



Shraddha. Saburi.

SAI SANDESH

The Official Monthly Newsletter of
OM SAI MANDIR

A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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Love All. Serve All.

July 2008

Volume 5, Issue 7



Baba's Ever-Watchful Eye

By The Sai Sandesh Team



After attending the Sunday bhajans at Om Sai Mandir, the author was on his way home when he came across a four-year-old girl running alone on the street. An unseen voice urged the author to help the little child.

The child was very difficult to control and was impatiently hurrying to the main intersection, an area frequented by many speeding vehicles. When he questioned her about her whereabouts she did not give a definite answer and babbled strange words. It was very clear that she was lost.

How was the author to control her? She was unwilling to take his help and was intent on running in an unknown direction. It was a dilemma. If he were to force help on her, people could easily mistake his intentions. Leaving her alone was not an option either. Baba was the only one who could suggest a way out of this dilemma, and so he fervently invoked Baba's grace.

The invisible voice again drew the writer's attention to the girl's forehead. There was a distinct vermilion mark, suggesting that she had just visited the Ganesh temple across the street from Om Sai Mandir. This was a wonderful clue. Next, the voice suggested, "Ask her to run a race with you. That way she won't resist your help."

It worked. The girl cheerfully ran in the direction of the temple. When they reached the temple's cafeteria a group of people were frantically looking for the girl and as soon as they saw her they felt very relieved. It was a wonderful reunion -- all hugs and kisses.

How did the author reach the spot just when the girl was lost? Who was the invisible voice guiding him through the entire situation? It was none other than Baba. Were it not for Baba's help, the innocent child could have fallen in serious danger.

When devotees are in harm's way, Baba cannot but rush to their help. This has been the experience of countless devotees. When Baba was physically present in Shirdi, a devotee

visited the place to seek His blessings. As is normally the case, some villagers misguided the man into visiting a woman who offered her services to travelers.

The two engaged in a conversation and just when the man was to face spiritual downfall, the door slammed open and he saw Baba physically standing there. Baba made hand gestures, indicating as if that you have come to seek my blessings and is this what you engage in? The devotee immediately left the place and was saved by Baba's timely warning.

Nanasaheb Chandorkar, too, was saved from physical harm because of Baba's vigilance. Nana was on a pilgrimage to a shrine that was situated on a hill. When he was climbing the hill, he felt intensely thirsty and extremely weak.

He prayed to Baba and at that very moment a man came to him and offered water. It need not be mentioned that the man was none other than Sainath. In fact, at that very instance, Baba remarked to villagers at Shirdi that he just gone to deliver water to Nana. None understood this comment but when Nana visited Shirdi, the purport of Baba's remark became clear.

Our beloved Baba keeps an ever-watchful eye on His children and He ensures our safety and welfare in every way possible. He is ever vigilant and ever-ready to help everyone.

DIVINE WISDOM

Man should be the master of his behaviour; he should not be led away by the impulse of the moment; he must always be conscious of what is good for him. He should carry on his daily tasks such that he does not make others suffer or suffer himself. Be calm, unruffled and collected. The more you develop charity for all beings, contrition at your own faults, fear of sin and love of God, the more firmly established you will be in Shanti (peace).

- July 02, 2008, BABA

Guru, The Eternal Guide

By The Sai Sandesh Team, Adapted from Sai Sandesh, July 2004, V1, I1

Oh mankind, worship and install in the mind the feet of the Guru; it is very difficult to cross the ocean of life and death, but the Guru can safely carry you to the shore of divinity. This was the first bhajan sung by Baba himself. Baba was calling all those suffering in the endless rounds of births and deaths to worship the feet of the Guru, who was announcing Himself, and who had come again for taking upon Himself the burden of those who sought refuge in Him.

