



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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Have Blind Faith in the Guru

By The Sai Sandesh Team

If we resort to Sai Baba's feet our sufferings are minimized significantly. Whatever little pain and suffering we undergo is a very small fraction of what we would have to undergo had we not resorted to Baba.

The ways of a guru are often difficult to understand. Through, what appear to be strange actions, a guru always benefits his devotee in ways that are beyond human understanding.

Once, Mahaavatar Babaji, an immortal 2,000-year-old Himalayan Saint, was sitting with his band of disciples. Suddenly, he struck a hard blow to the shoulder of a disciple. The remaining disciples were very upset at this strange behavior and questioned the necessity of hitting an innocent person.

Babaji smiled and explained that the disciple was to die at that time and Babaji had saved his life by kindly substituting the blow of his stick for what was to be the blow of death.

There are innumerable instances where the guru's grace has helped in overcoming karma. Guru Thirupalluvar, while at his deathbed, instructed Elela Surya that after the samadhi the disciple should pull the body with a rope and drag it across the village. The devotee was shocked to hear this order but knew that implicit obedience was the best course of action for any disciple.

After the master's death, the disciple dragged his body across the village. The villagers were disgusted to see this behavior and threw stones at him. Despite the blood and pain, with tear-filled eyes, the devotee continued dragging his master's body for three full days.

Finally, at the end of three days he turned around to look at the master's body and was horrified to see the torn remains of his beloved master. The scene was unbearable for him and he died immediately. Why did the guru instruct his disciple in this manner?

The master had foreseen that the disciple, due to karmic forces, was to be reborn in a fallen state for three subsequent births. By making the disciple adopt this course of action, karmas that would otherwise take three births were exhausted within a short span of three days and the disciple was liberated.

Sai Baba has helped (and continues to) countless souls. He has saved innumerable devotees from critical dangers and has uplifted many souls from the common realm of mortality to the perfect state of a sadguru. Kashinath Upasani is one such example. Kashinath came to Baba as an ordinary person but within a short span of four years, Baba transformed him into a perfect master.

The journey wasn't easy, though. From enduring harassment from young boys to suffering the pangs of hunger and abject poverty, Kashinath quietly underwent a lot of suffering. As a result of this process of karmic elimination, he was transformed to a perfect saint within a remarkably short period of time.

During the course of life, we are often subjected to pain and suffering. The purpose of these events is not to hurt us but rather to help us evolve to a higher level. Those who understand this truth will surrender to Baba and continue living their lives in accordance with His will.

The difficult times we face are really a very small fraction of what we would have to undergo were it not for Baba's grace. What is wanted on our part is firm faith in Baba and ceaseless chanting of His name. Sai is sure to pull us out of all dangers.

DIVINE WISDOM

I have come to light the lamp of Love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added luster. I have not come on behalf of any exclusive religion. I have not come on a mission of publicity for a sect or creed or cause, nor have I come to collect followers for a doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into my fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this unitary faith, this spiritual principle, this path of Love, this virtue of Love, this duty of Love, this obligation of Love.

- July 04, 1968, BABA

Arjuna - The Ever-Bright Beacon Light

By The Sai Sandesh Team

Arjuna stands forth as a shining example of what can be achieved through devotion and unconditional surrender to God. By relying on Lord Krishna, Arjuna was able to defeat a mighty army and re-establish the victory of truth over untruth and righteousness over unrighteousness.

At the start of the Mahabharata War, Lord Krishna asked both Arjuna and Duryodhana to choose between Krishna and His mighty army. Arjuna wisely chose Krishna while Duryodhana, under the influence of maya (illusion), chose Krishna's mighty army. Arjuna was wise in choosing the Lord and he was therefore able to win against such powerful forces. Through this incidence, Arjuna has established a wonderful example for all of us to follow. If we chose God over his mighty army (personifying illusion, worldly pleasures, fame, money, and the like) we will surely win the battle of life and achieve the ultimate goal of liberation. If, however, we behave like Duryodhana and run after worldly objects, we are sure to suffer spiritual martyrdom.

It was Arjuna's decision of choosing Krishna that protected him throughout the battle. During the battle Ashwatthama, the powerful warrior, released the powerful missile Narayan Astra on the Pandava army. Further, the divine weapon was so designed that nothing could work against it-it could never fail. As soon as this weapon was released it caused havoc in the Pandava army. Soldiers were dying by the millions and it appeared as if the entire Pandava dynasty was going to be wiped out that day. Finding themselves completely helpless, the Pandavas surrendered to Lord Krishna and sought his refuge. In

response to their prayers, Krishna advised Pandavas to adopt an unusual strategy. He asked them to drop all weapons and stand humbly in front of the missile. With implicit obedience, Arjuna and his brothers stood as instructed by Krishna. The weapon immediately calmed down and disappeared. This was a miracle and it happened only because of their reliance on Krishna.

