



Sabka Maalik Ek

SAI SANDESH

The Monthly Newsletter of Om Sai Mandir

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Love All, Serve All

Vijayadashami (Dassehra) Special Issue



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THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VIJAYADASHAMI (DASSEHRA)

Navaratri is a nine-day festival culminating into the tenth day, Vijayadashami (also known as Dassehra). Dassehra honors the victory of devas over asuras—the forces of righteousness over the forces of evil. They were able to win because *Paraashakti* (the dynamic aspect of divinity) the power that has elaborated God into all this variety and beauty—came to succor them and fight on their behalf. India also had to meet invasion by unrighteous forces and the same *Paraashakti* saved it from loss and dishonor. Therefore, this festival is celebrated with added significance.² Again, it was on Vijayadashami (Dassehra) that Lord Rama vanquished the demon Ravana in battle. It is for these reasons that this day is considered a day when one can easily conquer the evil forces within us with the help of our own indwelling divinity.

Navaratri is celebrated in memory of the nine days when Mother Durga, the motherly aspect of God, defeated and destroyed the evil forces; she is propitiated and easily pleased during these nine days.⁴ The whole creation has emerged from truth and merges back into it. In reality, truth is the real mother for the entire creation. The Goddess Devi is called Sathya Swaroopini, the embodiment of truth. During Navaratri, devotees read sacred texts, such as Devi Bhagvatha, Ramayana, and Mahabharata. Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati, the three incarnations of Devi, are also worshipped during these nine days. This trinity is also present in the principle of truth. Worshipping truth thus amounts to the worship of the divine mother.

Goddess Gayatri symbolizes three forces; these are Gayatri, Savitri, and Saraswati. Gayatri is the presiding deity over the senses; Savitri, the life principle; and Saraswati, the presiding deity of speech. All these three are present within the principle of truth. The Gayatri mantra begins with “Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvah”. ‘Bhu’ means materialization (body); ‘Bhuvah’ means vibration (life principle); ‘Suvah’ means radiation (atma). Truth, righteousness, peace, forgiveness are all expressions of the principles of Shakti. The *Navaratri* worship has been started in order to foster sacred qualities in us. Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati symbolize the three attributes, *Satwa*, *Rajas* and *Thamas*. *Satwic* qualities emerge out of ‘*Hridaya*’ (heart), ‘*Rajasic*’ out of throat, and ‘*Thamasic*’ out of the tongue. ‘*Hridaya*’ is the center of Love and Peace.¹

***Sthree* symbolises the three gunas in women.** The world is a manifestation of the three *gunas*, (*Satwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*). The Divine is worshipped as “Devi”. The term *Sthree* is used to denote a woman. There are three

syllables in this term: *Sa*, *Tha*, and *Ra*. “*Sa*” symbolises the *Satwic* aspect of a person. The *Satwic* quality is the very first quality that manifests in man. The feeling of love develops from the mother. The mother converts her own blood into love and gives it as milk to feed the child. Therefore, the first quality represented by “*Sa*”, is the *Satwic* quality.

The second syllable is “*Tha*”. This does not represent *thatva* or *thaamasa*. In the term *Sthree*, the syllable “*tha*” represents bashfulness, modesty, self-esteem, and such traits which are characteristics of women. Shyness is a predominant trait in women. They attach great value to their honor and reputation. It is because of these sacred qualities that their *Tamasic* aspect is significant. The common view regarding the *Tamasic* quality does not apply to them. The third quality, symbolized by the syllable “*Ra*”, is *Rajas*. Such qualities as sacrifice and high-mindedness in women reflect the *Rajasic* aspect of their nature. When necessary, women will be prepared even to sacrifice their lives to safeguard their honor. Without regard to the difficulties and troubles they may encounter, women are ready to make any sacrifice to protect their honor and self-respect. When the *Tamasic* elements attempt to subvert the *Satwic* qualities, they are ready to combat and vanquish them.

