



# SAI SANDESH

The official monthly newsletter of

## Om Sai MANDIR

A Non Profit Organization

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Jan 2010

New Year's Special Issue

Volume 7, Issue 1



## Message from the President

As we close curtains on 2009 and embark on a hopeful and prosperous 2010, it takes great pleasure on reflecting on the happenings of 2009 and all the grace that was showered by the Lord Sai Baba on all of us at Om Sai Mandir.

Despite all the incidences of the year, one thing that was constant during the entire year was Baba's invisible hand guiding us through every event. It takes me great pleasure to inform you that the temple has grown consistently and what amazes me most is the growth in the number of younger devotees, especially young adults and children.

Our work with the children has started informally through one-on-one bal vikas sessions, bhajans practice, and the habit of naama smarana which is being inculcated into these young minds, personally by me and by the volunteers. In fact, the number of young volunteers actively singing bhajans and performing seva has grown remarkably during 2009. It makes me very proud to see the devotion and dedication exhibited by these young men and women of faith.

### Ganga Jal miracle

Lord Sai has very unique ways of demonstrating His divine presence. In fact, during the month of May 2009, we had a series of miracles wherein Baba manifested Ganga Jal (holy water) from the temple's Shiva Lingam. Steady streams of water miraculously poured out of the Shiv Lingam every day for a full period of one month. In fact, on Easwaramma Day we had to collect the miracle water in vessels and the same was distributed to devotees in need. We are humbled by this sign of grace.

### Divine visits

His Holiness, Sri, Sri Viswayogi Viswamji Maharaj, who is considered to be the ninth incarnation of Lord Dattatreya visited the temple. During his visit, he delivered an inspiring discourse and blessed the gathering with one-on-one interviews and divine prasadam.

Another crest-jewel of a saint, Swamy Bhagavathi Siddar, visited the temple and performed many miracles and miraculous manifestations, much to the delight of devotees. Devotees may recall that he had visited the temple last year as well and had miraculously pro-

duced vibhuti, rudrakshas, pendants, and other holy trinkets from Baba's statues at Om Sai Mandir.

### Rudram continues for world peace

It also gives me great pleasure to inform that the chanting of *Ekadasa Rudram* which had commenced on June 11, 2007 continues along with ritual abhishekam in the divine presence of Sai Baba. In fact, this year the devotees chanting Rudram are individually expected to finish 14,641 chants (Athi Maha Rudram) of the Rudram and much to everyone's delight the day when these devotees will achieve this count coincides precisely with Swami's 85th birthday.

What grace that Swami chose His own birthday to bless the temple with the performance of Athi Maha Rudram, a process which took almost 3.5 years. Elsewhere, 121 priests are called on to achieve this number, but here at Om Sai Mandir a handful of devotees were permitted by Swami to offer 14,641 Rudrams at His lotus feet. Om Sai Mandir is perhaps the only, or one of the rare few temples in the world, where Rudram is chanted eleven times along with sarva-devata abhishekam on a daily basis.

### Our volunteers

Swami's blessings find ample expression through the tireless service of our dedicated team of young volunteers, a taskforce that has grown remarkably well during the last year. We are thankful to them.

Despite the steady progress over the past seven years, a lot remains to be accomplished, and I would like to request the continued participation, support, and blessings of devotees. We are very eager to unwrap all the blessings Swami has in store for all of us in 2010. Many exciting initiatives are being planned for the upcoming year. For regular updates, be sure to check the temple's website ([omsaimandir.org](http://omsaimandir.org)) regularly.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Very Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year. May Sai Baba's blessings fill your lives, and the lives of your loved ones, with ever lasting bliss. Samastha loka sukhino bhavantu. Jai Sai Ram.

- Gangadhar Rao Chalasani, M.D.  
President

# The Hallmark of Devotion

## By The Sai Sandesh Team

During a conversation with a friend, a devotee was once told, “Oh, you are so close to Baba. I am sure you have no problems in your life.” The devotee’s life, much to the contrary, personified turbulence in every sense of the word. Difficulties, challenges, and adversities were his constant companions. The friend’s question led him to introspect whether he was a true devotee at all, and if so, why was his life so full of undesirable circumstances?