Such was Arjuna's surrender to Krishna. He set aside all logic and quietly obeyed the commands of the Lord. Pointing to a bird, Krishna once asked Arjuna, "Do you see that peacock?" Arjuna responded in the affirmative. "Oh Arjuna, it is not a peacock; it is an eagle," said Krishna. Arjuna promptly agreed. The naughty Krishna then said, "I am sorry; it is a dove." Arjuna approved again. "It is not a dove at all; it is a crow," asserted the mischievous Lord. Arjuna acceded yet again. Krishna was now roaring with laughter, as if mocking Arjuna's blind agreements. The wise Arjuna, however, gave an eye-opening response: "What you say is the truth for me. You can make a crow into a dove, or a peacock into an eagle. Why should I differ from what you declare? Your word is the truth I go by." Arjuna had realized that the five elements were nothing but God's slaves and would unflinchingly carry out His command.

It was for his devotion and foresight that Krishna instructed Arjuna in the knowledge of Gita and made him an instrument for conveying God's message to mankind. As such, Arjuna is a true beacon light for the rest of humanity.

Faith - Oka Chinna Katha

During the Second World War, a steamer carrying Indian Sepoys sunk as a result of bombardment by the Japanese. Many lost their lives. However, five among them managed to row their lifeboat and hoped to survive despite the surging ocean. They were tossed around for many hours. One of them became desperate and cried, "The sea will swallow me. I will be a meal for the sharks." He drowned immediately.

Another, wept for his family saying, "Oh, I am dying without arranging for my family's future." He, too, lost faith in his survival and died. The third sepoy thought, "I have with me the policy and documents of insurance. What a

pity!" I should have kept them at home.

What will my wife do? I am sure to die." He also died. The other two men reinforced each other's faith in God and said, "We shall not yield to fear. We shall prove that however desperate the situation may be, God will certainly protect man if he has faith in Him."

Even as they were talking like this, a helicopter sent from a coastal ship spotted these two men and hauled them to safety. After a safe landing they said, "It was only five minutes between victory and defeat. Faith earned the victory, while the lack of it caused defeat and death."

DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES: OUR TECHIE BABA'S MIRACLES

THE EDITOR, SAI SANDESH TEAM

Many consider Baba's role as being limited to showering spiritual blessings. The argument is certainly true, but not all-inclusive. While Baba's larger plan is to make us progress spiritually, He is also here to take care of our daily needs. Sai is the giver of both bhukti (worldly benefits) and mukti (liberation), the latter being the real goal. A villager was traveling by train for the first time.

Out of ignorance, he placed all the luggage on his head thinking it would ease the train's burden by not having to carry the extra weight. Would it have made a difference if he had put the luggage on the floor? In reality, the train was bearing the burden of both the man and his luggage, and where the weight was placed was immaterial.

Our habit of worrying can be compared to this ignorant person, for, whether we realize it or not, God is like the moving train who is always carrying us forward (with the burden of all our worries and responsibilities). What is the use worrying then?

We just need to place all our worries at His lotus feet. In one of His eleven assurances Baba has said, "If you cast your burden on me, I will certainly bear it."

The current issue of Sai Sandesh is a case in point. Weeks of preparation had gone into the writing of the Beacon Lights and Editorial articles. Unfortunately, the laptop storing those files crashed one night. (Translation: all Sai Sandesh files for the current issue were lost.) It was a huge blow (and also a lesson to not forget the human part of backing up), considering the deadline for submission was nearing. Several rescue attempts failed and the computer wouldn't even start. Swami always comes to the rescue in such instances, and a strong inner voice asked us to wait until the following morning. The Sai Sandesh team decided to follow the intuition. The next morning, all attempts to reboot the computer were unsuccessful again. Sai was not to let us down so easily, however. Immediately, a strong inner voice again guided us with simple troubleshooting instructions.

The instructions, though very unusual, were followed and the computer rebooted miraculously, with all files intact. This wasn't an isolated incidence, though. Swami's guiding hand is always helping all his children. A devotee with no previous programming background was once forced to undertake a project in which he had to code a website using the programming language ASP (Active Server Pages). The devotee somehow managed to finish most of the work, but the application would not work.

Finally, after exhausting all his intelligence, efforts, and references, he sincerely prayed to Swami saying, "I am going to close my eyes and put my fingers on the "lower arrow" key to scroll through the code. Wherever I stop should be the place where the error is occurring." He then closed his eyes and scrolled for a few seconds.

