



SAI SANDESH

The official monthly newsletter of

Om Sai MANDIR

A Non Profit Organization

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Just Surrender to Me!

By The Sai Sandesh Team

"Whatever God grants is for your good, for your liberation; not for your fall or bondage. A God who does evil is no God at all. God has no likes and dislikes; He is above and beyond all traits and characteristics. So, how can He be hating or revengeful? He is Mercy. He is Goodness, He is Wisdom, He is Power. He gives you what you ask. Learn to ask the really beneficial boons. Do not go to the wish-fulfilling tree and come back in glee, with a towel that you asked and got."

— Sathya Sai Baba

As Arjuna was battling the host of Kaurava Army, he was dejected and terrified at the ordeal of having to fight his own kith and kin in battle. In the midst of the battlefield, Krishna imparted the divine message of the immortal Bhagawad Gita to His beloved friend and disciple. While the Gita epitomizes immortal wisdom, one ageless message that appeals to modern man is Krishna's assurance to Arjuna: "Seek refuge in Me (surrender to Me), and I shall free you from all sins."

Our daily life is no less than a battleground in its own right, and a Sai devotee was similarly contemplating various dilemmas posed in his family life. Each choice appeared to personify a life and death situation and he was unable to make a decision. He fervently and prayerfully appealed to Lord Sai for His divine grace and intervention and prompt came the response in meditation: "Just surrender to me!"

The concept of surrender is glorified in every scripture, every religious text known to man. It is indeed an irony that we ungrudgingly surrender to common men in every day life situations. Don't we just sleep in the plane knowing that the pilot will safely take us to our destination? Do we ever doubt his intentions in steering the flight? Don't we just leave our bodies to the care of surgeons trusting him, despite the fact that he holds a dangerous knife in his hands? What if he were to cut the wrong nerve accidentally? Nay, we never doubt our fellow-mortals and yet we distrust every decision that God makes for us.

The Lord protects those who surrender

During the sixties, Swami took upon himself a serious heart attack that was to affect a devotee who had surrendered even his mind to God. Sai's timely protection had saved his life. Draupadi, too, had experienced this protection in the Dwapara Yuga (the previous age) when evil forces were attempting to disrobe her in public. When none came to her rescue, she helplessly called out to Krishna for help. The Lord immediately appeared on the scene and protected Draupadi's modesty by covering her with an endless stream of fabric that the evildoers could never exhaust.

Just let go; He knows what is best

Sai Baba often explains "letting go" by giving the example of dropping a handkerchief. It is much harder to hold on to the cloth as it causes strain on the fingers, but releasing it is much easier. Our worries are like a kerchief woven from threads of worldly attachments, which if dropped would grant us everlasting peace. In comparison to our eternal cosmic life, the earthly journey is not even a millionth of a fraction of a second; if such be the case, why does it matter whether we live in a palace or a hut? Guru Charitra cites the example of a devotee who approached Sri Guru seeking protection from an alien king.

The king would order the killing of one brahmin every year, and that year happened to be the devotee's turn. After [futile] worrying for many months, he resorted to the Lord and expressed his feeling: "Thy will, not mine." Sri Guru assured him of divine protection and ordered a bold visit to the monarch. The devotee surrendered his worries to the Lord and left for the palace. As soon as the disciple entered the court, the king fainted mysteriously. On waking up, he honored the devotee instead of killing him.

Surrender always draws a very powerful response from God, as in the example of a mother-in-law. The absence of grandchildren in her family was a cause of great concern for the lady. When she visited Swami, the latter explained that destiny had not decreed children in her lineage. The woman did not lose hope,

however, and insisted that Sai could alter the divine writ itself. She left all her worries at Swami's feet and returned home with renewed faith and hope. After a year, she came back with grandchildren.

The Lord surrenders back

Dr. K.V. Raghava Rao (Guruji) of Hyderabad was a highly evolved soul, nay, a saint who had completely surrendered to Sai. His relationship with Baba was very intimate, and the latter would often warn him about approaching dangers. Once, Sai cautioned him about an imminent stroke. Ordinary devotees would panic in such situations, but Guruji cheerfully accepted the disease as God's blessings. Baba, on his part, surrendered Himself back to Guruji and would honor every prayer that emerged from his pure heart. Once, a sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) learnt about his nearing death. He was terrified and vehemently prayed to Shirdi Sai Baba. Baba appeared to him in meditation and said that He would not reverse the verdict as his allotted time on earth was over, but also added that there was one surrendered soul (Guruji) whose prayers could never be refused. The sadhaka immediately rushed to Dr. K.V. Raghava Rao, on whose request Baba prevented the demise and extended the sadhaka's life by eight years.

