



Shraddha. Saburi.

SAI SANDESH

The Official Monthly Newsletter of

OM SAI MANDIR

A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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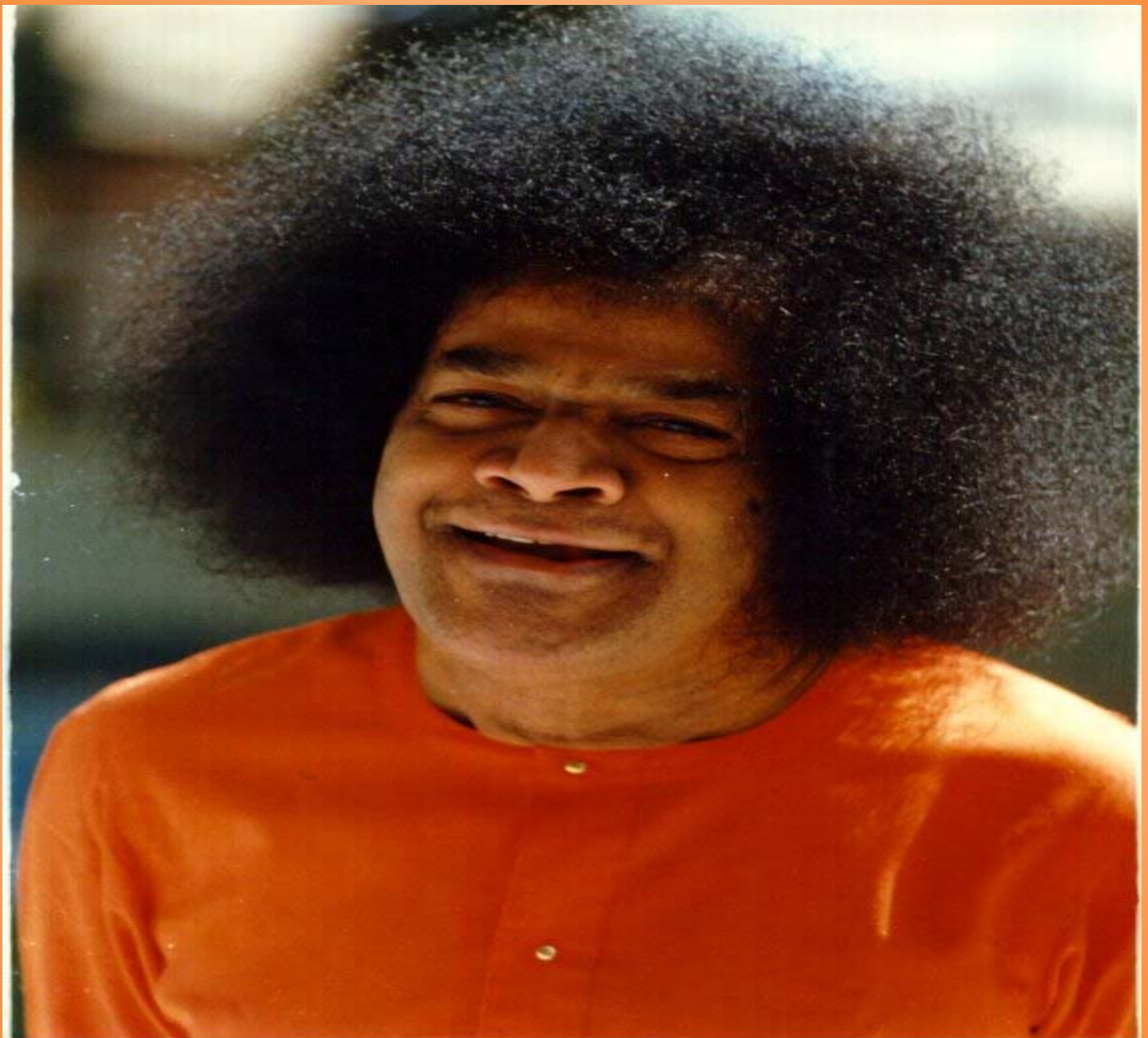
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Love All. Serve All.

January 2009

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Message from the President

2008 was another eventful year at Om Sai Mandir. It was indeed a year where devotees experienced numerous mind boggling miracles and benevolent acts of Divine grace. Numerologically, 2009 adds up to 11 (2+9) which coincides with Shri Sathya Sai Baba's 83rd year (again, 8+3 -- the digits add up to 11). As such, we are very hopeful that the upcoming year will bring blessings and prosperity to one and all.

Babas' statues have completed one year!

