



SAI SANDESH

The official monthly newsletter of

Om Sai Mandir

A Non Profit Organization

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CHRISTMAS SPECIAL ISSUE

Volume 9, Issue 3



Sai is *THE* Master of All Creation

By The Sai Sandesh Team

One must be an enlightened, God-realized master in order to be able to recognize and understand another. Fortunately, we, as Sai's children, do not have the arduous, nay impossible task of recognizing Baba for who He is. We simply regard Him as our mother, father, friend, sibling, guru, or any other relationship we use as a "bonding material" between us and Sai. It does not matter how we choose to approach Baba for He responds to us with utmost love no matter what path we take toward Him.

It is said that even those look upon God with hatred are actually remembering God, just in a different way. It is for this reason that Ravana, Kamsa, and other demonic beings were redeemed by God toward the end of their life. Such is God's all-powerful love and compassion. He is Prema Swaroopa (embodiment of supreme love).

If there were an iota of hatred in God, all the physical worlds would have perished in a trice but fortunately such is not the case.

Many divine saints, sages, and avatars over the span of time since Sai's advent on earth have repeatedly testified that Sai is the Supreme Master of all that exists. Although Baba acted like a humble medicant in Shirdi and an equally humble God-Man in Parthi, His real nature was never revealed to ordinary mortals.

Yet, just as light cannot hide in darkness, Baba's divine acts offered us an occasional glimpse into the realm of divinity.

Baba does maintenance work on the universe

Avatar Meher Baba was once asked why Shirdi Sainath would spend nearly an hour in the rest room. At this, Meher Baba promptly replied that none could understand Sai. Meher Baba explained that when Baba created the universe He made it absolutely perfect and that during the one hour Baba spent in the rest room, He would perform "minor maintenance" to the creation.

A little polish to a distant galaxy, some minor alteration in the configuration of celestial bodies, a little

touch here and there to a distant star and some fine-tuning to ensure the creation continued functioning in perfect order. Devotees of Baba were shocked to learn of this truth for none had comprehended this aspect of Sai.

Not for another six thousand years

Another divine saint was once questioned as to when the next perfect avatar would incarnate on earth and she immediately replied that an avatar of Baba's caliber will not visit earth for another six thousand years. Isn't this what Lord Krishna has claimed in the Bhagwad Gita? "I Myself incarnate in every age to protect the virtuous and check the forces of unrighteousness."

Baba never discussed His divine nature but always allowed -- and still permits -- devotees to approach Him as if He were an ordinary human being.

Dead seeds sprout into a tree

Once a devotee of Baba wanted to plant seeds at a certain location in Shirdi.

He repeatedly requested Baba's permission but the latter refused for some reason. Disappointed, the devotee lost all interest in food and water and sat quietly in his place of residence. His wife and mother too followed suit and there was an aura of extreme sadness within the house.

The ever-merciful Baba's heart melted and He summoned the devotee to His presence and admonished the childish behavior. At this, the devotee started sobbing and Mother Sai's heart instantly melted just the way butter melts at slightest application of heat. He immediately declared that even though the seeds were dead, they would sprout into a big tree and true to Baba's words the dead seeds defied the laws of nature to sprout into a heavenly tree within a short period of time.

Baba's powers were never meant for display and He only provided a glimpse of His divine might when absolutely necessary.

Baba transports his devotee in a trice

Once, in Puttaparthi, a devotee rushed to Swami's presence to describe the pitiable condition of his ailing wife. Swami immediately scolded the devotee for leaving her alone in Australia. As the helpless devotee failed to respond, Swami tapped on the wall in interview room and lo and behold a map of Australia appeared on the wall. With another tap the wall transformed into a giant screen where the devotee could see his ailing wife and could communicate with her as if she had been magically transported in Puttaparthi. Swami then ordered the devotee to walk into the wall. To the amazement of onlookers, the devotee could walk right through the wall and was transported to Australia within the wink of an eye. This was a miracle that defied all logic and went beyond the realms of imagination.

Sai materializes artifacts thousands of years old

An avatar like Sai transcends all barriers of time, space, logic, and even mind itself. It is no wonder that for his dear devotee Hislop, Sathya Sai Baba visited 2,000 years back in time and materialized a crucifix using the same wood that was used on the cross of Lord Jesus Himself. On another occasion, Swami delighted His students by materializing the very ring that was worn by Lord Rama over 20,000 years ago. During yet another discourse, Swami materialized a garland that was worn during the time of Sage Markandeya, hundreds of thousands of years back in time. Such are the divine feats performed by Sai.

Super-Sai physically pulls a ship to safety

A story found in Sai literature comes to mind. Once a sailor devotee of Baba was helplessly caught in a wild storm and suddenly found his ship sinking. There was no refuge except Sai and the devotee, in the face of impending death, pulled out Baba's picture that was in his pocket and with tear-filled eyes begged Baba to come to his rescue.

