along with his queens and young princes spent the next few years in ecstasy.

**Viswamitra and Rama.** Once Vishwamitra, troubled by terrifying demonic forces, requested the King to send Rama and Lakshmana to protect the sages. Dashratha reluctantly fulfilled Vishwamitra's wish. The princes valiantly vanquished all the demonic forces and relieved the sages of their suffering.

While the princes were spending time in the company of the holy ones, Viswamitra received an invitation to attend the swayamvara (ceremony where the bride chooses her suitor) of the king of Mithila's daughter, Janaki. The condition of the ceremony, however, was that the suitor must be able to lift the divine bow of Shiva. Valiant stalwarts tried their best but none could move the bow, let alone lift it. Rama, however, lifted the bow, strung it, broke it into pieces, and won the hand of Mother Sita. Dashratha was overjoyed to learn about the news of a daughter-in-law and ordered the entire kingdom to adorn a festive appearance.

### DIVINE WISDOM

The Lord has endowed man with the body and so, every limb and every sense organ is worthy of reverent attention. Each must be used for His Glory. The ear must exult when it gets a chance to hear the wonderful glories of God. The tongue must exult when it can praise Him. The human body has been given to you for the grand purpose of realising the Lord within. If you have a fully equipped car in good running condition, would you keep it unused in the garage? The car is primarily for going on a journey; get into it and go! Only then is it worthwhile to own it. So too, with the body. Proceed towards the goal. Learn how to use the faculties of the body, senses, intellect and mind for achieving the goal, and march on.

- BABA

## The Divine Nectar of Rama's Life continued

**The exile.** The king was now growing old and decided to coronate Rama as the king of Ayodhya, but providence had charted a completely different plan for Rama. Kaikeyi, Dashratha's youngest wife, incited by her wicked maid, Manthara, opted to ask for the fulfillment of two boons that the king had promised her in the past. According to the conditions, the youngest queen requested Dashratha to send Rama to exile for fourteen years and coronate her son, Bharata, instead. Dashratha was a man of his word but was reluctant to commit such an act of injustice. Rama, however, did not wish to let His father down and decided to fulfill his word and accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana, Rama proceeded to the forest. The divine trio was passing their days in the forest, when Surpanakha, the sister of Ravana, accosted Rama for courtship. Rama did not accede to her requests and punished her instead. Infuriated, she fled to Lanka and prompted Ravana to seek revenge; the demon immediately proceeded and in Rama's absence abducted Mother Sita.

Although these incidences appear unplanned, they were in reality a part of the divine play, the very purpose for which Rama had incarnated. On discovering Mother Sita's absence, Rama and Lakshmana set out in her search. In their travails, they met the Monkey King Sugriva and his minister, the gem among devotees, Lord Hanuman. Rama instantly recognized Hanuman as His chosen messenger. Hanuman too recognized in Rama, his chosen deity. Both Sugriva and Hanuman pledged to serve Rama in His mission of recovering Sita and destroying the Ravana's demonic forces. To ascertain Mother Sita's welfare, Lord Rama dispatched Hanuman to Lanka. Hanuman leapt across the Indian Ocean and reached Lanka, where he wreaked havoc on the demons. A band of monkeys was collected to fight the mighty army of Ravana. Divine grace is such that a band of monkeys was sufficient to annihilate an entire demon army. To reach Lanka, it would be necessary to cross the Indian Ocean. As there was no bridge, the monkeys started throwing stones in the water after writing Rama's name on every stone. The power of the Lord's name made the stones float on water and a bridge was built. What followed was a war in which the monkeys destroyed Ravana's army. Ravana too met his end at the hands of Rama.

The destruction of Ravana. Ravana was a gatekeeper of Vishnu in his previous life. While to human eyes, Rama killed Ravana; in the divine realm, Rama had freed Ravana from a great curse. The Lord's ways are mysterious and always full of benediction.