The path of devotion

One should not be overwhelmed by difficulties encountered in life; they are all transient. The source of enduring bliss is within us and we must not give way to weakness. Prapthi means total surrender, offering everything to the Divine and doing away with the sense of ego that separates the individual from God. In such a state, pleasure or pain are both cheerfully accepted as God's blessings. The bhakti marga (path of devotion) is truly the path of sharanaagathi (surrender), of which Lakshmana is a classic example. During His exile, Raama once asked Lakshmana to put up a hut on a site of Lakshmana's choice. The latter grieved and pleaded with Raama: "Why do you ask me to select the site? Have I any individuality left? Can I choose? Will I select?"

Don't you know that I have no will of my own? You decide and I obey; you command and I carry out." This is the essence of sharnaagathi. Krishna has assured us that if we surrender, He will liberate us.

The whole Universe can become yours

Baba once narrated a beautiful example. A king held a big exhibition with a variety of art products. He had announced that all his subjects could take home anything. All rushed there and filled their hands with the choicest of products. One lady, however, came out empty handed. The king was surprised and questioned her. She expressed her disinterest in worldly things. The king was adamant, however, and promised to grant her anything. After repeated assurances, she finally asked for the king himself. The king kept his word and along with him, the entire kingdom—including the exhibition, became the lady's. Sai compares this cosmos to a vast exhibition. All entering this exhibition are free to satisfy their desires with objects of their liking. Some seek wealth; some, jobs; some, children ... and so on.

The wise, however, seek only God, for they know that all else is contained within Him.

Sai Wisdom

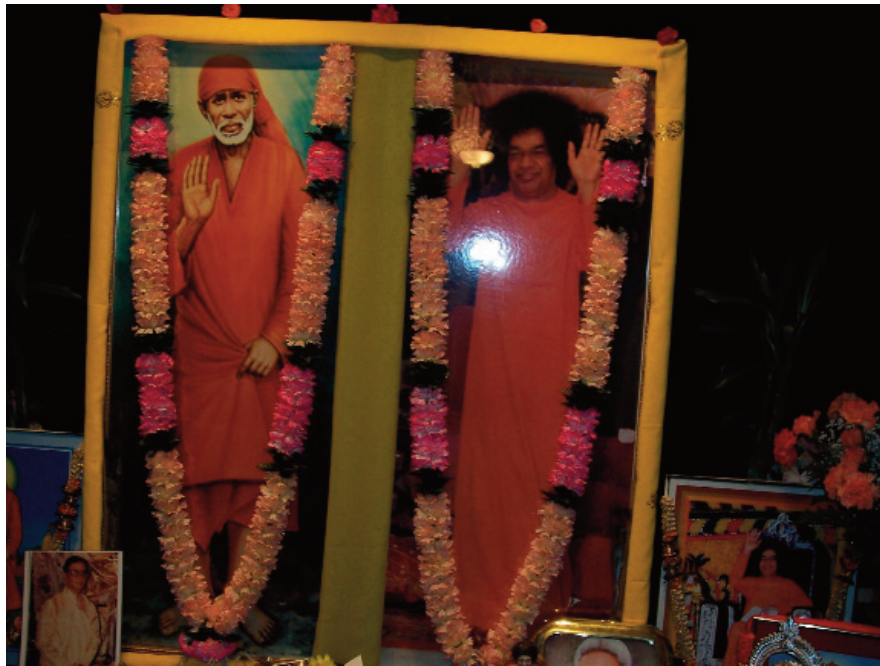
Just as cream is present in the milk, fire in the fuel, so also is the attainment of Divine a sure result for those who perform spiritual practices. Even if the attainment of Liberation is not directly realized as a consequence of taking the Lord's Name, the following fruits are clearly evident: (i) the company of the great (ii) truth (iii) contentment and (iv) control of the senses. Through whichever of these gates one may enter, whether one is a householder or a recluse or a member of any other class, one can certainly reach the Lord. This is certain!

- BABA

Source: Thought For The Day, Prashanti Nilayam, May 15, 2010

Ja Ko Rakhe Saiya Maar Sake Na Koi!

