



# SAI SANDESH

The official monthly newsletter of

## Om Sai Mandir

A Non Profit Organization

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# Sincere Prayers Can Overcome Destiny Itself

By The Sai Sandesh Team

A sincere prayer from the heart's innermost recess can melt the butter-like heart of the Lord within a fraction of a second, so says our beloved Baba. The entire universe is but a minute manifestation of the Divine Lord and when His heart is melted, there is nothing a devotee cannot attain. Such a devotee can even alter the writ of destiny itself, for destiny is nothing but a manifestation of Divine Will in accordance to one's karmas.

Mrikandu, a great sage, and his wife Marudvati offered intense prayers to Lord Shiva. In response to their sincere devotion, the benevolent Lord appeared to them and offered a boon. The boon, however, involved a choice where the saintly couple could either opt for a hundred long-lived but foolish sons or one intelligent son who would live for a period of sixteen years. The couple willingly chose the latter and as a consequence of which was born the highly-gifted Markandeya.

This divine child grew up to be a very handsome and intelligent youth who possessed divine splendor in abundance. He soon became the beloved lad of the entire village and all praised him and held him in great awe and reverence. As he started growing in age, soon came the time when he was about to turn sixteen. The parents became morose at the prospect of the death of such a young and intelligent son and expressed their disappointment to the lad.

Markandeya, however, was wise beyond his years and he consoled the parents with the following words: "My dear parents, what you say is true. Indeed my destined lifespan is a mere sixteen years, but always remember that the Divine Lord is above and beyond such laws and at His mere will, He can alter the destiny of the entire universe, what to speak of my destiny then. When such a powerful and compassionate Lord is pleased, there is nothing the devotee cannot attain. I am going to melt His heart with my prayers." The parents were immensely pleased with this exposition and blessed their son to attain success.

Empowered by his parents' blessings, the lad lost no

time and set out on his quest to please God. With intense fervor, he worshipped the Lord and prayed to the divine Shiva Lingam with sincere devotion. Fear of death did not weaken him; if at all, it strengthened his resolve. As his sixteenth birthday grew nearer, Markandeya started intensifying his prayers. On the predestined day of the sixteenth birthday, the emissaries of death arrived on the spot but failed to ebb the life of the devotee who was so deeply engrossed in prayers.



At their failure, Lord Yama himself arrived on the scene and threw the noose around Markandeya's neck. Much to his dismay, however, the noose landed around the Shiva Lingam and from it emerged the most powerful Lord Shiva. In an ensuing battle, Lord Shiva soon subdued Yama to the point of death and ordered him to spare Markandeya's life. He also granted Markandeya the boon of immortality. Since Lord Shiva nearly killed Yama (death itself), He is addressed as

Kaalakalaya (one who brought death to death himself).

In the *Sai Satcharitra*, there is the story of a devotee whose destiny (as revealed by his horoscope) foretold death on a particular day. When he came in a dejected condition to Baba, the Lord of Shirdi declared: "Let us see how death kills." That evening when the devotee went to ease himself, he saw a snake sitting there. True to Baba's words, however, he escaped death and his destiny was changed due to the Supreme Will of Sainath. In the *Satcharitra*, Baba says, "Nothing will harm he who remembers me. I will draw my devotees out from the jaws of death."

Such is the power of prayer. It can alter the course of any event in life. No calamity is too big to overcome if a devotee applies himself to sincere prayer and faith in the compassionate Lord. Nothing can ever be impossible for such a devotee. All that is needed is a daily schedule of prayer that the devotee will follow consistently.

# As You Think So Shall You Become

## By The Sai Sandesh Team

A disciple once asked Ramakrishna Paramahansa for advice on meditation. At this, the saint asked the disciple: "What do you love the most in this world?" The disciple replied that he loved his buffalo the most. "Then meditate on your buffalo," said the master. For a year from then, the disciple spent day and night meditating on the buffalo. At the end of a year, the master visited the disciple. The door was locked from inside; when he knocked and asked who was inside, the disciple replied, "I am the buffalo." Through constant thinking, he had become one with the buffalo.

**"Whatever we think constantly, we become that."**

Sri Ramakrishna would often assume different roles while worshipping. Sita, Radha, Hanuman--these were some of the devotional attitudes he adopted. During one of his moods, he was worshipping God in the servant-master spirit as epitomized by Hanuman. In that state, he developed a real tail. Such is the power of the mind. Baba teaches that our thoughts are very powerful and that whatever we think constantly, we become that object. For this reason, we should cultivate good thoughts and constantly meditate on God.