Once, Emperor Shivaji and his minister were going on an evening stroll. They came across a Buddhist monk. Immediately, Shivaji removed his crown and prostrated at the monk's feet. The minister thought Shivaji had demeaned his stature. The righteous emperor sensed these feelings and wanted to teach him a lesson. One day, he asked the minister to bring the head of a goat, a sheep, and a human. The minister collected the goat and sheep heads. He went to a burial ground and cut the head of a dead person. Shivaji commanded him to sell them. The heads of the sheep and goat were sold in no time, but none came to buy the human head. The emperor then ordered it to be given at no cost.

The minister took the human head to the market and waited there for a couple of days. Despite his best efforts, nobody was willing to accept it. The emperor said, "You felt sad when I placed my head at the feet of a monk. Do you realize that the same would be the fate of our heads too, when we leave our mortal coils? We should sanctify our lives by serving noble souls." Material wealth is transient.

What is the significance of Guru Poornima? "Gu" means darkness and "ru" means light [the act of removal of darkness]. Guru is thus the one who illumines the path to divinity.

Poornima stands for the cool full moon light. Full moon symbolizes a mind with total illumination. It is spotless.

Shankaracharya had five disciples. Padmapada, was pure-hearted and always engaged in serving his Guru. He considered himself as a dasa [servant]. While others would be engaged in studying scriptures, Padmapada would busy himself in serving the Guru.

Once, on his way back from the other bank of the river, he did not realize that the Ganga was in spate. As he was crossing the river, it rose up to the level of his neck. He looked around, but had no fear whether he would be washed away by the swelling waters. His only worry was how to take the clothes to the Guru even at the cost of his life. Placing the clothes on his head and chanting the word, "Guruji, Guruji," he continued wading through the river. Because of his intense devotion, at every step he took there was a lotus-shaped stone on which he could place his foot. He thereby earned the appellation "Padmapada." Shankaracharya called him and imparted his teachings to him. He told Padmapada: "Service to the Guru is a great virtue. You have adored the Guru as God. Guru represents the Divine Trinity." Then, he imparted to Padmapada the sacred truth. Padmapada could then repeat the entire Vedic texts at one stroke.

Although a true Guru can lead the disciple to enlightenment, in modern times there is a scarcity of such perfected beings. In today's time, God alone is the Guru. What greater proof than the fact that Baba himself has come as the world's divine teacher and is imparting his teachings to all. One only needs to look inside and the inner Guru will safely lead us to the shore of divinity.

Sri Viswamji's Visit - July 10; Guru Poornima - July 18

Sai Ram,

Sri Viswaguru Viswamji will be visiting Om Sai Mandir on Thursday, July 10 at 7.00 PM. All are welcome to seek his blessings and participate in a divine discourse. This is an opportunity of a lifetime. Don't miss it.

Guru Poornima Celebrations will be held at Om Sai Mandir on Friday, July 18, 2008. The celebrations will start at 7.45 AM and will continue until 9.00 PM. A day full of prayers and festivities is planned. For a detailed schedule and directions, please visit the temple's official website: www.OmSaiMandir.org

As always, you can call us at 1.718.461.0454.

Gangadhar Rao Chalasani, MD

BE LIKE THE SQUIRREL

THE EDITOR, SAI SANDESH TEAM

In the legend of Ramayana one cannot but help notice the mighty contribution of the little squirrel, the same squirrel that was blessed thrice. First, for being able to make a contribution to the Lord's cause; second, for being blessed by Lord Rama; and third, for being sanctified by His holy touch, a mark of which is still borne by descendants of the squirrel race.

When in order to reach Lanka Lord Rama was getting a bridge built over the Indian Ocean, millions of members of the monkey army were gathering large stones and mountains for the construction. When the monkeys were busy constructing the bridge, a little squirrel busied itself in carrying small pebbles to the site of construction. It would run and carry small pebbles in its mouth and empty them at the place where huge stones were being assembled. The squirrel's small size was not a deterrent to its gigantic determination and devotion.

A band of monkeys noticed this unusual behavior and tossed the squirrel out in an act of mockery. Their apparent cruelty turned out to be an act of blessing, a blessing seldom secured by even the greatest of gods, for the squirrel landed straight into the hands of the Lord Himself. [What a beautiful lesson this is. When the world tosses us out, the Lord's ever-protecting hands are always ready to save us.]

