



SAI SANDESH

The official monthly newsletter of

Om Sai Mandir

A Non Profit Organization

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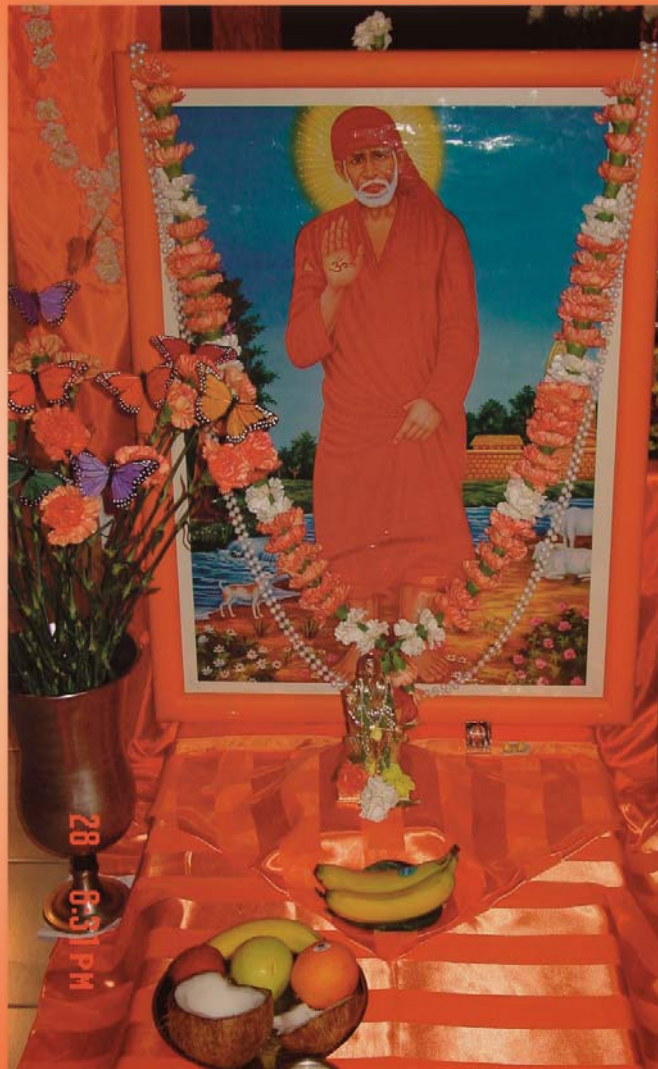
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Jun - Aug 2009

Shirdi Sai Jayanti Special

Volume 6, Issue 6,7, & 8



Baba Can Give You Anything

By The Sai Sandesh Team

“Ask and ye shall be given,” says the Holy Bible. Our Sai, too, has given us His assurance that He will give us not just what we ask, but also the unasked and most beneficial gifts from His treasury. “My treasury is every full,” declared Shirdi Sainath, “and yet all come to ask from me petty boons. None ask for what I have come to give.” As Baba often says, “Don’t go to God and ask for a handkerchief,” for these are trifles in comparison to His real treasury.

An impoverished brahmin accosted Lord Krishna when He was taking a walk with Arjuna, His friend and beloved devotee. The Brahmin touched Lord Krishna’s feet and went home. Much to his surprise, however, he lost a cow that was his only possession and sole means of sustenance. Soon thereafter, Duryodhana visited Krishna and touched His feet. No sooner had he done so, Krishna conferred a boon that he would be blessed with immeasurable wealth.

Arjuna was perplexed and expressed doubt over Krishna’s apparent partiality. He was wondering why the brahmin, who was pure and devout, lost his only means of survival, whereas Duryodhana, who was wicked and wealthy, won Krishna’s favor in the form of riches. Krishna responded:

“Arjuna, you cannot understand my ways. There is always a deep significance and mystery behind every act I perform. Common mortals often blame me, but my ways are always beneficial in the long run. The brahmin is very pure and my beloved devotee. I desire to personally take care of his welfare and so I took away the cow and replaced it with My own protection and grace. I will ensure his dishes will always be full. Also, since he won’t have any pride and egoism due to a lack of possessions, he will depend only on Me and this humility will enhance his devotion and expedite his path to liberation. Duryodhana, on the other hand, is wicked. I have blessed him with more wealth than he can handle, so he will soon lose all his good qualities and thus stray away from Me. He is sure to perish due to his own egoism.”

Akkalkot Maharaj had a devotee by the name of Balappa. In Balappa’s presence, He would often bless His devotees with many boons, none of which were given to Balappa. Balappa knew, however, that service to the sadguru is the only discipline and hence obediently served the master without ever asking for anything. In the end, Maharaj declared that Balappa was to be His successor and the one whom He had chosen to make into an image of Himself. It was for this reason that Balappa was denied all other pleasures. He was chosen, however, to receive the highest treasure.