No sooner had he finished the prayer, Sai was standing right in front of him, except that Baba had assumed a giant form and Baba's body was nearly

touching the horizon.

Suddenly, Baba pulled out a rope and tied the anchor to the ship and pulled it out of the storm to safety. The devotee was extremely perplexed at this remarkable miracle but was so grateful to see Baba present there. Almost simultaneously, devotees in Shirdi found Baba's robe soaked with water for no apparent reason.

The abode of Shirdi was dry and none could explain why Baba was dripping water as if he had just returned from a deep swim. It was only when the sailor devotee's letter reached Shirdi did Baba's devotees realize what Super-Sai had done for His child.

ALWAYS with us!

What is more mind-boggling, however, is the fact that Swami is ALWAYS present with each and every devotee and responds to even minor "help calls". On one occasion, the author's house was plunged in darkness due to power failure. Electricians came, maintenance crew did their work but nothing appeared to resolve the pestering issue despite several hours of work by so-called experts. At this, the author mercifully requested His guru to pray to Baba. As soon as the guru uttered "Sai" in an instant the lights came flashing back as if the light switch was in Baba's own hands. There are countless such instances in the life of EVERY Sai devotee where Baba responds to humble calls to resolve any problem the child-devotee may be facing. Who but the Supreme Lord can display such powers of omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence?

In the Treta Yuga, thousands of monkeys were able to cross the Indian ocean by chanting Lord Rama's name, but in this Kali Yuga, the entire human race has access to Sai and by chanting His name all of us are able to cross the ocean of worldly misery.

In Shirdi Baba is addressed with the epithet "Ananta Koti Brahmanda Nayak," which literally means the Lord of Millions of Universes. How true! Sai is indeed the master of all that there is, there was, and there will be. He transcends time, speech, and all that we can perceive. **He is the True Master of the entire creation.** Our humble salutations to such a powerful and all-merciful Lord.

Baba's Leela -- and Never Double-Cross Him!

By S. Bhatnagar

I had just gotten into Baba's Fold in 1999, and I was eagerly looking forward to going to India to see Baba in Puttaparthi.

In those days, we were allowed to take two suitcases at 70 lbs each. I excitedly and at the last minute packed LOTS of stuff for relatives. When I weighed the suitcases, I realized with horror that one weighed 105 lbs and the other was almost 110 lbs. (almost 75 lbs overweight-basically, a whole suitcase). My husband told me to decrease the weight immediately or else I would have to take stuff out at the airport. At it happened, I had procrastinated and packed at the last second after coming home from work and I was running late. Also, I was taking a cab to the airport, as my husband could not get off work. In addition, my bags were huge.

On the way to the airport, I was really sweating it out. I knew I was WAY OVER my allowance and I was berating myself for, as usual, packing too much unnecessary stuff. I was totally stressed out when we reached the airport. Even the cab driver, who drove me there, eyed the extra-large suitcases and told me they were too heavy. I begged him to stick around until I went in. I figured that if I had to download weight, I might as well give the cab guy the chocolates and things—at least he could give them to his kids.

At the check-in counter, EVERYONE looked at my suitcases with disgust. I knew they were simply too huge by regulation standards. As my turn towards the stewardess came closer, I literally started sweating. I then called out to Baba PROMISING that I would never, never do this again and to please, please forgive me and help me this time.

Soon, it was my turn. I was already too stressed at the thought of lifting the suitcases on the weigh-in counter. Luckily (or is it with Baba's help), a male attendant saw me and immediately came to pick up the suitcases. When they were on the scale, the woman at the counter gasped and said, "You are more than 70 lbs over." By then, I was desperately saying, "Baba, please help me, Baba, please help me, Baba please help me...I will never do this again. I promise." Seconds later, the woman said, "Wait, there is a message

coming across my screen." This message flashed across the screen (and I will NEVER forget the words): "This person is not to be charged any extra for any additional luggage."

Incredulously, the woman told me she cannot charge me extra and that she would take the entire luggage. She said she had to follow the orders. She even showed me the screen. She admitted she had never ever in her 30 years of work had this happen. She ended by saying, "God helped you." I was too dazed to realize what had happened. I could not believe my ears or eyes! Baba had saved me. I thanked Him from the bottom of my heart for saving me from pure embarrassment.

I thought I had learned my lesson. A year later, I was going back to India. This time, I had packed much ahead of time and I only was about 5 lbs overweight on each suitcase. I even patted myself on my back for this great accomplishment. My husband drove me to the airport this time. At the counter, I very nonchalantly turned my suitcases over, very sure of myself. To my total surprise, the woman said, "Ma'am, you are 5 lbs over on each suitcase. Please remove the weight until you are at 70 lbs. each" "But, but," I stammered, "it is only 5 lbs per suitcase, what is the big deal?" No, I was not even allowed that! I had to remove the extra.