**Symbolic significance.** The epic Ramayana is not an ordinary one. Every word and character in this great poem has a very deep significance. Lord Rama, for example, symbolizes a person on the Nivrithi Marga (inward path); while the character of the demon, Ravana, symbolizes a person on the Pravritthi Marga (the outward path). Mother Sita symbolizes Brahma Jnyan (knowledge of the absolute). Lord Rama's securing Sita demonstrates how a person on the inward path secures the knowledge of the Lord, while a person on the outward path, Ravana for instance, faces death. Ayodhya, the capital of Rama's kingdom, symbolizes the human heart. Ayodhya was a place free of strife and controversy; in a similar manner, we too must attempt to make our heart free of all faults so the Lord can make our heart as His capital.

It may be asked: Did Rama go to the forest under any compulsion or out of His own resolve, or with a sense of dissatisfaction, or merely to comply with His father's pledge? No. Rama set out for the forest with the same sense of serenity and joy with which he looked forward to his coronation. Rama demonstrated the spirit of equanimity. In human life, pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow alternate all the time. It is not good to welcome pleasure and turn away pain. We must welcome sorrow in the same joyous spirit in which we greet happiness.

Happiness has no value unless there is also sorrow. That is why it is said: "Pleasure is not secured by pleasant measure." Pain is needed to secure pleasure. Rama demonstrated this concept. Compare His behavior with our lives. The least fortune sends us sky high and the smallest trouble makes us depressed. Contrary to our imagination, it is not difficult to emulate the Lord's life. If we can emulate mortals, why can't we emulate the life of one who incarnated to teach us the way of an ideal life?

1. Discourse, 5 Apr 1998, Ram Navami, Brindavan
2. Summer Course, Brindavan, May 21, 2002
3. Discourse, March 11, 1994.

## **BABA, THE EPITOME OF SACRIFICE**

### **BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM**

Ramakrishna Parmahansa once asked his follower to summarize the Bhagavad Gita in one word. After many failed attempts on the latter's part, the Parmahansa asked him to repeat "Gita" incessantly. "Gita" when repeated several times started sounding like "Tyagi" (one who sacrifices for others). Selfless sacrifice is the true essence of Gita.

Krishna has declared that the actions of great men are emulated by the masses and hence the life and conduct of every avatar is carefully orchestrated so as to serve as a shining example for the rest of humanity. Baba, in both Shirdi and Parthi avatars, has demonstrated that sacrifice and detachment are supreme virtues that lead a man God-ward.

#### **Simplicity and sacrifice in lifestyle**

During the Shirdi avatar, devotees would bring cushions and many items of comfort, but Baba discarded all of these and chose a simple rock as His seat. A piece of rug served as His bedding and one torn and tattered gown, His wardrobe. Baba's detachment and spirit of sacrifice were so great that He would freely distribute all the money that was offered to Him by devotees. Thousands of rupees were offered to Baba daily, yet when He took samadhi only Rs. 16 were found in His possession.

When delicious fruits were offered to Sai, He would skillfully extract the sweet pulp for devotees and retain only the skin for Himself. Even the food collected by Baba was left in the open courtyard for humans, birds, and animals to consume from, and only leftovers were partaken by Baba.

Even in the present Sathya Sai avatar, all that is offered to Him is used in the service of humanity. Baba's organization spends hundreds of crores of rupees on mammoth projects that provide relief to millions of suffering souls. Free hospitals where even major heart and brain surgeries are performed without remuneration, free universities where hundreds of students study from kindergarten to Ph.D. and beyond, free drinking water to thousands of drought-prone villages—even governments are unable to accomplish relief work on such a massive scale.