Sathya Sai Baba, in one of His discourses, described the story of an old woman. In an ancient kingdom, the king declared that all his treasures were available for his subjects. Some took jewels, others took gold coins, while still others took away elephants. There was one old lady, however, who went through the entire exhibition but chose nothing. She just walked out. The king, who was observing her, was confused.

He went to her and asked her to accept something. He assured her that there was nothing he wouldn’t grant. The lady kept quiet, however, and said she didn’t desire anything. He requested her once again to accept something.

She was wise and so sought the king’s promise that he would give her whatever she wanted. The king was so pleased with her desirelessness that he assured her he would grant *any* wish, if only she would ask. She then asked for the king himself. He was shocked at the strange request but decided to honor his promise. He then asked her why she chose the king, at which she replied: “Lord, everything you displayed was your property. Had I chosen any of those things I could have only gained those possessions, but now by winning you over, I have gained *everything*.” God is like that. Everything is under His sway. If we choose, He can give us anything that is present in this universe, or even create something for us, but if we act like the wise lady, we can have God Himself. There would be no room to desire anything else in this world, then, for, all belongs to the Lord and all is contained within Him.

Baba's Ever-Watchful Eye

By The Sai Sandesh Team



After attending 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 a temple across the street. 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.

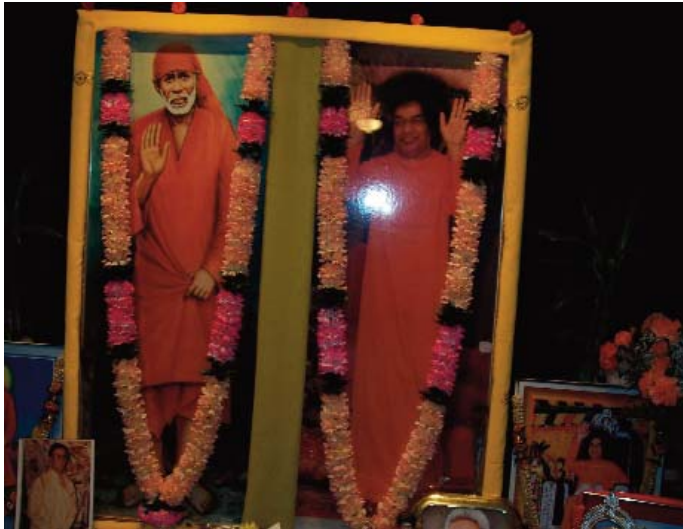
Nanasaheb Chandorkar, too, was saved from physical harm because of Baba's vigilance. Nana was on a pilgrimage to a shrine that was situated on a hill. When he was climbing the hill, he felt intensely thirsty and extremely weak.

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.

God Can Change Destiny

By The Sai Sandesh Team



The warmth of sincere devotion can melt God's butter-soft heart in an instant, and in response to a devotee's plea the Lord becomes like a servitor, willing to extend any service possible.

When the call is sincere, He will alter even destiny and rescue devotees from sorrow. This has been the experience of innumerable devotees.

Once, a mother-in-law was fortunate enough to experience this grace. She was a pious lady who had a big family with many sons and daughter-in-laws. Despite experiencing all forms of happiness, she was not at peace, for none of her children were able to become parents. She visited Puttaparthi with utmost reverence and placed her sorrow at the feet of the Lord of Parthi. He heard her request with compassion but explained that none of her family members were destined to become parents--that was their fate.

She was disheartened but she firmly held Sai's feet and with tear-filled eyes begged Him to intercede. Swami was moved and asked if she believed in Him. She calmly said that His will was supreme and that He could alter destiny itself, if He so willed. Swami was touched by her faith and blessed her. The following year, she came with beautiful grand children.

Obedience to God's teachings is a sure way to draw His response and when a devotee adapts his lifestyle

to match Baba's teachings, Baba is sure to save such a devotee from even the most unalterable writ of destiny.

In the *Sai Satcharita*, there are numerous instances where a devotee was to meet death or a terrible accident, but Baba intervened and saved the devotee.

Once a devotee was intent on visiting Chitali on business purpose. Just before the visit, Baba warned the devotee of upcoming danger. Shirdi Baba posed his hand in the form of a snake and said: "The *lamba buva* (snake) is dangerous but what can he do to the children of Dwarakamai.

The presiding deity (Baba) is merciful; He will always protect." In compliance with Baba's warning and instructions, the devotee took Shama on the trip. True to his word, just when the devotee was reading a newspaper a snake was found unnoticed, but Shama noticed the snake and quickly called for help. Needless to say, the devotee's life was saved. There are many such instances where Baba saved devotees from accidents and even predictions of sure death.

God is so merciful, He cannot but run for His devotees. He is like the hard-working mother who is always busy performing routine household chores--in His case, cosmic-duties. Despite her burdens, the mother always provides for the children's needs and keeps a watchful eye on them. The children may not know or realize this.