By The Sai Sandesh Team



Whom the Lord protects, none can harm! The Pandavas are a shining example of this maxim. Their opponents, the land-hungry Kauravas, tried to harm them using various stratagems, but failed every single time. In fact, not only did their strategies fail, they actually led the Pandavas to unforeseen, beneficial outcomes.

As a child, Bhima, the middle of the Pandava brothers, was poisoned and thrown into the river. Much to the disappointment of his foes, however, he was rescued by the King of Serpents, who not only administered an antidote to the poison, but also administered a divine ambrosia that granted Bhima the strength of thousands of elephants.

As they grew younger, the Kaurava brothers arranged for the Pandavas to live in a palace of wax, which to all normal human appearances resembled a regular palace, but was actually made from wax. The same was set on fire, but the Lord arranged for an underground rescue at the last minute and saved the Pandavas' lives.

As they escaped from the fire, they were mysteriously led to a forest where Bhima met Hidamba and fathered a divinely-powered son who rescued them

during a very serious situation in the war. Furthermore, in their travails they became relatives of

the powerful King Dhrupad who served to a very potent ally in the war against the Kauravas.

When the Pandavas demanded a share of their kingdom, the greedy king Dritrashtra granted them the barren land of Khandava Van (an uninhabited and barren forest). Due to the divine help of Krishna, however, the forest was transformed into a magical kingdom that later came to be known as Indraprastha (the abode of the heavenly king, Indra).

In this manner, Lord Krishna rescued them from every difficulty, every challenge that was thrown their way by their opponents and in the end all of them emerged victorious.

It was their adherence to the code of righteousness, their surrender to God, and God's grace that enabled them to face all adversities and emerge victorious and safe.

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

Hanuman Chalisa (108 Times): Every Saturday from 12.30 PM to 6.30 PM

PUJA SPONSORSHIP

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

HANUMANJI'S FACE APPEARS MIRACULOUSLY—AND WITH AN AURA!



Om Sai Mandir, the heavenly abode of Lord Sai, is fast becoming a divine destination where prayers are being uninterruptedly and ceaselessly chanted every single day. The latest in the series of prayer events is the chanting of 108 Hanuman Chalisas every Saturday (from 12.30 PM to 6.30 PM).

During one such occasion (Hanuman Jayanti 2009), a group of devotees were chanting Hanuman Chalisa 108 times when a picture of Hanumanji's portrait was taken. Much to the surprise of devotees, when the picture was observed later, the real Divine Face of Lord Hanuman has appeared within the portrait – with a shining aura.

While the rest of the picture is a painting, the face appears real with eyes, nose, and facial features resembling a live being (and not a portrait).

Even more surprising is the fact (which can be observed on digitally enlarging the picture) that the face is that of a child Hanuman, while the entire body is one of a grown-up. Furthermore, seasoned photographers have attested to the fact that the aura is not the work of flash.

What Can I Offer You?

By The Sai Sandesh Team

My Dearest Swami,

What gift can I offer you, for there is nothing that is my own. All I possess has been given by thee. How can I call it a gift if I merely return what is already yours?

I thought of offering my tears at first but what can tears mean to a Lord who owns all the oceans?

Then I thought of offering my life. But, again, life itself is your cherished gift to me.

Material possessions I do not wish to offer, for they are not even dust compared to your infinite glory.

Then I thought of offering my seva, but seva, again, is done by you, through me.

It is so difficult to offer something to the Lord who created the entire universe.

Then, finally, a thought crossed my mind: "What if I offer my love to you and surrender all that I thought was mine."

Ah! That is exactly what I will gift you this time.

My love, my Lord! Myself! For although I was always yours, my love I had withheld and frittered in worldly pursuits.

I shall gift myself to thee. Make me the hollow flute through which you blow and the enrapturing music of which shall make the entire universe glow.

--By A Sai Devotee, New York

Dream Visions

By Mayank Saxena

March 01, 2010

I am talking with my cousin, and am in my home looking outside the window. I am very excitedly talking about Baba with him, and just as I look out the window, I see Baba in my neighbor's driveway, giving them darshan. They are putting a flower mala around Him. He is younger, like in the Sai videos from the 1960s. I am so enthralled, I simply jump out of the window, and hurry to jump the fence separating our house from our neighbor's. When I jump, I quickly look up and run to Baba. He is now older, like how He looks now. I am alarmed to see Baba change so quickly. Yet I am captivated by his timeless smile.

