



Sabka Maalik Ek

SAI SANDESH

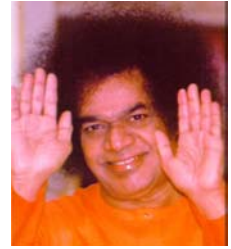
The Monthly Newsletter of Om Sai Mandir

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Love All, Serve All

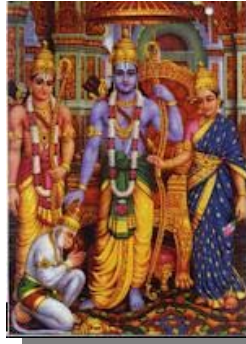
Ram Navami Special Issue



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LORD RAMA – THE REDEEMER OF MANKIND

Lord Rama manifested during the Tretayuga, 20,000 years ago. Rama's deeds are difficult to comprehend, for every action was suffused with divinity even though it was performed in the mortal realm. He always behaved like a common man and yet performed miraculous feats. Chanting Rama's name, Hanuman could leap across an ocean. The name has that much power; imagine, then, the power of The Lord.



The name. The name Rama has an esoteric significance. It consists of three syllables: Ra + Aa + Ma. "Ra" signifies Agni [The Fire God], "Aa" symbolizes Suryaa [The Sun God], and "Ma" personifies Chandra [The Moon God]. "Ra," representing The Fire God, burns away all sins; "Aa," representing The Sun God, dispels the darkness of ignorance; "Ma," representing The Moon God, cools one's temper and produces tranquility. The name Rama, thus, has the triple power of washing away one's sins, removing one's ignorance, and tranquilizing one's mind. Rama's name signifies the harmony of thought, word, and deed.¹

Ramayana in brief. Describing Ramayana in a few paragraphs—or even a million books—is like attempting to capture the entire universe through a camera's lens—an impossible feat. Yet, for the purpose of this article a brief synopsis of Ramayana is provided.

Dashratha, the King of Ayodhya, did not have a son. With a desire for progeny, Dashratha, along with his three queens, performed a yagna [divine rite]. At the end of the yagna, a heavenly being granted him four sons, verily the four Vedas. These divine children were named Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna. Rama, the eldest, is considered an incarnation of the Supreme Being. Lord Rama, during his childhood, and during his entire lifetime, performed countless miracles and served the cause of re-establishing dharma [righteousness].

Guru Vishwamitra once approached Dashratha with a request. The sages were being constantly troubled by terrifying demons and they desired the protection of Rama and Lakshmana. Though reluctant, Dashratha consented and allowed the two princes, all of fourteen, to fight terrifying evil forces. The princes valiantly fought the forces of oppression and after overcoming them, were preparing to return home. Just then, a messenger arrived from the Kingdom of Mithila, announcing the swayamvara [ceremony where the bride-to-be chooses her suitor] of King Janaka's daughter, Sita. To honor the

invitation, Vishwamitra, along with his disciples, Rama and Lakshmana, proceeded to the Kingdom of Mithila.

King Janaka had placed a condition that anyone desirous of seeking Sita's hand must be able to break a divine bow. The bow originally belonged to Lord Shiva and was such that even millions of elephants would not be able to move it. While valiant Kings failed in their attempt to lift the bow, the young prince, Rama, lifted and broke the bow as if it were a mere toy. In fulfillment of the condition, and to the jubilation of all, Mother Sita was wedded to Rama.

As years passed by, Dashratha was growing old and decided to crown Rama as the king. Providence, however, had a different plan. In Ayodhya, there lived a wicked maid named Manthara. She was the servant of Kaikeyi, Dashratha's younger wife. Manthara poisoned Kaikeyi's mind and asked her to request the king to crown her son Bharata as prince and send Rama to the forest. Dashratha had once promised Kaikeyi with two boons and she chose to use those boons now. Dashratha had to keep his word. Though heartbroken, he was forced to send his beloved Rama to the forests for fourteen years. Rama, the ocean of virtues, calmly accepted His father's wish and accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana resigned to the forests.

The divine trio was happily passing their days, when Surpanakha, the sister of Ravana, with a desire for courtship, approached Rama. Rama did not accede to her requests and punished her instead. Infuriated, she fled to Lanka and prompted Ravana to seek revenge. He immediately proceeded and in Rama's absence abducted Mother Sita. Although these incidences appear unplanned, they were in reality a part of the divine play, the very purpose for which Rama had incarnated.