Inner meaning of Dassehra festival. The term “*Devi*” thus represents the Divine power which has taken the *Rajasic* form to suppress the forces of evil and protect the *Satwic* qualities. When the forces of injustice, immorality and untruth have grown to monstrous proportions and are indulge in a death-dance, when selfishness and self-interest are rampant, when men have lost all sense of kindness and compassion, the *Atmic* principle, assuming the form of *Shakti*, taking on the *Rajasic* quality, seeks to destroy all the evil elements. This is the inner meaning of the Dassehra festival.

When the Divine Goddess is in dreadful rage to destroy the wicked elements, She assumes a fearful form. To pacify the dreaded Goddess, Her feminine children offer worship to Her with red *kumkum* (sacred red powder). The Goddess, seeing the blood-red *kumkum* at her feet, feels assured that the wicked have been vanquished and assumes Her benign form. The inner meaning of the worship of Devi with red *kumkum* is that thereby the Goddess is appeased.

During the ten days of Dassehra, the *rakshasas* (demons) in the form of wicked qualities have been routed.

Rakshasas do not mean demonic beings. The bad qualities in men are the demons. Arrogance is a demon. Bad thoughts are demons. Ravana is depicted as the king of *Rakshasas*. He is said to have ten heads. Who is this Ravana and what are his ten heads? *Kama* (lust), *Krodha* (anger), *Moha* (delusion), *Lobha* (Greed), *Mada* (pride), *Maatsarya* (Envy), *Manas* (the mind), *Buddhi* (intellect), *Chitta* (Will) and *Ahamkara* (the Ego)--these ten constitute the ten heads. Ravana is the one who has these ten qualities.

Rajasic and Satwic qualities of Rama. Rama is the destroyer of bad qualities. When engaged in this act of destruction of bad qualities, He manifests *His Rajo-guna*. But His *Rajasic* quality is associated with His *Satwic* quality. Even in cutting off Ravana's ten heads, Rama showed His love. This was the only way Ravana could be redeemed. When the Lord metes out a punishment, it may appear harsh. But what appears externally as *Rajasic* is in reality *Satwic*. In a hailstorm, along with rain there will be hailstones. But both the rain and hailstones contain water. Likewise, there is *Satwic* quality even in the Lord's *Rajasic* actions. Similarly there may be *Satwic* quality even in *Tamasic* actions. These depend on the time, place and the circumstances in which the Lord acts. Butter can be split with a finger. But a powerful hammer is needed to break a piece of iron. The Lord deals with *Satwic* persons in a *Satwic* way. He applies the *Rajasic* weapon against *Rajasic* persons.

All the festivals of Bharatiyas have been designed to promote divine love among the people. It is to confer such love on people that the Lord incarnates on earth. He Himself demonstrates how love should be expressed. He showers His love and teaches everyone how to love. Hence, experience this love and joy in your life and live in peace. ³Wish you all a Very Happy Dassehra!

References:

1. Divine Discourse, The Path Of Love, Sept 25, 1998, Prashanti Nilayam
2. Divine Discourse, Prashaanthi Nilayam: Dassehra, 1965:26-9-1965
3. Divine Discourse at the Kalyana Mandap at Brindavan, on 18-10-1991, Dassehra Day.
4. Divine Discourse, Prashaanthi Nilayam: Dassehra, 29-9-1965

UPCOMING EVENTS

October

Monday, Oct. 03: Devi Navarathri begins
 Tuesday, Oct. 11: Durgashtami
 Wednesday, Oct. 12: Vijaya Dashami/Dussera
 Thursday, Oct. 20: Karva Chowth
 Sunday, Oct. 30: Dhanteras

November 2005

Tuesday, Nov. 01: Deepavali
 Thursday, Nov. 03, Bhai Duj
 Saturday, Nov. 12, 6pm to Sunday, Nov.13, 6pm:
 Akhanda Bhajans (24 hour bhajans for world peace)
 Tuesday, Nov. 15: Guru Nanakji's Jayanthi
 Saturday, Nov. 19: Ladies' Day Celebrations
 Wednesday, Nov. 23: Sathya Sai Baba's 80th Birthday

OM SAI MANDIR'S DAILY 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.