When they are safe or at play, she continues performing her chores, but if a child starts crying inconsolably, she will leave everything and run to console her darling. Similarly, God, who bears the love of a thousand mothers, rushes to respond to His children's calls. His simple words will allay all fears and fulfill devotees' wishes.

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

September

Wed, Sept. 2: Onam
Sat, Sept. 19: Devi Navarathri Begins
Sat, Sept. 26: Durgashtami
Mon, Sept. 28: Vijaydashmi/Dussehra
Shri Shirdi Sai Baba Samadhi Utsav and Shri Shirdi Sai Baba's Birthday

SAI WISDOM

The sanctification of the five senses is the way to Truth. If the senses are polluted, of what avail are spiritual exercises? When the water in a tank is polluted, all taps will give only polluted water. Your heart is the tank. When the heart is polluted, the senses are bound to be sullied. When the heart is filled with good thoughts and feelings, all that comes out of the senses - your speech, your vision, your actions - will be pure. The secret of spiritual wisdom is not to be got from scholars or by study. Spiritual understanding can only come from mastery of the senses.

Source: *Thought For The Day*, Prashanti Nilayam, August 12, 2009

WHY FEAR WHEN I AM HERE? A SAI DEVOTEE, NEW YORK

An old knee injury had resulted in a serious tear of my left knee's cartilage (Meniscus). A surgery was recommended but due to some lapse at my end, I had not undergone the treatment. The excruciating pain from the injury relapsed after a period of ten years and I fell to the ground, unable to stand or move. It was almost as if I had lost one leg.

As I helplessly looked at Baba's picture, He diverted my eyes to a car sticker that had the picture of Shirdi Sai Baba with *abhaya hasta mudra* (the blessing hand gesture granting freedom from fear).

I could distinctly read what was written under the picture. The words were "Why fear when I am here."

As soon as I saw the sticker, a miracle happened and as I tried to stand back on my feet I did not experience the slightest pain or discomfort. I have been pain free ever since.

On another occasion, an elderly family who were worried about their health prospects were advised not to worry because Baba would always protect them. At first, the mother of the household did not have faith in these words and would constantly worry about the family's safety.

One night, her husband developed a serious health problem and she panicked at the prospect of what could happen. She was quietly praying within her heart but did not know what steps were needed at the moment. Within moments, however, doctors came to her house even without her calling and she was relieved as they took over the patient's health and healed him from the dangerous condition. She then realized that Baba was indeed with her and that He was always protecting her.

Millions of devotees across the world experience many such acts of protection and grace the moment they invoke Sai's name.

True to His words, Baba is ever-active in protecting His devotees. A sincere, heartfelt call cannot but melt His butter-soft heart.

Devotees' Experiences

By H. Shivaramakrishnan., Flushing, NY

By late July 2008, I was looking for a job as it was about time for graduation from grad school. At the same time, I was in a situation to ask my parents for my wedding. It was impossible for them to even consider my request if I did not have a job. The same was the case with my fiancé's parents. So, getting a job in that situation was not an option, it was a compulsion. Hearing from the radio, news channels and also from my own friends about the diminishing chances for a fresh graduate to get a job, I was ridden with worries and distress and faced with a very challenging situation in my life.

Baba's Call

I was a devotee of Sai Baba back then as well, but my devotion got more amplified through the practical teachings of our adorable Sadguru over a course of events illustrated further. I can literally say that this was the best period of time in my life so far and will continue to remain the same. I started to frequent Om Sai Mandir in Flushing, NY, and in fact it was Baba who pulled me to him like a bird with string attached in its feet. In fact, I could not myself stop going to the mandir on Thursdays no matter how far away from the temple I used to be. I enjoyed the tranquility and divinity that I experienced then and still continuing to experience in our beloved sadguru's company. The joy of being taken care by our sadguru is priceless and cannot be explained in mere words. Back then, it used to alleviate me from my mental faculties and worries. Very very slowly, Baba started to take my burdens on his shoulders and started to become literally my everything. My worries about finding a job slowly lessened and I became more confident in undertaking this herculean task.

Our Guru's subtle moves

Devotees of Baba mention many times that there is no necessity to worry once we land in Baba's arms, He starts to run the show. All that we have to do is stand back and let him take control. In my case, I realized it very slowly as the following events took place. Few months passed by and it slowly became a battlefield for my fiancé as her parents were looking for a bridegroom for her. To add fuel to the fire, her parents received several proposals from many qualified grooms and I still did not find a job. All of a sudden, from thin air, I started getting interview calls and was blessed with three job offers, out of which I chose one. I was elated and overjoyed by this and started to understand Baba more and more. Only upon constant pondering of the situation, I began to just feel like puppet of the play and that Baba is the actual wirepuller. My time was fast approaching to go to India and persuade our parents to accept the marriage proposal. And as I was inexperienced in dealing with such issues, it was only Baba who gave me intense inner strength and courage to undertake the task. Eventually, both my father and mother were convinced with my points. The same was the case with my fiancé's parents. In fact, there are a lot of unforgettable incidents where Baba appeared in portraits, gave us a vision, etc. which further strengthened our faith.