Upon much introspection and contemplation, he managed to have an inner conversation with Baba and the Lord assured him as follows: “My child, true devotion is not measured by how many (or how few) worldly problems one has to face, but is judged, rather, based on how much equanimity, fortitude, and faith the devotee has demonstrated during those [so-called] problems.”

Was the life of Jesus without problems? Was Mira given a dream life? Did Hanuman never face difficulties? Nay, much to the contrary, these exemplary devotees lived lives steeped in insurmountable challenges, yet they were always cheerful and never detracted from their vow of devotion and loyalty. They were never disturbed in the least and continued marching God-ward no matter what came their way.

When Hanuman, who is now deified as God Himself, was crossing the ocean to fulfill Lord Rama’s task, he braved and defeated not one, but many dangerous demons. Yet, Hanuman cheerfully fought all these demons with just one simple recourse—the name of Lord Rama Himself. Not once did he feel dejected at the prospect of facing these difficulties. If at all, he demonstrated utmost devotion and set an example for us that problems and challenges make us stronger and inculcate and foster dispassion and devotion.

A guru once asked his disciple to plough a barren field. With implicit obedience, the lad obeyed the guru’s command and toiled day and night with the fond hope that the field will produce an outstanding produce. During the process he was often scoffed and ridiculed by his lazy neighbors, but the lad persisted in his efforts and did not pay heed to what the idlers were saying.

Yet, despite his best efforts for many years there was no result. Undaunted, the lad continued his efforts as he had utmost faith in his guru’s words. After many years of toiling and innumerable difficulties, however, there was no produce and the lad finally decided to give up. Just then, the guru appeared miraculously and inquired as to what had happened over the years.

Dejected, the lad replied he had failed in his efforts and had not managed to produce anything for offering to the guru. The guru smiled and asked the lad to look at himself. The person who was once a little lad had now grown into a young man. His body, which was once emaciated, had been transformed into a rugged, muscular, and masculine form. He had become stronger and more experienced. Wisdom shone on his face and a strange sense of calmness and peace pervaded his aura—all a product of his tireless, determined, and faithful effort.

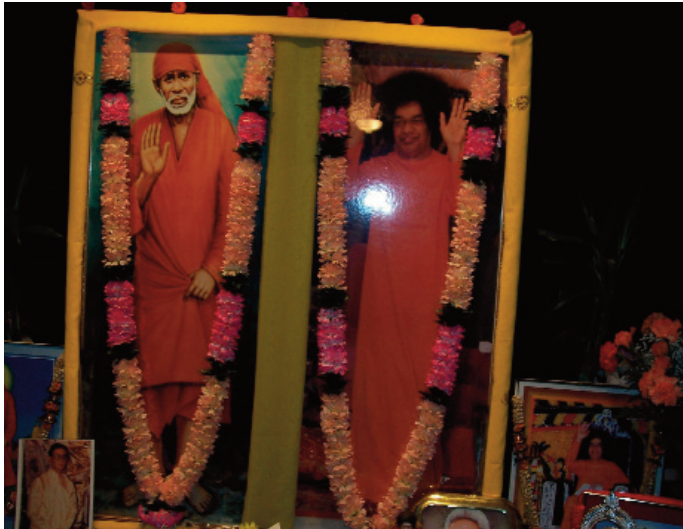
Again, the guru asked the disciple to look at the field. Through constant work on the soil, the lad had managed to dig deep enough to find visible traces of precious pearls that lay buried deep within the apparently barren land. These precious treasures, which were buried, had now surfaced.

Isn’t God like that? He asks us to plough the land of our hearts, which though at the surface appears to be barren and hardened, holds precious treasures in the form of love, compassion, devotion, and other virtues extolled in all ancient texts and religions. At first, our efforts may not produce the desired fruits, but if we persist with faith and tireless determination, we are sure to achieve success and become stronger in the process.