SAI NAAM JAP (CHANTING BABA'S HOLY NAME):

Last Saturday of Every Month 8.30 A.M. – 8.30 P.M.

STOTRAS (CHANTING SAHASRANAM, BABA'S 108 NAMES, ETC.):

Daily 12.30 P.M. and 6.30 P.M.

ANNADAN [FOOD SERVICE]:

Daily at the Temple

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Vahana Puja.....	\$15
Annadan.....	\$251

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I DON'T BELONG TO ANY PLACE

One day in the sacred shrine of lord Viswanath at Kasi, all the devotees and temple priests were immersed in singing hymns and reciting chants. All of a sudden, they heard a metallic sound. When they turned their heads in that direction they saw a shining gold plate on the floor of the shrine. It must have fallen through an open space in the center of the hall from the sky leading to the sanctum sanctorum. All of them gathered round with wonder, while the chief temple priest went close to examine it. He found some letters inscribed on it. "This belongs to my dear devotee". The priest read the inscription loudly. All the temple priests vied with one another to snatch the plate with the feeling, "Who could be a greater devotee than myself. I spend my time, talent, and strength only to offer worship to the Lord Viswanath." But the plate changed into an earthen one the moment they touched it one after another. News spread like wild fire about the golden plate. Several scholars, singers, poets, and preachers came and tried their luck but in vain. Days, weeks and months rolled on but the plate remained there without a claimant.

One day, a stranger came to the temple. He stood at the entrance and tears gathered in his eyes when he saw beggars, blind, dumb and lame pitiously pleading for alms. He felt ashamed of his inability to relieve them of their hunger and agony. He wanted to pray to the Lord and so stepped into the temple. He saw people gathered round and discussing something. He tried to squeeze himself into the crowd to find out why they were standing there. He saw a golden plate in the center of that enclosure. He enquired and was told about the episode of the golden plate. He was rather surprised and sad at the attitude of the people and the priests. Instead of praying to the Lord of the Universe and trying to possess Him, they were eager to possess the golden plate. Observing his non-chalant attitude, the high priest requested him to try his hand. The stranger replied: "Oh Revered one! I do not care for either gold or silver, what I long for is God's Grace." The priest's esteem for that man increased. So he once again pressed him, "At least to satisfy us, please try your hand." The stranger touched the plate without a trace of attachment. Lo! It shone forth with redoubled effulgence. All the priests gathered round and queried: "Sir, where do you come from? What are your qualifications? What are the branches of learning you have mastered? How many years did you do penance?" The stranger replied calmly: "I don't belong to any place. I just manage to earn my bread by hard labor. The only sadhana I do is Namasmaraan [repeating the name of the Lord]. This has perhaps rendered my heart

pure and filled it with love and compassion. It has enabled me to control my mind and the senses. I have not read any book or mastered any science. The only art I know of is chanting the Name Divine. The only act I do is to be kind to the poor."

So, the only qualification to become dear to the Lord is to acquire a compassionate heart and sense control. These two can be acquired through Namasmaraan with full faith in the Lord.

- Adapted from Oka Chinna Katha by N. Kasturi

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**DEVOTEES ARE
REQUESTED TO
CONTRIBUTE ARTICLES,
EXPERIENCES, STORIES,
ETC. FOR PUBLICATION
IN THE FORTHCOMING
ISSUES OF SAI SANDESH**

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

“The word 'Dharma', which is really bound up with an infinite variety of meanings, is regarded in common usage as referring to actions like charity, performing good deeds, going on pilgrimages and discharging one's duties, etc. But these relate only to external actions. Dharma is eternal, the same for everyone, everywhere. It expresses the significance of the inner Atma. The birth place of Dharma is the heart. What emanates from the heart as a pure idea, when translated into action is Dharma. The true Dharma of every human being is to make every endeavour to realize the Divine; Dharma should lead to Self-realization.”