The all-knowing, ever-merciful Lord feigned ignorance for the sake of teaching the world and asked the squirrel: "What is it that you were trying to accomplish, my child?" The meek creature humbly replied, "Lord, I am very small in size and I cannot carry big rocks, but I was very eager to contribute to your cause and was therefore carrying these small pebbles in my mouth. I did not want to lose this opportunity to serve you and so I tried performing service in a manner that befits my size, strength, and abilities."

When the squirrel fell into the hands of the Lord, three beautiful lines were imprinted on its back, and Lord Rama blessed the squirrel with the boon that all its descendants would bear the same three marks on their backs. This act was a beautiful lesson for mankind. The big works being performed by giant, able-bodied monkeys did not catch the Lord's attention, but this little act of service that was being performed with sincere devotion ultimately won blessings.

Even in this Kaliyuga (age of unrighteousness), this truth was demonstrated by a little child of Swami. When Sri Sathya Sai Baba was constructing a super specialty hospital, huge project plans were being drawn out. Top engineers,

doctors, project managers, and the elite of elite were eagerly awaiting a chance to contribute to this magnanimous project. All along a little boy, a student in Swami's university, was wondering how he could contribute to this project.

During the construction of the hospital Swami would often spend hours behind closed doors conferencing with engineers and doctors. One afternoon, the doors of the interview room opened suddenly and the Lord appeared holding a letter in His hand. There was a twinkle in His eye.

When the letter was read aloud, all were dumbfounded to hear the plea of a small child. When all other students were giving their clothes for professional laundering, this little boy was washing them with his own hands. This went on for months until the boy finally managed to save hundred rupees. This currency of love was enclosed with the letter where he had poured his heart out to Swami.

Dear Bhagavan:

You have given so much to me and to every one here. You have provided free education for me and all my brothers and now I hear that you are constructing a BIG Hospital what will provide the most modern health care facilities to every section of the society totally free of cost.

Bhagavan! I also want to be a part of your glorious mission but I am just a small boy and I don't know how I can contribute. Bhagavan, my parents are extremely poor but in spite of that they send me a little extra pocket money.

Bhagavan! For the last three months I have not given my clothes to the dbody. While all the other boys were sleeping in the night I washed my clothes and thus I managed to save a little money. Bhagavan! I have also resisted the temptations of toffees, chocolates and all the other things and thus managed to save money.

Bhagavan! I offer this 100 rupee note to you. I feel ashamed and small to give you so little but even if this money can be used to buy a small brick for the new hospital, I will be the happiest child in the world.

Your Loving Son¹

Baba held this note very close to His heart and declared with utmost joy that this single note was more than millions of rupees for Him. The money was not important at all; it was all the feeling and devotion that went behind it that had touched the Lord's heart and won His grace. How many times do we stop from undertaking beneficial devotional or service activities with the fear that our little acts won't matter to the world or to God. Had the squirrel or the little boy paid heed to such discouraging thoughts could they ever have won God's 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
Abhishekam: \$51
Satyanarayana Vrata: \$81
Vahana Puja: \$15
Annadan: \$251
To sponsor pujas, call (718) 461-0454.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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.

Baba Lights Lamps with Water

Baba provided a brief peek into his divine powers by performing the miracle of lighting lamps with water, instead of oil. They were the early days of Baba's stay in Shirdi, when many villagers had not recognized His divinity. They considered him to be an ordinary renunciate.

At one point of time, the local merchants of Shirdi formed a pact and decided to cease giving Baba oil gratis. They wanted to see what Baba would do without their favors. Of course, the Lord had his own plans and wanted to use this opportunity to inculcate a few moral lessons in the hearts of his children.

When the grocers refused to provide oil, Sainath left their place unperturbed. The merchants, intent on testing Baba's greatness, followed Sai to his place of residence, Dwarakamai. From their place of hiding, they witnessed Baba following an unusual course of action. The Lord of Shirdi took some water in his mouth and poured it into a pot, as if sanctifying and consecrating the same. He then filled all the lamps with this water and lit them. Much to the mischief makers' surprise, the lamps burnt bright all-night.