Baba's reinforcing acts

As soon as I came back to the US to proceed with my new job, I started facing difficulties in the company as there were talks of layoffs and staffing cuts. And this was a more serious situation. To find another job amidst this recession and accumulate some money beforehand to start my life with my fiancé would have been difficult without Baba's grace. But I faced the situation with full courage as Baba was there to take care of anything if it happens. I started looking out for another job. With Baba's sheer grace, the other company that I initially got the offer was still having the doors open for me. I switched jobs. Recently, I heard from a friend of mine who is still working for the old company that my position along with two others were eliminated and the department was downsized. This was just another situation Baba put me into, which confirmed my faith on him. Another important milestone was the fact that I was able to find an apartment very close to the mandir. Dr. Rao and devotees at Om Sai Mandir were instrumental in making this possible. From these events, the best lesson I learned is that we are merely instruments in His show and that complete surrender to this greatest of the greatest guru is the best resort. I shall pray to Baba to take care of all the same way he is taking care of me and that we on our part have to surrender to his feet to listen to his subtle instructions.

Chinna Katha

Adapted from Oka Chinna Katha Part I

Vinayaka - The Leader of all

On one occasion, a competition was arranged among the gods for selecting the leader of the ganas (troops of demigods who are attendants of S'iva). Participants had to go round the world quick and come back to the feet of Lord S'iva. The gods started off on their own vehicles; the elder son of S'iva also enthusiastically entered the competition.

He had an elephantine head; his vehicle was a mouse! Therefore, his progress was severely handicapped: He had not proceeded far, when Nârada appeared before him and asked him, "Whither are you bound?" The son was very much annoyed; he fell into a rage. For, what happened was a bad omen, doubly unpropitious for those going on a journey. It is inauspicious if the first person you come across when you are on a journey is a lone brahmin. Though the foremost among the brahmins (he was the son of Brahmâ Himself), Nârada was a bad omen! Again it is a bad omen if you are going somewhere and someone asked, "Whither are you bound?" Nârada put him that very question!

Nevertheless, Nârada was able to assuage his anger. He drew forth from S'iva's son the cause of his predicament and his desire to win. Nârada consoled him, exhorted him not to yield to despair, and advised him thus: "Râma -the name- is the seed from which the gigantic tree called the universe has emanated. So, write the name on the ground, go round it once, and hurry back to S'iva, claiming the prize." He did so and returned to his father. When asked how he returned so soon, he related the story of Nârada and his advice. S'iva appreciated the validity of Nârada's counsel; the prize was awarded to the son, who was acclaimed as Ganapati. (Master of the Ganas) and Vinayaka (leader of all).

Lighting the lamp of wisdom

Once a sadhaka, who had great ambition to know something about the divine, wanted his eye of wisdom to be opened. He entered a cave where a guru was residing. While entering the cave he saw a small light. As he moved forward even that little light got extinguished. In darkness one feels frightened, and in fear, we think of God very intensively. Thus he uttered loudly the word 'Namah S'ivaya' and on hearing this, the saint asked him who he was. He said that he had come to seek his grace. The great saint, who was sustaining himself in the cave only by breathing the air around him, had the competence to know the mind of his visitor. He said that he will answer his question later but asked him first to go and light the lamp, which had been extinguished. The visitor took a matchbox and tried to light the lamp but did not succeed. He told the guru that he had finished all the matchsticks and yet he had not succeeded in lighting the lamp.

The guru then asked him to open he lamp, put out all the water and pour oil in it, and then try to light it. The person did this but the lamp would not light even then. The guru then said that the wick was probably wet with water and asked him to dry it nicely in the open and then attempt to light the lamp. He did this and succeeded. Then the person ventured to mention his need and sought it to the guru. The surprised guru said that the appropriate answer was being given all the while. The visitor pleaded that, being an ignorant man he was not able to understand the significance of the teaching and requested the guru to explain to him in clearer terms. The guru said: "In the vessel of your heart, there is the wick of your jîva. The wick has been immersed all these days in the water of your sensuous desire. Therefore you are not able to light the lamp of wisdom. Pour out all the water of desires from the vessel of your heart, and fill it with Namasmarana of God. Take the wick of jîva and dry it in the sunshine of vairagya; squeeze out of it all the water present in the form of desire and put into the heart the oil of devotion of Namasmarana. It will be possible for you to light the lamp of wisdom".

OM SAI MANDIR

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