- Baba

DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES

Mr. G.S.R.C.V. Prasada Rao (63), a retired IAS officer, relates a few of his experiences of the divinity of Bhagavan in his own words.

“My marriage took place in 1964. My wife, Mrs. Sarojini, happened to be a devotee of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba since her early childhood, coming from a family of Sai devotees. I learnt about Bhagavan from my wife. When I was working at Tirupati in 1967, I came to Prasanthi Nilayam with my wife. That was my first visit. There was a meter gauge train from Tirupati in those days. We got down at Mudigubba at about 4:30 a.m.; there was no bus till 6:30 a.m. to Bukkapatnam. As we waited on the platform, I said to my wife in lighter vein, 'see! What happened? You brought me here, saying Swami, Swami! What a time-consuming journey! We could have gone to Madras and returned three times meanwhile.' Later we reached Prasanthi Nilayam.

We went and sat for darshan. Swami came along and called us for interview. As I was entering the interview room, Swami told me, 'I may be new to you, but for me, you are not new'. During the interview, my wife caught hold of Swami's hand. We were married only three years ago. My wife was only 18 years old then. Yet, some aged people in the house always used to talk about our not having children till then. My wife was feeling unhappy about such talk and wanted, perhaps, to represent her predicament to Swami. So she clutched Swami's hand, but did not say anything. Swami answered her silent

prayer telling us, 'you will have children'. Swami, at the outset, began by saying, 'how was the journey? You must have felt a lot of inconvenience'. Then he repeated all that I had commented on the journey with my wife at Mudigubba, as if He was replaying a tape recorded version. I was amazed. We stayed there for four or five days. One day, during darshan, a teenaged boy sat by my side. 'I came here only as company to my mother because she cannot travel alone', he told me, 'in fact, I am not interested in all this'. Swami came along darshan line; stood before that boy and said, 'you can worship your own deity'. So saying, Swami materialised an idol of Krishna and gave him. Later, that boy told me, 'I don't do any pooja, but, if at all I do, I worship only Lord Krishna'. He was visibly moved that Swami had given him the idol of his personal deity Krishna only. He came to Prasanthi Nilayam as company to his mother, but went back as a devotee transformed by Bhagavan.

On another day, Swami took me to His room on the first floor of the mandir. In those days, He used to reside on the first floor of the mandir at Prasanthi Nilayam. 'We are constructing Dharmakshetra, our ashram in Bombay', Swami told me, and 'these are the plans of that building. Do they look all right?' 'Very good, Swami!' I replied. He materialised a locket with Shirdi Sai on one side and Sri Sathya Sai on the other, and gave it to me. 'Give this to your wife' Swami told me, 'let her wear it always. She asked for it when she was a child. I did not give it then. So I am sending it with you'. Later, my wife's grandmother confirmed that, as a child, my wife used to ask Swami to give her something. During our stay there, Swami used to talk with me, at least a few words, during darshan, invariably. One day I took a bust of Bhagavan made of plaster of paris. It was of pink colour. I wanted Swami to bless it. Swami blessed it and said, 'look, I (in the idol) will be moving my eyes now and then'. The idol is still with us. When I returned to Tirupati where I was working at that time, my colleagues asked me, 'what is your impression of your first visit to Sri Sathya Sai Baba?' 'He is giving food and clothing to poor', I told them, 'and free education. You have to accept Him as Mahatma whether you agree that He is God or not, and we do not know the definition of God'. After that I could not go to Prasanthi Nilayam again for nearly 15 years. In 1980-81, we admitted our second son G.N.A Rao in Class V in the Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prasanthi Nilayam. Once I came to Prasanthi Nilayam to see my son. At that time, Swami was not there. I went to the mandir, sat there for a few minutes when I was overwhelmed by a feeling of remorse for not having visited the place for 15 long years. My heart became heavy as I wondered how I could have been away for such a long time from Prasanthi