What a lesson I learned. Stick to the rules. I had begged Baba the first time, and He let me off scott-free. The second time, it was NO. I had promised Baba I would never over-weigh and I had gone off my promise.

What a way for Baba to teach me this lesson! I learned that when I promise something, I should stick to it. When in distress, call out to Baba; He will come and help you.

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 Sat 12.30 to 6 PM
Mrityunjaya Jap 1008 Times: Every Mon 4.00 PM to 6 PM
Sai Naam Japam: Every Sun 5.00 PM to 6.00 PM

PUJA SPONSORSHIP

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

UPCOMING EVENTS--DECEMBER

Sun, Dec 23: Vaikuntha Ekadashi
Mon, Dec 24: Christmas Eve
Tues, Dec 25: Christmas
Wed, Dec 26: Hanumad Vrat
Thurs, Dec 27: Datta Jayanti
Mon, Dec 31: New Year's Eve
(Bhajans 10.00 PM to 12.01 AM)

Sai Wisdom

All that I seek from you is that you love your fellowmen, share their sufferings, and engage yourselves in serving them. Rich people and those in power have plentiful servants. But the distressed, the poverty-stricken, and those who suffer have no one to serve them. Go to such people and be their friends, their kith and kin, and their closest well-wishers. Let them welcome you as such. If you pour spirituality into the ears of those who are tortured by hunger, it will not be assimilated. First satiate the hunger. Give them God in the form of food and in the form of clothes. Give God in the form of peace to those who are afflicted with anxiety and in the form of medicine to those who are suffering from ill health. Give God in a form that will assuage fear, pain and sorrow. It is only when this is done that spirituality can soak into their hearts. *Source: Thought For The Day, Prashanti Nilayam, Nov 23, 2012*

Flower Power By S. Pankanti

There was this intense feeling that I should take a bunch of flowers to Baba's temple in Pittsburgh on a Sunday morning. Not knowing the place or neighborhood very well, we spent arbitrarily searching for a florist shop near by and were on verge of getting frustrated.

Finally, "on a hunch" we found a small florist shop not far away from the temple by sheer coincidence.

The florist had only one big white rose bouquet left and we purchased and were soon on our way to the temple just in time for the madhyana arati.

A lady who was volunteering at the temple was pleasantly surprised at the arrival of the flowers. She later recounted that the priest had exhausted all the flowers by offering them to Baba and she was dismayed that they had no more full flowers left for offering for Baba's noon arati.

She took the timely arrival of flowers as Baba's leela for fulfilling every passing wish of His bhakta.

The authors eyes were bedimmed with tears as through this act Baba affirmed his faith but also He considered him worthy of being His instrument for this leela.

AN APPEAL

Devotees may be aware that the recent Noreaster Hurricane Sandy wreaked havoc across the entire East Coast. While the temple and its main areas were spared from the impact of the storm the second Noreaster damaged the temple's fence and some areas behind the temple. We have temporarily secured the fence using metal wires and strong wooden posts but are in discussion with Home Depot to redo the fence. The cost of the project is far more than we anticipated. We are requesting devotees to kindly contribute toward this cause and assist with the fence reconstruction project. Please send your contributions to Om Sai Mandir. You can also contribute online:

http://www.omsaimandir.org/voluntary_donations.cfm

Withstanding the Storms of Passion

By M. Saxena

Recently our neighborhood was overwhelmed by a powerful storm. The storm was a unique combination of strong opposing winds, creating a powerful cell that brought down trees and power lines all across the area. Though only lasting a few minutes, the damage would take days to repair. But for those whose homes were destroyed, it might take weeks, if not months to rebuild.

How does this event pertain to our journey towards Atma Vidya, Realization of the Self? Our physical body is like the naked earth, which is either covered by the natural landscapes, or bulldozed over to make way for buildings and malls.

We decide whether to fill our bodies, our lives, with the true essence of our nature – which is striving towards the Paramatma, or to be enraptured by the pursuits and spoils of the material world.

However, be aware that whenever the chitta and vasanas, the mental agitations and impressions, enter our thoughts – our very body and minds can become as violent as the grounds of Kurukshetra, where the ceaseless battle between spirituality takes place against moha (desire), krodha (anger), kama (intense desire, lust), and lobha (greed).

At times we may feel full of devotional ecstasy, feeling divine closeness to Bhagawan and His leelas. At other times we can lose sleep over our innermost desires and worries.