#### **Accepting the suffering of others. Granting joy to all.**

Once, Mrs. Khaparde, wife of Dadasaheb Khaparde of Amraoti, was staying at Shirdi. She heard that her young son had developed high fever and subsequently Bubonic Plague. The terrified mother accosted Baba to seek permission for her Amraoti trip, at which the merciful Master spoke kindly to her, saying, "The sky is beset with clouds, but they will melt and pass off; everything will be smooth and clear." On

saying this, He lifted his robe and showed four fully-developed bubos, adding, "See how I have to suffer for My devotees; their difficulties are Mine."

On another occasion, Shirdi Baba suddenly thrust His hand in a fire. A devotee who witnessed this incidence rushed there and pulled Baba away. Much later, Baba explained that a blacksmith's wife, who was working near a furnace, accidentally dropped her child into the fire while in a hurry to respond to her husband's call. Not minding the scorching flames, Baba had willingly burnt His hand to save the child.

Granting relief to suffering devotees is a never-ending saga. A student of Sathya Sai Baba was a chronic asthmatic and would frequently suffer from severe attacks. Frustrated, he once put a piece of cloth around the nose of Swami's picture and said, "See how it feels." During the darshan, that day, Swami came straight to the boy and caught his hand firmly. Almost immediately, the merciful Sainath took on Himself the devotee's asthma attack. Seeing his beloved Lord in pain, the young lad tried to free himself from Sai's grip, but failed.

Much to his relief, Baba resumed normal breathing within a few minutes and explained that what would take the lad almost two decades as a process of elimination of karma, could be mitigated in a matter of a few minutes if undergone by Divinity instead. True to these words, the boy never suffered from the debilitating attacks ever again.

With utmost happiness, divine embodiments go to great extents to make even the ultimate sacrifice for their devotees. It is said that Shirdi Sai Baba had predicted the death of his devotee, Tatyia. When the appointed hour came, Tatyia became severely ill and was expected to die any moment, but events took a strange turn, and the Lord of Shirdi gave up His mortal form instead. Many believe that Sainath had given up His mortal coil in order to protect Tatyia's life.

#### **No attachment to name and form**

When Baba arrived in Shirdi as a young lad, Mhalsapati addressed Him as "Sai". Ever since, Baba came to be known as Sai Baba. How great was Baba's detachment, He did not even care for His original name or form, but instead assumed and glorified the one that was offered to Him.

None can equal Sai in sacrifice or detachment, but all of us make small attempts to imitate His behavior--and this is one of those rare instances where imitation, even to the smallest degree, is desirable and praiseworthy.

## 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

#### May

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

#### June

Sunday, Jun. 15: Father'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.

## How a Small Bhajan Center was Started in Bangladesh

"I had to be in Asia for almost one year in 2007, on official work, sourcing and purchasing merchandise for American Importers. In February, I went to Bangladesh. Before going there, I asked my local agent, if I should come to Dhakka, the Capital or to Chittagong, the Main Port.

He asked me to come to Chittagong. After two days and completing our work., he insisted that I should meet one Mr.Ramachandran, Production Manager of a leading Textile Mill. Actually I did not have any official work with him. But my agent said that since Ram and I are Tamils, we will be happy to meet each other. At that point of time, I really did not understand why he insisted on meeting him.

However we went to the mill and met him. Ram asked me where I am coming from. I told him Puttapparthu where my mother is staying. He was instantly and immensely happy and told me that he was looking for someone to come and give a helping hand and initiate Swamy Bhajans. He was searching for a Sai Center in Dhakka and other cities in Bangladesh for the last 10 years, but in vain.

After a brief discussion, it was decided that a Bhajan Centre should be started there. He immediately called his Sri Lankan friend who is a Tabla player and all arrangements were made for Bhajan the very next day. It was a Friday, the weekly holiday.

The first bhajan was held in Ram's house and it was a small group . A lady from Kerala, working in Bangladesh joined, another Sri Lankan couple (whose daughter is in medical student in Bangalore whose life was saved by Swamy) and few more joined. It was a modest beginning. Today there are about 20 people attending and all have started singing very well. Subsequently the Regional Coordinator, Sai Centres of Asia, from Nepal, contacted the Bhajan group, suggesting that it should be converted into a Sai Centre which will be the first one in Bangladesh. Now they are doing necessary ground work.