They later repented for their act and sought Baba's pardon. The merciful Lord immediately granted His forgiveness but urged them to be truthful in future.

What is considered a miracle in the realm of mortals was really a manifestation of Baba's will. For the one who created this universe, transformation from one form of matter (water) to another (oil) is of no significance. Not only water, Lord Sai has transformed countless devotees from ordinary to extraordinary. This, too, poses no difficulty for the all-powerful Lord. He uplifts His children from lower states of existence to saint-like conditions in the wink of an eye. The act is as easy for Him, as it is for a powerful gush of wind to uplift nearly weightless cotton balls.

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

FROM PAIN COMES PLEASURE BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

Life has its ups and downs. Events in life occur in an almost circular fashion, periodically alternating between pain and pleasure and joy and sorrow -- mimicking a merry-go-round as if. Despite their unpopularity, unhappy moments of our lives play an important role in furthering -- almost shaping -- the spiritual growth of the jivātmā (individual soul).

The darkest phase of night occurs just before sunrise, welcoming the light that is to shatter the reign of darkness. Painful moments in our lives, too, serve as precursors to their happier counterparts, and the peak of their intensity is a sure indication that the light of God is going to fill our lives with unending happiness and bliss.

When Swami, as a lad, made the divine declaration proclaiming His divinity, many disbelieved Him and even went to the extent of tormenting His physical form. They subjected His body to untold, unbearable suffering that cannot be described in words. Through the entire ordeal, Swami smiled to prove to the world -- and to set an example -- that He is beyond pain and pleasure. Through this suffering, however, Swami's divinity shone like a million suns and He is now worshipped in every corner of the world.

The Guru Charitra narrates the wonderful account of a devotee whom the Lord Dattatreya visited in His physical form. The Lord appeared at the doorstep of the devotee in the form of a monk begging for food. The devotee was not at home and his wife attended to the needs of the Guru. On His way out, the Lord uprooted a vegetable plant that was the only source of meals for the family. When the wife discovered this, she was petrified and wailed inconsolably. The devotee returned to find a wife bemoaning the loss of the only source of their sustenance. He was a true devotee, however, and explained to her the importance of equanimity in the wake of pain and pleasure, both products of our own actions. After the explanation, he tried to replant the tree and in the process discovered a pot of gold that was buried there. Had the Lord not inflicted the momentary pain, could the family have discovered the buried treasure?

Lord Krishna gave a unique demonstration about this truth as well. A brahmin devotee once came to see His blessings. On securing Krishna's blessings, the brahmin's cow (his only source of sustenance) died immediately. Arjuna was by Krishna's side when this happened and he did not lose the opportunity to question the strange occurrence. The Divine One immediately explained that He wanted to grace the brahmin with divine blessings, a pre-requisite for which

would be unconditional reliance on God. Reliance on one's own possessions would only hinder the divine blessings that were to fill the brahmin's life. In the worldly sense this event would be considered a tragedy, but in reality it served as blessing in disguise, for the brahmin's responsibility was being borne by the merciful Lord Himself.

In all the above stories, pain was the seed that planted the tree of happiness. In addition to serving as a fertile soil for long-term happiness, pain also has another benefit.

Ancient wisdom and seers often liken suffering to a furnace that molds gold. In order to mold raw gold into fine jewelry, it is subjected through the intense heat of a furnace. The intensity of the heat plays a critical role in softening the pure metal. Once it softens, it becomes very easy to mold it into fine jewelry. Swami often calls His devotees "bangaru". In His eyes we are pure gold and in order to soften us and carve us into beautiful jewels that can be adorned by Divinity, we are often challenged with the worldly fire of trials and tribulations. As painful as these challenges appear, they play a beneficial role in carving us into wonderful instruments of God. One need not go far to look for proof of this. Reviewing our own lives, we will find that the best of our qualities express themselves after the worst of circumstances.