On discovering Mother Sita's absence, Rama and Lakshmana set out in her search. In their travails, they met the Monkey King, Sugriva and his minister, the gem among devotees, Lord Hanuman. Lord Rama instantly recognized Hanuman as His chosen messenger. Hanuman too recognized in Rama, his chosen deity. Sugriva and Hanuman agreed to serve Rama in His mission of recovering Sita and destroying the terrifying demonic forces. To ascertain Mother Sita's welfare, Lord Rama dispatched Hanuman to Lanka. Hanuman leapt across the Indian Ocean and reached Lanka. In Lanka,

he wreaked havoc on the demons and returned. An army of monkeys was collected to fight the mighty army of Ravana. Divine grace is such that a band of monkeys was sufficient to annihilate an entire army. To reach Lanka, it would be necessary to cross the Indian Ocean. As there was no bridge, the monkeys started throwing stones in the water after writing Rama's name on every stone. The power of the Lord's name made the stones float on water and a bridge was built. The monkeys marched to Lanka and destroyed Ravana's army. Ravana too met his end at the hands of Rama.

The destruction of Ravana. Ravana was a gatekeeper of Vishnu in his previous life. While to human eyes, Rama killed Ravana; in the divine realm, Rama freed Ravana from a great curse. The Lord's ways are mysterious and always full of benediction. No matter how hard the circumstance may be, in reality the Lord is helping us in some unseen way. He won't do any wrong.

Symbolic significance. The epic Ramayana is not an ordinary one. Every word and every character in this great poem has a very deep significance. Lord Rama, for example, symbolizes a person on the Nivrithi Marga [inward path]; while the character of the demon, Ravana, symbolizes a person on the Pravritthi Marga [the outward path]. Mother Sita symbolizes Brahma Jnyan [knowledge of the absolute]. Lord Rama's securing Sita demonstrates how a person on the inward path secures the knowledge of the Lord, while a person on the outward path, Ravana for instance faces death in the end. Ayodhya, the capital of Rama's kingdom, symbolizes the human heart. Ayodhya is a place free of strife and controversy; in a similar manner, we must attempt to make our heart free of all faults so the Lord can make our heart as His capital.

Rama led a very divine life even though it appeared ordinary. Ramayana gives us all an example of how one must behave in the ordinary world. The relations between the characters teach us a worthy example. Rama's behavior toward His parents is what children, today, must learn to emulate. Rama's behavior toward His brothers teaches us how every person should treat kith and kin. Rama's love toward Sita, and Sita's love toward Rama, sets the ideal for a husband-wife relationship. Likewise, Rama's ruling over His kingdom is a worthy example of how we must run our administrative functions. Hanuman, while chanting Rama's name, leapt across the ocean. What does this teach us? Devotees, suffering from the pangs of samsara, symbolized by the ocean, can easily cross it if merely the name of the Lord is constantly chanted. On crossing the ocean, one comes

face to face with Brahma Jnyan (personified by Mother Sita). Hanuman also teaches how a devotee must be ready to fulfill the master's command.

It may be asked: Did Rama go to the forest under any compulsion or out of his own resolve, or with a sense of dissatisfaction, or merely to comply with his father's pledge? No. Rama set out for the forest with the same sense of serenity and joy with which he looked forward to his coronation. Rama demonstrated the spirit of equanimity. He showed that pain or pleasure, profit or loss, victory or defeat, were the same to him. In human life pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow alternate all the time. It is not good to welcome pleasure and turn away pain. We must welcome sorrow in the same joyous spirit in which we greet happiness. Happiness has no value unless there is also sorrow. That is why it is said: "Pleasure is not secured by pleasant measure." Pain is needed to secure pleasure. Rama demonstrated the truth of this concept. Compare Rama's behavior with our lives. The least fortune sends us "sky high" and the smallest trouble makes us "depressed." Maintaining equanimity in the face of joy and suffering will unfailingly lead us to bliss and also save us from dangerous diseases.

Contrary to our imagination, it is not difficult to emulate the Lord's life. We are all attempting to become some chosen idol. Some have a movie actor as an idol, whereas others may have chosen a business tycoon. If we can emulate these mortals, why can't we emulate the life of one who incarnated to teach us the way of an ideal life?

The ideal devotee. Ramayana has great examples of ideal devotees. Hanuman, the pearl amongst devotees, would at the utterance of one word from his master, be ready to undertake the most difficult of tasks. Bharata, Rama's brother, was willing to sacrifice his relationship with his own mother and an entire kingdom for the sake of The Lord. Vibhishina abandoned his golden kingdom and his own brother to be with the Lord. Mother Sita abandoned the comforts of her kingdom and set-out to the dangerous forest, only to accompany her Lord. Such are the high ideals found in Ramayana.