November 23, 2008, in addition to being Baba's 83rd birthday, marked the first year anniversary of the installation of life-sized, most beautiful color statues of both Shirdi Sai Baba and Sathya Sai Baba. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time in the world where both Babas are being worshipped together. We celebrated this historic, doubly-blessed event with all due rituals, festivities, and an intense spiritual fervor.

Rudra Abhishekam continues

Devotees may recall that for the benefit of humanity, we had started Rudra Abhishekam and abhishekam of Baba, Ganesh, and sarva devata (all deities) eleven times daily. We embarked on this auspicious undertaking on June 11, 2007 and on December 11, 2008, we completed eighteen months of constant chanting of Sri Rudram and other vedic prayers.

The prayers were initially scheduled for 121 days, but after experiencing intense energy, divine vibrations, miracles, and devotees' enthusiasm and participation, we have decided to continue performing the abhishekam indefinitely. It is being performed from 8.30 AM to 11.30 AM every single day. All are welcome to participate.

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.

This year, we were very fortunate to be graced by two visits from Swami Bhagavati Siddhar. This great saint not only blessed us with his divine presence but also materialized various pendants, rudrakshas, and vibhuti to bless devotees present during his visit.

Our volunteers

Sai's blessings find ample expression through the tireless service of our dedicated team of young volunteers, a taskforce that has grown remarkably well during 2008 as well. We are thankful to them.

The future

It has been over five years since the inception of the temple and despite all the progress, we are anxiously looking forward to many Sai activities during the upcoming year. We desire to intensify all the prayers that are being performed and are hoping to add many activities and prayers to our already growing list. As such, I would like to request the continued participation, support, and blessings of devotees. For regular updates, be sure to check the temple's website (omsaimandir.org) regularly.

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

-- Gangadhar Rao Chalasani, M.D.

President

Everything Happens For A Reason, For Our Own Good

By The Sai Sandesh Team

DIVINE WISDOM

In the pursuit of the good and godly life, one may encounter many difficulties and disturbances. Many doubts and questions crop up. It is only when these difficulties are faced squarely and the troubles are borne with patience and fortitude that we can understand the true nature of Reality. You should not allow yourselves to be overwhelmed in any way by difficulties and sorrows, doubts and disappointments. You must have faith. Have confidence in yourself and strive to understand well the nature of God's love. To secure that love is the sacred goal of human life. The transforming power of Love is boundless -- Baba

Thought for the Day:

December 28, 2008, Prashanti Nilayam

In an ancient land, there lived a king who was fortunate to have a very wise minister as his advisor. This minister had a unique habit, though. Whenever something would happen, he would always say: "Everything happens for a reason, for our own good." The king and his cabinet had a tendency to take these words lightly and would often ridicule the unusual philosophy.

Once, the king accidentally cut his finger. As was always his habit, the minister's reaction was the same: "Everything happens for a reason, for our own good." The king was infuriated at this comment and immediately ordered the minister's arrest. Much to everyone's surprise, however, the minister again uttered the same words.

It was soon hunting day in the king's calendar and he, along with his retinue, visited a dense forest in search of adventure. Unfortunately, the king lost his way and found himself surrounded by an armed tribe. These individuals were performing a human sacrifice and were very pleased to find such a healthy and royal sacrificial animal. They immediately overpowered the king and took him to the presence of their chief priest. The sacrificial rites were being prepared and the king was wondering if this was his last day on earth. To his good fortune, things took a strange turn.

On making a closer examination, the priest realized that the king had just lost his finger and a subject who had such an

injury would be inappropriate for the rite. Almost immediately, the tribal chief ordered the release of the king and asked his deputies to make a better search this time. On release, the king realized the wisdom of his loyal minister. Had he not lost the finger, he would have surely lost his life.

The monarch rushed to his kingdom and immediately ordered the release of his dear minister. The king congratulated him on his wisdom and asked him as to why he felt his own imprisonment was also for a good reason. The minister explained that had he not been arrested that day, he being the king's constant companion would have surely been sacrificed in place of the king. All rejoiced.

So many such experiences occur in our daily life as well. While we always tend to express disappointment at their occurrence, we rarely think back and trust God's wisdom. After all, God does know how to run the show of the universe and every action of His must have a deeply mysterious and beneficial reason.