Baba often says in His discourses that God besets man from all sides and is constantly saying "*tathasthu!*" (bless you) in response to our thoughts. Thoughts, in that sense, shape our destiny, and if one were to observe carefully, all events in our lives are nothing but a reflection of our own inner thoughts.

The mind constantly seeks to acquire objects and possessions that grant temporary pleasure. The moment these objects are lost, one experiences grief again. What is the use of running after such objects? God, the source of bliss, can grant permanent bliss. Taking us away from this goal, it is our mind that prompts us to enjoy objects of desire and thus causes our downfall. Like a pendulum, it sways from one thought to another, from one desire to the next, and from joy to sorrow. Fueling the mind's vagaries are the five senses: sound, touch, form, taste, and smell. It experiences the external world through these five and subsequently enjoys joy or grief that arises therefrom. In order to escape the alternating phenomenon (duality) of joy and sorrow, one should cultivate unconcern or equanimity

that allows one to experience both joy and sorrow as God's grace. Such an attitude leads to the state of bliss. It is imperative, therefore, to bring the mind under control by freeing ourselves from the entire process of mental agitation. Constant agitation is the mind's natural state, however. *Manana sthithihi manaha* (the state of cogitation or remembrance is the mind). Through constant rumination over one's sensory experiences and desires, the mind acquires a form and by relating the experiences to the "I" as the experiencer, the consciousness of a distinctive individual (ego) arises. The process of merger with God therefore requires the elimination of all desires which impede our path to God.

Baba explained this principle through a beautiful illustration. Chaitanya Mähäprabhuji once visited Brindavan, where Lord, Krishna had walked many centuries ago. The divine environment's effect was electrifying and Sri Mähäprabhuji became completely oblivious to everything, including food and water. Yet, he relished the desire to have food that was consecrated in Krishna's temple. God appeared in his dream one night and admonished him for entertaining even that desire. Chaitanya immediately gave up even that desire and experienced complete union with the Lord.

Lord Buddha, before attaining *nirvāna* (self realization), called his brother, Ananda, to his side in order to impart his last message. The brother was in tears, but Buddha told him: "Ananda, it was for realizing this blissful state that I had striven all these years. Why do you shed tears? How many are able to secure such bliss? Few. You are looking only at my earthly body; you cannot know the internal bliss I am experiencing. I suffered a great deal over the past thirty years because of the aberrations of my mind. It was the mind that stood between me and self realization. Today, I am free from the hold of my mind. That is the cause of my bliss. When the mind is absent there is bliss."

Let us make a firm determination to continue our journey Godward and make serious attempts to control our mind and thoughts.

# The Unconditional Surrender Of Kakasaheb Dikshit

## By The Sai Sandesh Team

Surrender is a commonly used, seldomly practiced term. There is one devotee, however, whose unconditional reliance on Sai stands out as a beacon light for the rest of us. Hari Sitaram Dikshit (a.k.a. Kakasaheb) came in contact with Sai Baba around the year 1910. In the physical sense, Dikshit was introduced to Baba by Nanasaheb, but in the spiritual realm, it was Sai who had drawn Kaka to Him.

During his contact with Baba, Kakasaheb experienced numerous spiritual and miraculous phenomena that convinced him about Sainath's divinity and he gradually found himself surrendering to His feet. Through steady practice of *naama smarana* (constant contemplation of the divine name), what started as a tiny spark of devotion assumed the form of an uncontrollable fire that burnt all passions and worldly desires.

Kakasaheb developed such devotional zeal that he would rely on Baba for every matter. When Dikshit's surrender reached the pinnacle, Baba gave him the opportunity to experience the fruit of unconditional surrender. Due to adverse circumstances, Kakasaheb, who was a lawyer by profession, found his practice diminishing precipitously. This was not a cause of concern, for he knew that his Lord was watching over him. After losing all income, there came a time when he had to repay a loan of Rs. 30,000 (a large sum in those days).