On Rama Navami [Lord Rama's birth day], we are undertaking spiritual discipline, participating in pujas, and partaking of feasts. This is not the purpose of celebrating this great day. The purpose is to learn from Rama's life and sanctify our lives by following His greatness and manifest the divine principle of Rama within us.

1. Discourse, 5 Apr 1998, Ram Navami, Brindavan
2. Summer Course, Brindavan, May 21, 2002
3. Discourse, March 11, 1994.

**Sai Sandesh can be read online
at:**

<http://www.omsaimandir.org>

**Devotees can send articles,
experiences, etc. to
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UPCOMING EVENTS

April

Saturday, April 09: Ugadi/Gudi Padwa

Wednesday, April 14: Tamil New Year and Vishu
(Malayali New Year)

Monday, April 18: Sri Rama Navami

May

Friday, May 06: Eshwaramma Day

Sunday, May 08: Mother's day

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
**ANNADAN [FOOD SERVICE] FOR HOMELESS
BROTHERS AND SISTERS:** Every Saturday at 29th Street
& 1st Avenue: 1 p.m. For more information, call the
temple at: (718) 461-0454.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

“Life is a pilgrimage to God. The road lies before you; but unless you take the first step forward and move further on, how can you reach your destination? Start with courage, faith, joy and steadiness. You are bound to succeed. The mind and the intellect are the two bullocks tied to the cart of the inner man. The bullocks are not used to the road of Sathya (Truth), Dharma (Righteousness), Shanti (Peace) and Prema (Love) and so they drag the cart along the road familiar to them, namely, falsehood, injustice, worry and hatred. You have to train them to take the better road so that they may not bring disaster upon themselves, the cart or the passengers traveling in it.”

- Baba

SHORT STORIES BY BABA

THE INSTRUMENT OF FLATTERY

Zebunnissa was the daughter of the Moghul Emperor Aurangazeb. She was not only beautiful and charming, but also a great scholar and a poetess. She was an ardent lover of the Indian Culture. Once, Aurangazeb gave her a beautiful mirror as a birthday gift.

Zebunnissa loved the mirror very much. One day her maid was holding the mirror to her while Zebunnissa was combing her hair. The mirror just slipped from the maid's hand and broke into pieces.

The maid was mortally afraid. She knew that the mirror was a precious gift, given to the princess and how much she loved the mirror. The maid was prepared to accept any punishment her princess may give her.

She fell at her feet. But the princess very calmly said with a smile. “Get up. I am glad the instrument of flattery is broken. Why worry over the broken mirror? Even this body to which all these articles cater is liable to damage and destruction.” Is this not a lesson in detachment?

- Adapted from *Oka Chinna Katha* by N. Kasturi

HAVE AN IDEA OR A SUGGESTION?

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DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES

Mr. T. Surya Rao, an agriculturist from Sampara, East Godavari District, presently settled at Puttaparthi, relates a few of his experiences in his own words.

"In 1954, I got married. In 1956, my in-laws took my wife and me on a tour of pilgrimage. We went to Tirupati and from there to Chennai. Then I had an idea. I wanted to go to Puttaparthi. I was not a devotee of Bhagavan but I used to hear a lot about Him in our area. I was a patient of severe asthma. I tried several medicines but in vain. I thought, 'why not I go to Puttaparthi and test my luck'? But my in-laws were reluctant. They, however, agreed for my going to Puttaparthi with my wife, and left for Kakinada.

I enquired about Puttaparthi. No one could tell me where it was. We were then put up in Mudaliar Choultry near Chennai Central Station. That day a person came there from Puttaparthi. He told me to go via Pakala. It was a shortcut, though I would have to change trains

twice. 'You have come as godsent'. I thanked him. My wife and I left by train for Puttaparthi. We got down at Mudigubba, came to Bukkapatnam by bus and engaged a cart to take us to Puttaparthi. By evening we arrived at Puttaparthi. At that time there was no Gopuram. Only a gate was there. Swami saw us from the balcony. We were allowed to stay in the Mandir. Ladies used to sleep in the hall and gents in the verandah. We kept our baggage in the room. We all sat outside under the trees for Darshan.

Swami used to reside on the first floor. He came down, and walking along the lines, stood near me. He placed His hand on my back and caressed. 'Don't worry. Asthma will go. I will take care of you', He said. This was on the third day after our arrival at Puttaparthi.

After that, I returned to Sampara. Asthma has not showed itself up to me again since that day. I used to go to Puttaparthi at least once a year. Swami also came to our village during His tour of Godavari districts. Mr. N. Kasturi wrote two or three pages on our village in his book, 'Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram.'