Once, a family visited Shirdi Baba. They wanted Baba to cure a relative who was suffering from an incurable lung ailment. Baba, knowing what is best for the individual, did not offer blessings. After some time, the patient passed away and the family became dejected. They lost faith in Baba and decided that they would never visit Shirdi again. Children may forget the mother, but the compassionate Sai Maa would never ever forget Her children. Baba gave a vision to one of the family members and held out two decomposed lungs. He said, "My dear child, you blame me for the death of your loved one, but see what I saved him from. He was suffering immensely." It was then that everyone realized that Baba had indeed benefited them even though they had distrusted Him. Their faith in Baba was re-affirmed and they became staunch devotees of Baba.

God's ways are always inscrutable and it is very difficult to understand what he does, but it is very easy to stand-under (surrender to) Him. The story of a widowed mother clarifies this.

There was a young lady who had lost her husband at a very young age. She spared no effort in raising her children and her son soon grew up to be a fine young man. He joined his departed father's position in the military and thus managed to secure his future. The mother was overjoyed and asked him to visit their family deity to offer gratitude for God's benevolence. *continued on page 4*

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While at that holy land, his foot accidentally slipped and he fell into a deep water tank. Witnesses could not save the lad despite their best efforts. The widowed mother was devastated to have lost her only son and lost all hopes for living. Our compassionate Swami never leaves the suffering alone. He is indeed the friend of the friend-less, the support of the support-less, and the savior of those could not be saved otherwise.

Someone urged this lady to visit Shri Sathya Sai Baba. It was indeed Swami calling her through one of His mysterious instruments. Swami granted this lady an interview and what happened at the interview clarified the mystery for this grief-stricken mother. Without her asking, Swami told her everything that had happened in her life, including her recent loss. He then said, "Do you want to see your son during his last moments?" He then held out His divine hand. She saw a clear vision within the hand, almost like a motion picture. She saw how the lad was walking near the water tank and how he slipped and fell into the deep water. As soon as he fell, however, a bright lotus-shaped light emanated from his head and crossed all the people that were standing there. The light went through the temple gates and crossed all the areas of the shrine to finally reach the innermost area adorned by the deity.

As soon as the light reached the deity, the deity transformed into an image of Sathya Sai Baba and the light merged into Him just the way a drop merges into the ocean. Swami then explained to the mother that her son was not an ordinary person. In his previous life, he was a great saint who had performed severe penance at the very place he passed away in this life. When he was dying in that life, he had but one last unfulfilled wish: to take jal samadhi (some great yogis give up their life in a state of samadhi under water). It was as a result of this unfulfilled wish that the yogi was reborn as the woman's son. As his devotion was so intense, providence had arranged for a trip to the holy shrine in order to fulfill his one sincere wish.

The lady then realized the greatness of her son and felt great pride that she had indeed borne a mahatma (great soul). She was also at peace to learn that what happened was nothing but the fulfillment of her son's own wish. She then regained peace and realized that there is always a mystery behind a mystery and that all does happen for a good reason, even though one may not immediately comprehend or decipher that reason. She then dedicated the rest of her life in service to Swami, who not only offered her protection but also provided for her daily living and shelter.

A POEM - By Rima Naik

Saibaba....

Upon this earth when you descended,
Problems of people suddenly ended,
With your merciful hands vanished people's
sorrows, Your love and support sent their
pains to the gallows.

God, magician or a saint... Who were you?
"Saibaba" they lovingly named you.
King of kings, you lived in Dwarkamai..
No money or wealth could interest you Sai..

Devotee's faith is all that you craved,
Which to you they lovingly gave,
Lucky are those who lived with you,
Fortunate enough to have served you...

My be or not I was one of them then...
Not sure when I will get the chance again...
Dear Baba, I pray to you this day...
Please give me a chance to serve you some-
way.

Keep you loving hands upon my head,
Forgive my sins and anything wrong I said,
Be by my side in times good and bad,
Make me smile when I am sad.

Oh my humble father, you are in air, land and
water, Accept the prayers and love of "Rima"-
your loving daughter.

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
ANNADAN (FOOD SERVICE) FOR HOMELESS
BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Every Saturday at 1 P.M. Call
718-461-0454

PUJA SPONSORSHIP

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

January

Tuesday, Jan. 01: New Year's Day Celebrations
Sunday, Jan. 13: Lodhi/Lohri
Tuesday, Jan. 15: Makara Sankranti/Pongal
Saturday, Jan. 26: India's Republic Day

EKADASHA RUDRA ABHISHEKAM

Daily from 8.30 AM to 11.30 AM

Rudra Abhishekam - Daily

For the welfare of humanity, Ekadash Rudra Abhishekam is being performed daily (eleven times) from 8.00 AM to 11.30 AM. All are welcome to attend this historic event.