Nilayam to which I then felt a sense of belonging. Actually I broke down and wept for about four or five minutes inconsolably non-stop before I could control myself. At that time I was hale and healthy with no problems whatsoever. I had no known reason to feel that way. My first son, G.S.N. Sai Ram was then studying in the Sainik School at Korukonda. 'You have admitted my brother in Swami's school', Sai Ram told us one day, and 'I also want to study in Swami's school. Admit me there'. Normally, we would have overruled him and tried to convince him on the advisability of continuing in the Sainik School. There he got adjusted well and was meritorious. But, we condescended to get him admitted in Swami's school. Luckily, he got admission in class VIII owing to Swami's grace. He belonged to the first batch of the Swami's school to pass the 12th class exam conducted by the CBSE, and was a topper at the national level.

My daughter Satyasri was also a student of Swami's school. She joined in VIII class in the Primary School here and studied up to X class. She went to the Anantapur campus and received her B.Sc. degree from there. 'I want to do M.Sc. Swami', my daughter asked Swami during darshan one day. 'Get married', Swami counselled. When she returned to Hyderabad, an alliance was set for her. We could perform her marriage within a short period owing to Swami's grace. Though Swami called our family for interview thrice, our daughter missed all the three times, and had to be content speaking to Bhagavan in darshan line. We used to visit Prasanthi Nilayam four or five times a year - partly to see our children and partly to have darshan of Bhagavan. In 1985, Swami called us for interview. My wife, my two sons and I went in. 'What do you want?' Swami asked my second son in the interview. 'I want only Swami' he replied. Swami materialised a chain and gave him. Another time, Swami called us for interview. At that time, names were being considered for conferring the IAS on the APAS officers. I, too, was eligible, but I was being overlooked year after year. I did not make any trial or approach any one for help. Swami told me, 'they are overlooking you, but I will give'.

As foretold by Swami, I was selected, owing to Swami's grace, to the IAS in 1991, but with seniority from 1982. Once, Swami materialised vibhuti for me. When He was doing so, a photographer clicked his camera. The photograph showed vibhuti literally dropping down from the hand of Bhagavan. That was a rare shot and earned recognition as it was showing vibhuti actually emanating from Swami's hand and falling into mine. It is on display in the central hall of the SSSIHMS, Prasanthigram.

One day I happened to come to Anantapur on official work. From there, I came to Prasanthi Nilayam. I had darshan of Bhagavan and went back. Next morning I came for darshan again from Anantapur. 'You were not to be seen in the evening yesterday', Swami remarked as He came to me. 'I went to attend some official work, Swami', I replied. Swami smiled and said, 'Swami-karyam, swakaryam' (both Swami's work and personal work). From then onwards, I came to Prasanthi Nilayam only on leave. In 1981, when I was in Amudalavalasa, we arranged akhanda-bhajan in the Sugar Factory quarters. At the end of the bhajan, we requested all those present to partake lunch. By 1:30 p.m., only one-third of the persons that attended the bhajan ate while two-thirds of the preparations were over. We estimated that about 300 would come, but the turn-out was unexpectedly huge. My mother, Mrs. Venkataratnam and my wife were in jitters and began to pray to Bhagavan. There was no time to prepare food again for all those that were waiting to take lunch. But owing to Bhagavan's grace, all could partake lunch satisfactorily, and some more was left. It was as if Bhagavan had blessed the food to become akshaya that day.

In 2004, my sister had an attack of paralysis. I wanted to go and see her. So I got railway reservation made for me by 3rd AC. In the last minute, my wife also wanted to come. How to get reservation for her in the last minute? We started at the house for the railway station praying to Bhagavan. In spite of summer rush, she got lower berth in the same coach in which I had reservation; that, too, just on the opposite side. The same thing happened for the return journey also. The engagement for the marriage of my elder son was on August 2, 1998. The marriage was scheduled for August 9. Hardly there was a week's time. How to get a suitable venue for the wedding? The bride's father went to a noted kalyanamandapam in Vijayawada. He got it booked. In fact, it had been booked in advance for August 9 several weeks earlier by some one. He had come there only half-an-hour before the bride's father went there and cancelled. So he could book it. It was, indeed, a Sai miracle. Mr. Chiranjeeva Rao told me later, 'Swami was telling me one day, 'I arranged everything well for the wedding of Sai Ram'.