Much to his surprise, the problem was exactly at the line where he stopped. For several hours, the devotee had relied on his own intelligence and met with failure; however, the moment he invoked Sai's blessings-and expressed his sincere reliance on God, the task was accomplished within seconds.

Baba is always eager to help and will come rushing to our rescue when called. While Sai is always protecting and guiding everyone, many fail to recognize-or underestimate-his guiding hand and protection.

Many attribute successes to their own efforts or intelligence. The truth, however, is that even the act of breathing cannot be accomplished without God's infinite grace. He who recognizes this truth and sees the hand of God in everything is truly blessed.

Share!

Readers of Sai Sandesh would love to hear your experiences, stories, miracles, articles, suggestions, etc. for publication in forthcoming issues of Sai Sandesh.

Please e-mail your contributions to the editor's attention at:

saisandesh@omsaimandir.org

Your contributions will benefit thousands of readers of Sai Sandesh.

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

June

Sunday, Jun. 15: Father's Day

July

Friday, July 18: Guru Poornima

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.

Swami doesn't need electric fans

Puttaparthi recently (August 09 to August 20, 2006) witnessed the performance of a grand Athi Rudra Mahayagna (holy ritual where Rudram is chanted thousands of times) -- an event so great, it happened only once before in the history of mankind when Lord Shiva Himself performed it, many thousands of years ago, to promote world peace.

We are very fortunate to be living in present times when Sai Shiva re-established the glory of this holy rite by performing it in the midst of thousands of devotees. While the yagna was being performed many strange incidences were reported throughout the world, including a report of sea water tasting sweet. Whether the occurrences had a direct correlation with the yagna is known only to Baba, but it is worth mentioning that many such phenomena were reported during the same time span.

Reverting to the place of the yagna, Puttaparthi, among the many miracles that devotees experienced at the event, the author was humbled by a unique experience that sheds some light into the divine glory of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Throughout the event, Sai Kulwant Hall was packed to capacity, and the heat emerging from the flames of the mahayagna was intensified manifold by the presence of the large gathering. Aggravating the unbearable heat was the afternoon sun that relentlessly tested the patience and enthusiasm of the gathering. Despite the physical ordeal, we were all craning our necks to witness the magnificent prayer orchestrated by none other than the Lord.

All along I was joking in my mind: "Swami you should install fans in this hall." Much to my surprise, one afternoon, we experienced a sudden drop in the oven-like temperatures. A strong gush of cool breeze caused the beautiful decorations to dance in a wave-like fashion. I was thrilled to get some relief but was immediately distracted by the Vedic chants that were welcoming Swami.

At first, I failed to correlate Swami's entry with the gift of breeze, but this incidence repeated itself over the next few days with impeccable precision -- as soon as Swami would enter the hall, a cool wind would start blowing. My observation was confirmed by fellow-devotees nearby, who had experienced the same act of grace. Swami doesn't need fans that run on electricity -- the Lord of Wind himself is a slave to the commands of Bhagavan.

-- Sai Devotee, New York

GOD SERVES US! BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

Many live with the mistaken notion that devotees serve God and God just sits and enjoys all these offerings and prayers. The truth couldn't be farther.

If one were to get a sneak peek into God's office, we are sure there would be an endless pile of prayers and requests awaiting God's [immediate!] attention. Add to that God's daily duties -- making sure the universe runs in order (sun, moon, solar system ... the entire universe, basically), ensuring all His children are well-fed and well taken care of, taking incarnations on earth and other places, patiently listening to our constant complaints and suggestions about how the world (and our lives) should be run, making sure His ministers (angels and demigods) are doing their jobs in compliance with allotted job descriptions, resolving universal problems, keeping the devils in check ... phew, the list appears to be endless. He does all this single-handedly, and despite such a busy work schedule, God, surprisingly, finds time to connect with each and every one of us.

[Oh, did we mention that He survives on strictly voluntary compensation (our love and gratitude) that He rarely receives.]

Compare this with our easy nine-to-five work schedules, limited job descriptions, fat paychecks, small problems, and ample support from God, friends, and family members.

An interesting story comes to mind. A follower once requested Sai Baba to grant him the view from God's eyes. Baba sternly refused. The devotee was adamant, however, and refused to move until his request was fulfilled. The compassionate Lord finally acceded to his prayer and gave him the vision for a split second.

The disciple's fancy soon turned into a nightmare, for he could now see the entire universe with millions of creatures seeking succor from Baba -- some crying, some praying for the fulfillment of their desires, some holding His robe This almost maddened the devotee and he cried to make the vision vanish; the merciful Sai complied immediately.

The view from God's eyes was unbearable for the devotee to withhold for even a fraction of a second. Imagine, Swami does all this (in addition to serving devotees, running hospitals, educational institutions, and many mammoth projects) quietly and yet remains ever cheerful, acting as if He does nothing.