Despite these vacillations, we must strive towards our goal – which is Atma Vidya, through Sathya (Truth), Dharma (Righteous Duty), and Prema (Love). We must make sure we do more than pay lip service to Swami's words, "Hands in Society, Head in the Forest." For if we try to plant the seeds of virtue in the world, the storms of passions will try to violently, and may successfully destroy those trees, should they ever have the chance to grow that high. But if we plant the seeds of virtue in the strong and deep soil of earth, those seeds will have a much stronger chance to withstand the thundering cries of the storm, and will have a chance to mature to divine fruition.

And notice the destruction caused by these storms of passion. So much damage. Think of the heights a spiritual person ascends to, then falls down from upon giving way to their internal battles.

All the time spent in prayers, meditation, selfless service – all are of no avail if one is not deeply and courageously established in the Self. This is the only way to endure the mental afflictions that topples one's spiritual growth.

So when you next observe the aftermath of a powerful storm – notice the damage incurred in the worldly sphere, then walk in a park.

Which trees are left standing? Which have fallen? Yes, though trees will fall in both places, those that are not rotted from the inside, and are strong, mature, and deep-rooted in the earth – those are the trees left standing.

No need to retreat to the forests! Stay in society. Fulfill your duty. But always remember to deepen the roots of your spirituality far beyond the grasps of the world, into the ever nourishing and rejuvenating depths of the Self. Sai Ram.

Have an article to share?

If you have an article, story idea, or experience to share with the readers of Sai Sandesh, please e-mail it to saisandesh@om-saimandir.org. We eagerly seek feedback and articles from all our readers.

Baba Comes to Our House

By S. Bhatnagar

I got pulled into Baba's fold initially in 1999. At that time, I had just started going to the Sai Center in Bethesda, MD, and I had put the kids in the Bal Vikas Classes.

My daughter, who was turning seven years in March, pleaded that we have Baba bhajans for her birthday. I did not sing at all and I did not even know people to invite. But, at her repeated insistence, I gathered together a handful of people from the Sai Center to come to our house and sing. I am grateful that they were able to do so.

I wrote Baba a letter the day before asking Him to come for the bhajans. I told him the exact time it would start and end (I had heard that Baba wants us to be punctual). I also asked that Baba show me proof that He has come.

The bhajans started on time. In those days, I was not used to sitting for an hour listening to bhajans, and I would start to get antsy after a bhajan or two. I remember that day, with full faith in my heart, thinking how great the bhajans were and how I wished that they would never end. And I truly meant and felt it.

All of a sudden I felt an aura descend on the whole room. It was very uplifting and heavy with love and light. It was as if a Being had come into the room and filled us with pure vibrations.

A few minutes after this, I heard a "thwack, thwack, thwack." I looked around perplexed as to what the noise was. I was sitting near our big glass-framed Baba picture. I again heard the "thwack, thwack, thwack" over the bhajans.

To my utter amazement, I saw that a large pearl necklace we had put on Baba's picture was not only swaying to the rhythm of the bhajan, but would also pick itself up and hit against the glass on the photo every so often, making the sound I was hearing. Totally anti-gravity and anti-anything!!!

This happened several times until I grasped that it was Baba! Baba was showing me proof that He was here. As soon as I "got" that, the necklace stopped moving. A few minutes later, even the heavy vibration cloud left. And I realized Baba had come and gone.

I was so blessed that Baba came to our house. After the bhajans, almost everyone came to me and said they felt Baba had come. A few people had even seen what I had seen. My Faith in Baba took an even higher leap. If you truly desire something good from your heart, then Baba will answer but you have to be open/receptive to allow this to happen. May Baba bless us all in our own homes with His Darshan.

Lamp Miracle

By S. Pankanti

Amma has this uncanny habit of relentlessly following Baba's instructions to best of her abilities. Knowing Baba likes lit lamps ("akhanda jyoti") she started keeping two perpetually lit lamps in her worship room for last few years. One of the lamps was lit with the sesame/gingili oil and the other was lit with ghee. I do not know why she started keeping two lamps nor did I know why one lamp with oil and the other with ghee. She would watch the lamps like a hawk to make sure that they were lit all the time. It was not easy for her to vigilantly watch the lamps but she did it with faith and joy knowing that her actions pleased Baba. So, one morning, she woke up (this was a Datta pournima and Thursday) and she was not very amused that both the lamps had extinguished. She immediately refilled the lamps with oil and ghee and adjusted the wicks. She lighted one lamp with a match stick and when she turned to light the other lamp, she was shocked to see that the other lamp was already lit. Once she realized what had actually happened, you can imagine her immense joy for witnessing this miracle first hand as if Baba were affirming her faith. She said kept seeing the lamp when she was doing her parayana (ritual reading of the religious scriptures) during the day.

Om Sai Mandir

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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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