March 02, 2010

We are all in the Om Sai Mandir, singing bhajans. I am in a state of happiness, bliss, and am looking around at the others in the Mandir happily singing. I look up towards Baba's moortis. They are beautiful. As I am singing, my gaze happily bounces around to see the blissful environment – the devotees singing, some crying, some clapping, then just as I turn towards Baba – I freeze still. The hair on the back of my neck is standing frozen. Standing in front of Baba's moorti, is Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself!

He is adorned in His red ochre garment. Though He is somewhat facing the moortis, Baba's is turned towards me, and is looking at me unblinkingly straight into my eyes. He has red rang (Holi color) on His face. I am stunned and stop breathing. The very night before this dream it was Holi, and we were putting color on each other's faces. Everyone put color on Baba as a teeka, but I went further and put it on Baba's face and cheeks. Now Baba was in the Mandir, looking at me. No one was else was reacting, in fact, they kept singing. Why was no one noticing?

His presence was so powerful that everyone else seemed unreal. He did not talk, did not blink, just looked, as if mischievously observing. Just narrating this story still gives me goosebumps of joy.

Was Shirdi Sai Baba an Incarnation of God?

By The Sai Sandesh Team

Those who read and follow the Sai Satcharita often believe that Sai Baba was just a guru or a holy teacher.

The truth, however, is that Baba is a guru avatar (God-incarnate come in the form of a teacher). Although teaching the way to truth, He is neither a holy teacher, nor even a sadguru of the highest order. In fact, He transcends all these labels and is unquestionably the highest of the highest: God Almighty, the one beyond human comprehension.

Every incarnation assumes a form suitable to the purpose and mission of the avatar, but these are merely outward veils that conceal the real nature of God. In the Krishna incarnation, God assumed the form of a cowherd boy and through that very form He performed countless leelas and superhuman feats that enraptured the hearts of even the highest of saints.

In His incarnation as Lord Dattatreya, God played the role of an avadhuta (an unclad saint). In fact, in that form, He would often sport with wine in His right hand and a woman on His lap just to test the devotion of those who approached Him. When devotees approached saw beyond these veils, the wine and woman would miraculously disappear and Lord Datta would reveal His true glory and divine nature.

For purposes best known to Him, God adopts these outward roles to conceal His real nature and provide seekers the opportunity to love and understand Him. Sai Baba, too, assumed the form of a holy teacher so that men and women of all faith could benefit from His proximity.

A dam, no matter how well-protected, will inevitably give way to the excess water. Sai Baba, too, would overflow with love and delight His devotees with many miracles that no ordinary human (or even divine) being could ever hope to perform.

A storm once tormented the tiny hamlet of Shirdi. As water threatened to destroy the entire area, all ran to Baba to seek shelter at the divine feet of the Lord Himself, and could the Lord Sai ever refuse those who sought His protection? Nay, that can never be. Like Lord Narsimha who protected his child-devotee Prahlad, Shirdi Sai Baba cast a furious look at the heavens and roared, "Stop! Stop, your fury. Be calm!"

No sooner had Baba uttered these magical words, the skies that were beset with clouds soon cleared and rains subsided instantly.

Not only did Baba perform many miraculous deeds, He also granted visions of various deities within Himself. A devotee of Lord Rama once visited Baba. No sooner did he prostrate at Baba's lotus feet, he saw none other than Lord Rama Himself seated in Sai Baba's place. Within a moment, Lord Rama's vision merged into that of Sai Baba. Another devotee attempted to peek into Baba's resting place and found no Baba, but Lord Dattatreya seated in Baba's place.

Hanuman, Rama, Krishna, Vitthal—Sai Baba granted visions of Himself as being one with various manifestations of Divinity.

It is said that God is omni-three: omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. Shirdi Sai Baba exhibited all of these traits and more. On one occasion, a devotee of Shirdi Sai, Nanasaheb, was overcome with extreme thirst while climbing a deserted mountain.

There was no water to be found and no sign of help or hope within the vicinity; the devotee helpless called out to Mother Sai. Within an instant, Sai Baba manifested there in the form an ordinary man and quenched the thirst of his beloved devotee.

There are countless such instances—that occur even today—where Baba demonstrates the quality of omni-three to protect, preserve, and guide his millions of children.

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.

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