One night, Kakasaheb saw a dream in which he was saying, "I know such and such individuals and with their help I can easily repay the debt." When he woke up, he chided himself for relying on mere mortals when his beloved guru Sai was there to protect him always. From that day, Dikshit decided to do nothing about the loan but sat calm and unruffled, knowing fully well that Sai Baba would rescue him--what perfect reliance! A strange incidence occurred. When the day of repayment was dawning, a young man came to Kaka with Rs. 30,000 (just what was needed). He was the son of Kakasaheb's late friend and he wanted Mr. Dikshit's advice on the best way to invest the sum.

Kakasaheb counseled the boy on different investment strategies and then gave an alternate suggestion that he could loan the amount to him on interest. Dikshit

also explained that as his income had subsided there was serious risk. The boy was adamant, however, that the sum be taken by Kakasaheb himself as he trusted his word over anything else--it was Baba who had led the boy to Dikshit and rescued him at the "right time".

On another occasion, Sainath staged a unique drama to test Kaka's faith. There happened to be an old, sickly goat in Shirdi. The Lord of Shirdi made a very strange request and asked devotees to cut the goat with one stroke. Many devotees in Shirdi were orthodox brahmins averse to any form of killing. They were shocked to find their spiritual preceptor demanding a sacrifice of this nature. Many fled from the place to avoid the predicament. Kakasaheb was present on the occasion and when Baba asked him to strike the goat, he immediately readied himself to perform an act he could not have done even in his wildest dreams. Just when the axe was a few inches away from the goat's throat, Baba ordered Dikshit to stop.

This child of Baba had passed a severe test. The test was severe for a saintly person like Dikshit but he did not consider pros and cons. He simply knew he had obey the command of his beloved Lord without questioning. What perfect surrender. To obey his master, Kaka had set aside all beliefs. But, why did Baba request the sacrifice of an innocent goat? The author interprets the goat to symbolize man's animal qualities, primarily the ones arising out of weakness and attachment to senses. Not only Kaka, isn't Sai asking all of us to sacrifice our animal qualities--lust, anger, greed, pride, jealousy, and attachment?

During life's journey we come across occasions where we find our faith and surrender being tested. During tough times, do we start questioning Baba and flee from Him or do we act like Dikshit and face what Baba has ordained for us? We should know that He won't let anything untoward happen and that He is there to rescue us at every step. God knows what is best for us and has shaped our lives as a process of eliminating karma and evolving spiritually. He doesn't get elated to watch us suffer. Experiences in life are not designed to hurt us, but rather to help us evolve into spiritual beings (our true nature). By surrendering to His will, we allow this to happen naturally.

## 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

Ekadasa Rudram: Daily 8.30 AM to 11.30 AM

### PUJA SPONSORSHIP

Archana: \$11  
Abishekam: \$51  
Satyanarayana Vrata: \$81  
Vahana Puja: \$15  
Annadan: \$251  
To sponsor pujas, call (718) 461-0454.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### March 2009

Tues, Mar. 10: Holi/Holika Poornima  
Fri, Mar. 27: Ugadi/Gudi Padwa/Cheti Chand  
Telugu/Kannada/Marathi/Konkani/Kashmiri/  
Sindhi New Year

## Sai Wisdom

"Only trees grown in fertile soil can yield good fruits. Those which are grown in saline soil will bear only poor quality of fruits. So also, only in the hearts which are pure and unsullied can such holy feelings and virtues like truth, compassion, forbearance, selflessness grow and shine. Like a farmer who toils to cultivate his field, a Bhakta (devotee) must put in efforts to cultivate the Name of the Lord in his heart in order to reap the harvest -- the Lord Himself."

—BABA

Source: *Thought For The Day, Prashanti Nilayam, March 05, 2009*

## SHIVARATRI -- FEB 23, 2009

Om Sai Mandir



## Devotees' Experiences

### By Jitender Verma, Chandigarh



After my marriage to Rashmi on November 12, 2003, we visited Ooty, Kodaicanal, and on our way back we halted at Bangalore to visit our relatives. Since our return to Chandigarh was delayed by three to four days, our relatives, who are not devotees, suggested that we take darshan of Baba at Puttaparthi.

#### Visit to Prashanti Nilayam

We visited Prashanti Nilayam on December 2003 and were fortunate to have Baba's darshan the following morning. The darshan had a miraculous effect on both of us and we felt instantly attracted to Him. We stayed there for a few days and returned on January 06, 2004.

#### His darshan

After our return, I was constantly thinking about Baba. One night, when I was sleeping, I heard a distinct voice: "Hey, son." I woke up and rushed to the lobby--lo, I could see Baba everywhere in our house. I had not heard Baba's voice before but when I heard his discourse on Sanskaar TV, I was convinced I had heard the same voice the previous night.