I was thinking about this episode later and wondering, why did I go to Chittagong instead of Dhakka. Why should my agent force me to meet Ram. Out of 16 million people in that country, why did I meet Ram in particular. I never had any clue that a Bhajan centre would be started there and I would be an instrument in the process. It was certainly not an accident. It is all Swamy's design. This is how Swamy makes people meet - for some specific purpose." --Jay Dinakar. Flushing, NY

## FEAR NOT, YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD

### BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

We call ourselves children of God and yet doubt our own divinity. Isn't that an irony? Self-condemnation is the biggest mistake one can make on the spiritual path. We often deride ourselves and others with adjectives, such as "sinners," "ignorant ones," "unworthy," etc. Swami has repeatedly told us that sin is a very big word for errors we may have committed out of ignorance and that there is plenty of hope for those wanting to change. For a person who sincerely repents and corrects erring actions, God will uplift and exalt him to the status of saint, almost instantly.

In order to prove this fact, God has repeatedly performed the miracle of transforming erring humans into saints. Valmiki, the great saint through whom was penned the epic Ramayana, started his early career as a highway robber. He continued along this path until Sage Narada showed him the right path. Valmiki decided to transform himself and resorted to the incessant chanting of Rama's name. Not accustomed to spiritual practices, he started chanting "Mara, Mara" instead of "Rama," "Rama." With the ceaseless chanting of Rama's name, Valmiki was blessed with a vision of Rama Himself. The person who at one point of time stole people's possessions had now managed to steal the Lord's butter-like heart, and the Lord on His part converted Valmiki into a great saint; such is the power of the Lord's name and grace. And what great service did Valmiki perform. He was instrumental in penning Ramayana, the divine epic that has served as a beacon light to humanity for thousands of years.

The Lord is very merciful and is forever keen to grant us His blessings. What is lacking is our desire to [truly] transform; the moment a sincere resolve is made, God's grace will work magic into anyone's life. Take the instance of Mary Magdalene; before coming in contact with Lord Jesus she had lived the life of unholiness; yet as soon as she came in contact with the Lord, He forgave her sins and raised her to the status of an apostle-like figure. Such is the power of repentance, forgiveness, and grace.

One may ask how were these people, despite numerous sins, forgiven so easily? The answer is very simple: God is pure love; He is willing to forgive those who sincerely repent and decide to walk along with Him. To such He will give the same gifts as He would to saints. Even a human mother forgives her children who commit sins out of ignorance, how much more so would the divine mother. In reality, God does not discriminate between saints and sinners. We are all His children and He loves us, always.

It is said that God created man in His own image; the Vedas too declare Tat Tvam Asi (Thou Art That). How can God's own image ever be bad? Yes, we may have made mistakes in the past, for which we must accept responsibility, but that should not stop us from correcting ourselves and changing, nor should it be cause for selfcondemnation. God always welcomes change and accepts us with open arms, the way a loving parent would.

You may have heard of Pundalika's story—the saint whose name is associated with Vitthala of Pandharpur. Pundalika, though of good heart, had turned to bad ways and had resorted to illtreating his aged parents, to the extent of making them perform menial work. It was not until Pundalika visited the ashram of a great saint and underwent purificatory punishment that he realized his mistake. The repentance, however, was sincere and Pundalika resorted to chanting of the Lord's name while sincerely serving his old parents. Pleased with this newfound transformation, the Lord Himself visited the house of this devotee. Despite seeing the Lord standing at his doorstep, Pundalika was unable to get up as he was deeply engrossed in serving his parents. In order to offer a seat to the Lord, he threw a brick and asked the Lord to sit on it. An ignorant person may consider this as blasphemy but God has no ego and He could see through the sincere devotion of Pundalika. Immensely pleased, the Lord granted salvation to Pundalika and blessed Pandharpur (Pundalika's village) with his permanent residence in the form of Vitthal. Even today, Pandharpur is one of the holiest places in India.