The truth is that suffering forms the basis of future success and through every painful experience we manage to acquire precious pearls of wisdom and become worthy recipients of the Lord’s grace.

# 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

#### January

Wed, Jan 13: Lodhi/Lohri  
Thurs, Jan. 14: Makar Sankranti/Pongal/Punyakalam Begins

#### February

Fri, Feb. 12: Mahashivaratri  
Sun, Feb. 14: Valentine's Day

## Sai Wisdom

You must understand the distinction between Education and Educare. Education is information-oriented. Educare is transformation-oriented. Education is limited to physical and mental levels. Education has its roots in Educare. Educare is related to our inner feelings and purity of heart. Our speech, song and way of life (Maata, Paata and Baata) should originate from the heart. That is the essence of Educare. Only those endowed with the practical knowledge and wisdom will be able to understand and appreciate the concept of Educare. Even after acquiring a number of degrees, if you lack purity in your heart, you cannot be called truly educated.

*Source: Thought For The Day, Prashanti Nilayam, Jan 12, 2010*

## EXPERIENCE AT PRASHANTI M. SAXENA

It was the first time I had traveled by myself to a foreign country. There was no family, no friends to where I was going -- only Baba. He would be my only destination and source of comfort and recognition for my trip to Prashanti, and for this life.

I remember first entering Prashanti. I arrived in the evening, and was thus taken by a mutual friend to the rear of the assembly hall, where Baba would sometimes appear. There were scores of white people seated, all waiting.

Just then the bhajans stopped, and the chatters and whispers increased, as along with their restlessness. The atmosphere was anxious -- Swami was coming.

I remember seeing Baba entering from the Ladies' side to the Mens'. He had stopped in the center of the Mens' section and turned towards the devotees. And though He was so far away I could barely make out his visage, I stared on.

Very soon, Baba was still. I locked my gaze upon Him. I then saw this simultaneous shadow and white aura emanating His body, and surrounding Him. I no longer saw my Baba's ochre colored clothing. He was simply light and shadows, shadows and light, slowly pulsating and coming from His core.

Just as I was to step deeper in my experience, this mutual friend broke my concentration, and asked me to go register so I may get appropriate lodging. We soon left after Swami retired for the evening. Though I never had a physical interview with Him, I know I experienced just a child's leela of the Divine.

# 2010 Calendar of Events at Om Sai Mandir

## January

Fri, Jan. 01: New Year's Day Celebrations  
Wed, Jan 13: Lodhi/Lohri  
Thurs, Jan. 14: Makar Sankranti/Pongal/Punyakalam Begins  
Tues, Jan. 26: India's Republic Day

## February

Fri, Feb. 12: Mahashivaratri  
Sun, Feb. 14: Valentine's Day  
Sun, Feb. 28: Valentine's Day

## March

Tues, Mar. 16: Ugadi/Gudi Padwa/Cheti Chand/Vasanth Navaratri Begins  
Wed, Mar. 24: Sri Ram Navami

## April

Tues, Apr. 13: Baisakhi  
Wed, Apr. 14: Tamil/Vishu/Malayali New Year

## May

Thurs, May. 06: Eshwaramma Day  
Sun, May. 09: Mother's day

## June

Mon, Jun. 07: Hanuman Jayanti  
Sun, Jun. 20: Father's Day

## July

Sun, Jul. 04: America's Independence Day  
Sun, Jul. 25: Guru Poornima/Vyasa Poornima

## August

Sun, Aug. 15: India's Independence Day  
Mon, Aug. 23: Onam  
Tues, Aug 24: Raksha Bandhan/Raakhi Poornima

## September

Wed, Sept. 1: Sri Krishna Janmashtami  
Thurs, Sept. 02: Sri Krishna Janmashtami  
Sat, Sept. 11: Ganesh/Siddhi Vinayak Chowthi  
Tues, Sept. 28: Shri Shirdi Sai Baba's Birthday

## October

Fri, Oct. 08: Devi Navaratri Begins  
Fri, Oct. 15: Durgashtami  
Sun, Oct. 17: Vijayadashami/Dussehra/Shirdi Sai Baba's Samadhi Day  
Tues, Oct. 26: Karva Chouth