Swami's Leelas

Once, Swami was traveling with a group of devotees. Their car was on a very narrow road when devotees noticed a huge truck heading their way. The truck was approaching at such a rapid speed that all thought it would be impossible to prevent a collision.

Even in that tense situation, Baba acted as if He were blissfully unaware of what was happening around Him. The devotees' hearts were pounding rapidly, however. They did not anticipate surviving the crash, but a miracle happened at the last moment, much to the surprise of everyone.

Within a second they saw behind them the very truck that was heading toward them. It was as if the car had passed through the truck. None could explain what had happened, but Swami's naughty smile appeared to say it all. What a wonderful play by the Divine.

Ordering a storm to stop

There was a huge storm in Shirdi at one time. As the situation became dangerous, all human beings and animals living in Shirdi rushed to Baba. The merciful Swami roared at the clouds, saying, "Stop! Calm your fury!" Lo, within a few moments the clouds passed away and things returned to normal.

Taming fire

On another occasion a fire was erupting at Baba's residence. Despite knowing this, Baba was calm and did not bother much about it, but the devotees who were witnessing this were alarmed and requested Baba to intervene. At this, Baba took his stick and started beating it on the ground. With every blow, the flames were coming down and within a few minutes things became normal.

Suspending the ceiling mid-way

Baba demonstrated His power whenever it was necessary. It was a custom in Shirdi that some devotees would sit with Baba during meals. On one such occasion, Baba suddenly looked at the ceiling of the building and said, "Wait!" The astonished devotees noticed the ceiling was collapsing but the moment Sai ordered it to wait, the fall was arrested mid-air.

Many devotees were afraid to continue eating but Baba asked them to finish their meals fearlessly. When everyone was done, Baba asked the followers to step out. He then ordered the ceiling to continue its unfinished work. Within seconds the suspended ceiling disintegrated and fell on the floor with a huge impact.

SAI IS ALWAYS THERE WITH US BY THE SAI SANDESH TEAM

A retired elderly couple was living in New York City -- both, very devoted to Swami and His teachings. Once, when the husband wasn't at home, the wife made a cup of tea for herself. As she was about to sip the freshly brewed tea, she heard a very sweet voice: "Where is My tea?" As she was alone in the house, she wondered where the voice came from and thinking it to be her own imagination, continued sipping her tea. The same voice asked her again, "Where is My tea?" She then followed the direction of the voice and found that it was coming from their prayer room -- from Swami's picture. She immediately realized that she was never alone and that Swami was with her all along and so immediately made another cup of tea for her beloved lord.

In the Satcharita, Baba has emphatically told Hemadpant, "Am I not always with you? Do you offer food to Me before you eat or drink?"

An old knee injury had resulted in a serious tear of the author's left knee's Meniscal cartilage. A surgery was recommended but due to some reasons, he had not undergone the treatment. The excruciating pain from the injury relapsed after a period of ten years and he unable to stand or move. It was almost as if he had lost one leg.

As the author helplessly looked at Sai's picture, God mysteriously diverted the writer's 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). He could distinctly read what was written under the picture. The words were: "Why fear when I am here."

As soon as he saw the sticker a miracle happened and as he tried to stand back on his feet he did not experience the slightest pain or discomfort. He has been pain free ever since.

Swami reveals His presence in various ways depending on the devotee's need and the intensity of the call. A student was planning to come to the United States for his higher education. He was much intimidated by the immigration and visa consular process but was very determined that he would not lie to any question, no matter what the consequences would be. He was fervently praying to Swami to be with him during the process, especially because he wanted to practice Baba's holy teachings of being truthful at all times. As his name was called out for the interview, he requested Sai to be with him. Much to his surprise, a miracle happened. As soon

as the officer would pose a question, he himself would complete the answer even before the student would finish his version. This happened repeatedly and the interview was over within a few minutes. It was Sai who had been with the student during the entire process.

The truth is that Sai Baba is always present and constantly communicating with us even though we may not realize it. He is like the radio waves, always transmitting His love and energy to everyone. All that is needed on our part is concentration, faith, and the right means of tuning in to His constant communication. Sai IS always there with us.

**Wishing all our
devotees a Very
Happy and Sai-
Filled Year
Ahead. May 2009
Bring the
Choicest of
Blessings Your
Way!**

Swami's 83rd Birthday Celebrations and First Year Anniversary of Installation of Statues - Nov 23, 2008



Swami Bhagavati Siddhar's Visit to Om Sai Mandir
The Pictures Below Are Ones Where Swamiji Materialized Vibhuti, Pendants, and Rudrakshas.



OM SAI MANDIR
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