A devotee asked Swami: "Swami who are you?" Baba replied, "I am the servitor of all." Prompted by pure love, the devotee burst into tears chiding Swami for talking about Himself in that manner. Prompt came the response: "But, everyone gives me a job to do."

This truth has been exemplified in the life of every avatar, saint, and prophet. Krishna spent every moment of His life for annihilating evil forces and for providing succor to His devotees; Rama enacted the drama of His exile (for fourteen years) to rid the world of the demon, Ravana; Shiva saved the world by drinking poison that emerged from the churning of the ocean; Jesus allowed his crucifixion to save countless souls from their sins.

At the end of Mahabharata war, all the brave warriors were egotistically boasting of having destroyed many demons. A devotee who had been blessed with divine vision appeared there and corrected their folly.

He immediately revealed to them that all the tasks they were boasting of, were invisibly accomplished by the sudarshan chakra of the Lord, and not by their own might as they so arrogantly proclaimed.

God, out of His merciful compassion, tirelessly takes care of all His children and serves them in all possible ways. Boons, miracles, grace, protection -- these are just a few of the many instruments He uses to accomplish the purpose of serving His children. The truth of the matter is that it is God who is constantly serving us.

Fear of Death Oka Chinna Katha

There was once a Raja, who had transferred all responsibility of ruling to his manthri (minister), and who was spending his time in ease. He never worried about anything, be it big or small. He had a personal companion, whom he had always by his side, more or less as a bodyguard. This fellow was very wise, for he never did anything without deep deliberation, about the how and the why and the wherefore.

The Raja took all this deliberations to be just foolishness and he nicknamed the companion, "Avivekasikhamani" or "The Crest-Jewel of Fools". He went to the length of actually engraving the title on a plate of gold and compelling him to wear it on his forehead for all to see! Many people were misled by this and they took him to be an ignoramus at court; they did not heed to his words.

Meanwhile, the Raja fell ill and took to bed. The kingdom was combed for physicians who could heal the king. Messengers went to the eight corners, seeking drugs and doctors. Hundreds were busy around the royal patient, but, all efforts failed; the illness worsened day by day. The Raja was at the very door of Death.

The Raja suspected that his end was near, so he hurriedly made some dispositions, spoke to all those whom he wanted to meet, and was immersed in sorrow. He had no thought of God or any other auspicious Power. He was in terrible fear of Death and could not think of anything else.

One day, he called Avivekasikhamani to his bedside and whispered feebly in his ear, "Well, I am going soon, my friend!" Then, the Fool asked without any compunction, "What? You are weak and cannot walk a few steps; I shall order a palanquin, please wait till it is ready." "No palanquin can take me there," said the Raja. "Then, I shall order a chariot," entreated the Fool. "The chariot too is of no use," replied the Raja. "Of course, then, the horse is the only means of journey," wailed the companion, who seemed eager to come to the rescue of his master, and spare him the toils of travel.

The Raja said that the horse too could not enter there. The Fool was at his wit's end. Then suddenly an idea struck him, he said, "Come on master! I shall carry you there." The Raja became sad; he said, "My dear friend, one has to go alone to that place, when one's time has come. No companion can be taken." The Fool was thrown in great doubt; he asked the Raja, "It is curious, is it not? You say that the palanquin won't reach there, that the chariot can't go there, nor the

horse; you say that no second person can join you! Well can't you tell me at least where that place is?" The Raja replied, "I do not know."

Immediately, the Fool unwound the Golden Plate with the engraving of the title, 'Avivekasikhamani', and tied it round the brow of the Raja, saying "Raja! You know so much about the place, even, which things cannot go there, but, you do not know where it is, and still you are going there soon. O, you deserve this title much more."

The Raja was overcome with shame. "Alas," he said to himself, "I wasted my years in eating and sleeping and pursuing pleasures, never caring to inquire who I am, whence I came, what I am doing, whither I am going, and why I came.

The precious time allotted to me has come very near its end. There is no time for me any more for all that inquiry. Death is knocking at the door; children have started weeping; my subjects are in great anxiety. Can I, under such conditions immerse myself in inquiry? Can a thought that I never entertained throughout my life suddenly arise now, during my last moments? It is impossible.

Yes, I deserve the title, Avivekasikhamani more than anyone else, for I wasted my life in useless pursuits; without any thought of the reality."

The Raja let it be proclaimed that inquiry is the best means of knowing the Truth, that the inquiry must be directed to separating the true from the untrue, the eternal from the temporary, that people should arrive at the conclusion that, 'God is the only true and eternal Entity' and that by their own independent investigation, his subjects must not only grasp the entity intellectually but must also attain the Grace of God, by their pure lives.

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