Bhagavan used to call us for interview whenever we went to Puttaparthi. He used to call us for interview only on the third day of our arrival there as He did when we had visited it for the first time in 1956. Once he materialized a ring and gave it to my wife. Another time He materialized a gold chain for my wife. He gave her a silk sari--a very expensive one. Once, He materialized diamond ear studs and gave them to my wife. 'Why don't you go to Whitefields'? Swami asked me one day. 'Yes, Swami,' I said. My wife and I went to Whitefields, and stayed in a room near Brindavan for a couple of years. I was asked to supervise the construction of a building for devotees opposite the present Sai Ramesh Hall. On the day of inauguration, Bhagavan called my wife and got that complex inaugurated by her!

We bought a house-site at Puttaparthi in 1986 and built a house in 1987. Ever since, we have settled down here due to His grace." - Mr. T. Surya Rao.

Source:

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

WANT TO SUBMIT YOUR EXPERIENCES?

**You can share your experiences with readers of Sai Sandesh by sending an email to:
saisandesh@omsaimandir.org**

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Sai Ram Children,



One day a gentleman from Europe came to see Sai Baba. He wanted to kneel down before Baba and kiss His hand. So he went to the masjid where Baba used to sit. But every time he tried to go near Baba, he was stopped.

Instead Baba made him sit in the open courtyard. He was unhappy with the way Baba treated him and wanted to leave immediately. So when he came to say good-bye to Baba, Baba asked him to stay. But he insisted on leaving.



Everyone advised him to listen to Baba. But he did not listen to anyone and hired a horse carriage and left Shirdi.



After they traveled a short distance, a bicycle came in front of the cart. The horses were frightened with the sight of a bicycle and ran fast.

The carriage toppled and the gentleman fell off the carriage. He was immediately rescued and taken to a hospital. With this incident everyone realized that they should never disobey Baba.



Source:

http://www.shrisaibabasansthan.org/main_English/saibaba/stories/europegentleman08.asp

Children can send stories, articles, pictures, drawings, poems, and more...

Please email your contribution to:

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THE LOVE THAT YOU SEEK...

You grew as a child, seeking for love from elders and siblings, yet you felt the thirst for more. A hand came to you, saying, "I am God; I am the love you seek." On seeing the hand you ran into your mother's lap and said, "No, I am too young."

As years went by, the child was transformed into an attractive youngster. The urge for true love made you seek the company of the opposite gender. The thorny path was full of miseries and disappointments. Yet again came God's hand and the voice said, "I am the love you seek." You refused and chose to be close to the bosom of your chosen beloved.

In a few years, you started a family that you thought was your own. Yet, the reality was far from your expectations. The love you showered on them was not reciprocated and your desire to be loved truly was not fulfilled. The patient Godhead came in again and said, "My child, I love you. Trust me." This time you paid attention, but said, "My children are too young. They need me; I have to go."

Decades rolled by and you constantly felt the need for true love. Your quest for love took you through unfulfilling relationships, and several heart-breaking journeys. You were used and abused, yet true love was nowhere to be found. Worst still, your once beautiful hair had now started turning gray. The loving Lord called again and said, "My child, I am still waiting for you. You have my unconditional love." The wisdom-filled soul had now understood the meaning of life but was too weak to break the attachments that had been created over a lifetime. "Lord," you replied, "I know you have come, but I cannot forget these innocent grandchildren of mine." Let me enjoy with them for a few more years. I shall call you when I am ready." The Lord smiled and said, "My love is unconditional and not possessive. If that is what you wish, then be it so. Yet, I will wait and be with you every moment."

The gray hair now found company in the weakened body and noticeable wrinkles. As everyone went their way, you cried. "Lord, I have lost everything. They have all deserted me when I needed them most."

All my life was spent in their care and yet none want to care for me." The Lord smiled and said, "My child, all is not lost, for I am with thee. When none cares for you, I won't abandon you so. You are my precious beloved and I shall care for thee."

The eyes that barely saw were now filled with tears of joy and your feeble voice said, "In vain I tried to find love in this world, for the true love I sought has always been with me, you, my dear Lord. Now, that I have realized thus, I shall not forsake thee." The Lord said, "Yes, my child, I have always been with you, and I am the love you seek. Not now, not ever, will I abandon thee."

Friends, why wait? True love is waiting for you now, this very minute. It is own dear Lord...just look inside.

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



**SAI SANDESH, ON BEHALF OF
OM SAI MANDIR, TAKES THIS
OPPORTUNITY TO WISH ALL
DEVOTEES THE VERY BEST FOR
THE FOLLOWING UPCOMING
EVENTS:**

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BAISAKHI
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