## November

Wed, Nov 03: Dhanteras  
Fri, Nov. 05: Diwali/Deepavali/Amavasya  
Sat, Nov. 06: Gujarati New Year  
Sun, Nov. 07: Bhai Duj  
Sat, Nov 13, 6.00 PM to Sun, Nov 14, 6.00 PM: Akhanda Bhajans for 24 Hours--Global Peace  
Tues, Nov 23: Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Birthday  
Thurs, Nov 25: Thanksgiving Day

## December

Tues, Dec 21: Datta Jayanti  
Fri, Dec 24: Christmas Eve  
Sat, Dec 25: Christmas  
Fri, Dec 31: New Year's Eve

## Note:

**Despite our best attempts, events may not always proceed as planned. Please check with the temple before planning your visit.**

# Chinna Katha

## Adapted from Oka Chinna Katha Part I

### Two Minutes

Once, a famous dacoit advised his son while initiating him into the ancestral profession, never for a moment to listen to stories of the Lord. "Do not stay to listen to any Purana or any reading of the Bhagavatha," he exhorted the young aspirant. The son scrupulously observed this injunction for years and amassed a good fortune.

One night, however, while running with his loot on his shoulder through a side lane of the city to avoid the police, a piece of glass cut his sole. He sat for a while to pull it off and stop the flow of blood. He was then behind a house, where some one was reading and explaining the Bhagavatha to a small group of listeners; he listened perforce for a short two minutes. The spark fell on the heap of cotton. During that short period, he heard the pundit explaining the nature of God. He has no ears, no eyes, no limbs: he has a thousand forms; He is without form. "Sarvathah paani-paadam," as the Gita says. That description got fixed in his heart. He could not shake it off.

A few days later the police came to know of the depredations made by him as well as his associates and kinsmen. In order to know more about their activities they entered the area incognito, one constable as Kali and some others as the worshippers and priests. They shouted and yelled, cursed and terrified the dacoits and called upon them to come out of their homes and fall at the feet of Kali.

Many did so, but the son who had heard the Bhagavatha, albeit for two minutes, knew just enough to save his skin. He was not terrified at all. He challenged the constable who was acting the role of Kali and tore off his make-up and exposed the plot and instilled courage into the hearts of the gang. Then, when the police left discomfited he argued within himself thus: "If two minutes of the forbidden fruit could help me so much, what can I not gain, if I devote myself entirely to the stories of the glories of God?" He left off the evil path and became a Sadhaka.

### Greatest Sin

Once Jesus was walking along the streets of a city. It was a slum area. He saw a young man rolling in dirt, dead drunk. He went to him, sat by his side and woke him up. The young man opened his eyes and saw Jesus. Jesus asked him: "Son! Why are you wasting your precious youth in drinking?" The young man replied: "Master!, I was a leper. You cured me of my leprosy. What else can I do?" Jesus heaved a sigh and walked away.

In another street he saw a man madly pursuing a beautiful woman. Jesus caught hold of him and asked him: "Son! Why do you desecrate your body by indulging in such a sinful act?" The man replied: "Master! I was really blind. You gave me vision. What else can I do?"

Jesus trudged along another street. He saw an old man crying bitterly. Jesus approached him and gently touched him.

The old man wiped his tears and looked at Jesus. Jesus questioned him: "Why are you weeping old man?" The old man said: "Master! I was nearly dead. You granted me life. What else can I do except weep in this old age?"

In times of difficulty and distress, we cry out for God's help.

But when God, out of His boundless love and compassion, responds to our prayer, we ignore Him and fall back into our self-centered life. One must guard oneself against this greatest sin of ingratitude towards God.

## **Om Sai Mandir**

### **A Non Profit Organization**

Om Sai Mandir is organized exclusively for charitable, religious purposes and is a non profit organization, exempt under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Contributions made to Om Sai Mandir are tax deductible and can be mailed to:

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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@om-saimandir.org](mailto:saisandesh@om-saimandir.org)

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