Night and day, summer and winter, joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure, suffering and happiness -- all of these represent opposites that constitute the dual nature of this universe. One follows the other unfailingly, repeatedly reminding us about the fleeting nature of things and carefully reiterating the importance of equanimity (undisturbed state of mind in joy and sorrow) in our lives.

God Does Everything for the Best Oka Chinna Katha

There was once a Minister to a King who was in the habit of declaring whatever happened was for one's good. One day the King cut his finger while slicing a piece of sugar cane. Seeing the bleeding finger the Minister said as usual "God does everything for the best". The King flew into a rage and said "Here I am suffering with the pain of a bleeding finger and you say God does everything for the best. Enough of your philosophy. Is this the way of consoling me? How can this be for the best when the pain is intense and real? The King immediately committed the Minister to prison. Even then the Minister said calmly "Even this sentence is for my best."

A few days later, the King went alone for hunting in a forest. When the hunting expedition was over the King was resting under a tree. Just then the servants of a certain tribal chief of the forest seized the King, bound his hand and foot. The King questioned them: "Why do you bind me? What are you going to do with me?" The tribesmen replied: "We are going to sacrifice you at the altar of our goddess Kali. It is the custom to offer her a human sacrifice once a year. The time has arrived. We have been looking out for a human being. We are fortunate in having found you." The King remonstrated: "Let me go, I am the King of the realm, you cannot kill me for the sacrifice." The tribesmen laughed and said: "We are glad that this year's sacrifice would be unique and our goddess will be highly pleased because we are going to offer as sacrifice a great personage."

The King was carried and duly placed on a sacrificial altar. Things were ready for the death blow; the priest noticed the bandage on his left hand forefinger. They removed the bandage only to find that a portion of it was cut. The priest said: "This man is not acceptable as a sacrifice to our goddess. A man with a defect in his body is not fit for sacrifice. Set him free."

The King remembered the words of the Minister uttered when his finger was cut "God does everything for the best." He realised that the injury to his finger alone had saved him from death. He at once hurried home and went straight to the prison to set the Minister free. He said, "I seek your forgiveness for the rash and cruel treatment accorded to you." The Minister said: "Your Majesty; you have done no harm. There is nothing to forgive." The King once again questioned: "Why did you say that my sending you to prison is for your good?" The Minister replied: "If I had not been confined in prison, I would have accompanied you when you went for hunting. I would have been in your Company.

When the tribesmen came to know that you were unfit for sacrifice, they would have chosen me and offered me as a sacrifice. So God does everything for the best."

Cross the River Oka Chinna Katha

There was a pundit who led a disciplined life, sticking to a prearranged time table. He woke up from sleep in the early hours of the morning, recited pranava and later, after ablutions, drank a cup of milk at 7 a.m. exactly.

Sometimes the milk-maid arrived late, for she lived on the other side of a river that flowed between the area in which she lived and the area in which the pundit lived. She had to catch a ferry to cross over the river with the milk. The ferry boat either started a little earlier or a little later. So, sometimes by the time she reached the Pundit's house it used to be very late.

One day the Pundit scolded her and said "You are upsetting my disciplined life. Don't you know that I must have my cup of milk at 7 a.m.? Why do you depend on that boat to take you across? Just repeat the name of Rama. You will be able to walk across the river. Rama will see that you do not get drowned."

The maid being very simple and unsophisticated had faith in the words of the Pundit. Next day, the maid repeated the name of Rama and she just walked across the river. The Pundit questioned her: "How could you come on time?" The milk-maid replied: "Sir, I repeated the name of Rama as you instructed yesterday, and I could just walk across." The Pundit was flabbergasted. He did not believe. He just drank the milk and said: "Let's now go to the bank of the river. Let me see you walk across the river." The maid stepped into the river repeating the name of Rama; she could just walk across. The maid requested the Pundit to follow her. But the Pundit knew that he would not be able to walk across the river, because he did not have faith in what he himself had said - the power of the Name.

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