The name of the Lord even if resorted to unknowingly can effect a miraculous transformation, as in the case of Ajmilla. In ancient days, there lived a brahmin by the name of Ajmilla. At first, he was a pious man and regularly performed holy rites; his association with a courtesan, however, led to his downfall. Contrary to the customs in those days, he cohabited her for a long time and fathered her children, the youngest of whom was named Narayana. This boy was very dear to him.

Due to his actions, Ajmilla had lost the respect of the entire community. He soon fell ill and took to the deathbed. Just before dying, however, he called out his youngest son, Narayana. Immediately, the emissaries of Lord Narayana came to the rescue of Ajmilla's soul. Around the same time, the torchbearers of hell also appeared on the scene and began claiming rights to Ajmilla's soul.

Around the same time, the torchbearers of hell also appeared on the scene and began claiming rights to Ajmilla's soul.

Their argument was based on the bad actions committed by Ajmilla throughout his life. The emissaries of Narayana, however, insisted on saving his soul as he had sincerely called out to Narayana, even if it was in the context of calling his own son. The emissaries of the Lord finally won the argument and Ajmilla's soul was saved.

Can fire cease to burn simply because it is touched out of ignorance? No! Fire makes no such distinction; its duty is to burn whatever comes in contact with it. In the same way, the Lord's name cannot but burn to ashes millions of sins committed by devotees.

This is the easiest practice to which one can resort. One could pray to God using any name or form one likes. Be it God, Bhagavan, Allah, Rama, Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Sai—whatever be one's mode of worship, it must be sincere.

Swami often tells us that Manava is Madhava (man is God). God cannot but help save us, for He did create us in His own image. What is needed on our part is just the first step toward Him; He will then take a hundred steps toward us.

Let us forget all our past experiences and resolve to make a fresh start toward God.

Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached; fear not—you are indeed a child, a precious, precious child, of God.

## MANIFEST BY NANDITHA DAS

He is my inspiration,  
my Herald of hope.  
His love shines in  
a mother's compassionate eyes.  
His wrath is nature's fury.  
His kindness is man's antidote  
for pain and suffering.  
A mother forgives only her children,  
while He forgives those whose  
mothers have abandoned them.

He created us,  
and we created Him.  
Our talents are His gifts.  
Our flaws are His punishments.  
Our pedestrian minds do not allow us  
to completely understand Him,  
but with prayer, we forge our way closer.  
His divinity that is present in us,  
reaches out to help others.

A child's gleeful laugh is His own.  
A parent's tear, too, is a part of His being.  
He is shapeless, yet exists everywhere.  
His encompassing presence can only comfort you.  
Those who fail to experience Him  
have not identified with themselves.  
As a flower is incomplete  
when it is missing a petal,  
we are vulnerable without his protection.

He leaves us with many choices,  
and it is up to us to choose the ones  
that make us one with Him . . .  
to choose those paths that  
He illuminates from above.

**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:

Om Sai Mandir  
45-11 Smart Street  
Flushing, NY 11355

or online: [www.omsaimandir.org](http://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](mailto:saisandesh@omsaimandir.org)

---

**ADDRESS FORM (HELP US UPDATE OUR RECORDS)**

First Name:

Phone:

Last Name:

Mobile:

Address 1:

Fax:

Address2:

Email:

City, State, Zip:

Please mail the address form to:

**Om Sai Mandir**

45-11 Smart Street

Flushing, NY 11355

Tel: (718) 461-0454

Email: [info@omsaimandir.org](mailto:info@omsaimandir.org)

Website: [www.omsaimandir.org](http://www.omsaimandir.org)