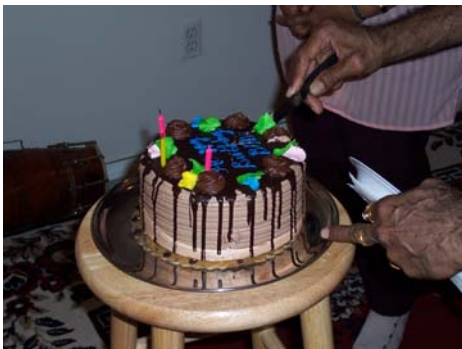
Swami Karunyananda once told us that Bhagavan had remarked to him earlier, 'My devotee Mrs. Sarojini turned the key, and made her husband my devotee. We feel that Bhagavan is guiding and guarding us through thick and thin, every moment of our lives.'

Source:
<http://www.vedamu.org/forum/ExperienceoftheDivinityofBhagavan/MrGSRCVPrasadaRao.asp>

TEMPLE JOURNAL GANESH CHATURTHI (WED., SEPTEMBER 07, 2005)



SHIRDI SAI JAYANTI (TUE., SEPTEMBER 27, 2005)



CHILDREN'S CORNER

Sai Ram

Story on Lord Rama continued...

When Ravana saw that Sita was alone, he came out of his hiding place disguised as a beggar. On seeing the beggar she bought rice in a bowl to offer the beggar. Ravana asked Sita to come closer to him but Sita hesitated to cross the line; Ravana said he cannot accept the rice otherwise. Sita did not want to upset the beggar so she crossed the line to offer the rice. As soon as she



crossed the line, Ravana grabbed her hand and disclosed to Sita that he is Ravana and that he had come to take her to his kingdom, Lanka.

When Lord Rama saw Lakshmana, he was very unhappy because Lakshmana had left Sita alone at home. Lakshmana explained to his brother everything and they suspected that something was wrong. So they both ran towards the cottage. They searched for Sita everywhere but could not find her. Lord Rama was very sad and upset. Soon they heard a cry of a wounded eagle lying on the ground. The eagle was Jatayu; king of eagles. Jatayu told Lord Rama that Ravana took Sita away and when he tried to stop Ravana, he cut his wings. Jatayu said that Ravana went in the south direction and soon after that Jatayu died. After burying Jatayu, Lord Rama and Lakshmana went south in search of Sita.

On their way, they met a demon named Kabhandha who attacked Lord Rama and Lakshmana. Finally, in the fight Lord Rama killed him but before his death Kabhandha disclosed his true identity. He said he was cursed and turned into a monster and

requested Lord Rama and Lakshmana to burn him into ashes so that he can regain his original form. He also asked them to get in touch with Sugriva, the king of monkeys, who could help Lord Rama and Lakshmana to find Sita. On their way to meet Sugriva, they came across Shabari, a pious old woman who was eagerly waiting to see Lord Rama for years. She offered them fruit and nuts and finally died in the presence of Lord Rama.

After a long walk, Lord Rama and Lakshmana reached the mountain where Sugriva, the king of monkeys lived. On seeing Lord Rama and Lakshmana from a distance, Sugriva sent his close friend, Hanuman, to find out who they were. Lord Rama and Lakshmana explained to Hanuman that they needed Sugriva's help to find Sita. Hanuman liked the brothers and took them to Sugriva. Sugriva agreed to help them on one condition. He requested Lord Rama to help him kill Vali who had taken his wife and kingdom away from him. Lord Rama agreed to help him. Soon after Lord Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva managed to kill Vali, and then Sugriva took over the kingdom and sent his army in search of Sita.

Courtsey:

<http://www.indolink.com/Kidz/Stories/ramayana1.html>

**DEVOTEES ARE REQUESTED
TO CONTRIBUTE ARTICLES,
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