On another occasion, we were at our relative's house for an all-night vigil. There, Baba appeared in His physical form and encouraged me and my wife to play the role of Lord Shiva and Parvati, a role that we were hesitating to enact. Baba added further, "I am Shiva and Shakti, do play the part."

#### He visits us

Baba gave us a third revelation when I was half asleep one afternoon. In response to the doorbell, I woke up and rushed to the door. Before opening the door, I peeped through the window to see who was outside.

I could see a beautiful red car parked in front of our house. It was dazzling with brass railings and on the rear seat was a king's throne. When I opened the door, the car had vanished.

I returned to my bedroom and fell asleep. This time, Baba came in my dream and told me, "I have come to take you to Parthi. Come with me." He was majestically seated in a red golf cart.

These experiences had a deep impact on our mind and me and my wife decided to visit Parthi. Despite severe resource constraints, Baba arranged money for the visit and we stayed at Prashanti Nilayam from November 18 till December 01, 2004. During this visit, we decided to spend the rest of our lives at Prashanti Nilayam and wrote separate letters requesting Baba to respond to our prayers. He did not take our letters, so we mailed them.

#### Return to Puttaparthi

When we returned home, there was a surprise waiting for us. I had received an interview call from the General Hospital at Prashanti Nilayam. I returned to Puttaparthi on December 14.

When I came for the interview, Baba sent a word that I was too young and should remain with my family. He also assured me that I would be called at a later stage.

I was disappointed but felt happy at the thought that He had immediately responded to my letter.

#### The 2014 prophecy

When I returned home, Swami appeared in my dream and said, "I will call you to Pranshanti Nilayam in 2014." Strange are the ways of Baba.

**Jitender Verma is an audiologist/speech pathologist at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh.**

Wishing you a Very Happy New Year for the following upcoming festivals:

Ugadi/Gudi Padwa, Cheti Chand  
Telugu/Kannada/Marathi/Konkani/Kashmiri/  
Sindhi New Year

## Holi, The Festival Of Colors

Holi, the festival of colors, is marked by the arrival of spring and is celebrated on the day after the full moon. There are different versions of stories that describe the origin of this festival. Some even attribute its significance to celebrating good harvests and fertility of the land. There seems to be some general consensus, however, on the story that describes the victory of good over evil. The story centers around an arrogant demon-king, Hiranyakashyapa, who disliked his son worshipping Lord Vishnu, and not the demon-king himself. What ensued were relentless attempts to defeat the young boy and his faith. The king ordered the execution of the boy on several occasions and yet failed each time because the boy's beloved Lord was protecting him on every occasion. Frustrated with recurring defeats, the king finally requested his sister, Holika, who had the boon of being immune to fire, to jump into fire with Prahlada on her lap. The demoness had on several prior occasions come out of fire unscathed and hence jumped at the opportunity to prove her loyalty to her brother. Wonder of wonders, the Lord protected Prahlada this time as well and Holika burned to ashes while he came out of the fire unharmed. Holi is also considered to be a symbolic reenactment of this story and bonfires are lit at every nook and corner of the country. Offerings of coconut and sweets are made in this fire and the victory of devotion is reminisced every year.

The colorful festival, which follows the next day, also finds a strong association with the divine love of Krishna and Radha and is celebrated with much grandeur in the holy cities of Vrindavan and Mathura--the two cities that were the dwelling place of Lord Krishna's avataric career.

Colored powder and water are tossed around on this day, accompanied by marvelous processions, folk dances, and general gaiety. Young and old, alike merge into the colors of the festival, forgetting all differences of caste, race, gender, and social status. All, it appears, get colored in the color of joy. The festival starts on the night of full moon when bonfires are lit on street corners, symbolically cleaning the air of evil spirits and bad thoughts, personified by Holika. The next morning streets are filled with people running about coloring almost every visible person.

The festival is celebrated all across India but Mathura, Vrindavan, Nandagaon, and Barsnar have their own unique style for celebrating this festival.

Wish you all a Very Happy Holi!

## **OM SAI MANDIR**

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## **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Have a suggestion, article, or idea for *Sai Sandesh*? Please e-mail our editorial team at [saisandesh@omsaimandir.org](mailto:saisandesh@omsaimandir.org)

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