



Sabka Maalik Ek

SAI SANDESH

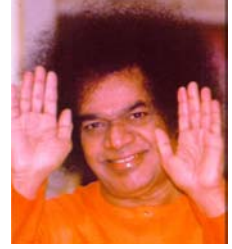
The Monthly Newsletter of Om Sai Mandir

August 2005; Volume 2, Issue 8

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Love All, Serve All

Janmashtami Special Issue



(Image Credit: www.answers.com/topic/krishna)

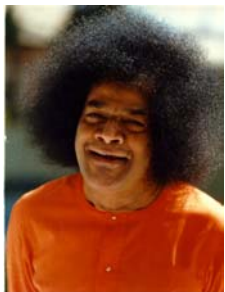
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SUFFERING: THE CATALYST FOR LIBERATION



The very word suffering brings to our memory feelings of agony, pain, and unpleasant experiences. Despite our ceaseless attempts, the fact remains that none escape

from the very experience that we strive to avoid. What if I were to tell you that the feeling that “I am suffering” is nothing but your response to a situation or circumstance and, in reality, you control how you feel, not the situation? Painful experiences can only affect you to the extent you allow it to, nothing more than that.



Unpleasant circumstances, however long their duration may seem, do not last forever. They are like dark clouds that clear quickly, revealing the clear blue sky of spirituality. It is the law of nature that after every night there is day. The sun must rise at dawn, no matter how dark the night had been. Just before dawn, however,

the night is the darkest. In the same manner, know that when you are in the darkest and toughest phase of your life, dawn (happiness) is very close at hand.

Contrary to our imagination, these experiences serve a great purpose in life, and if utilized correctly, the lessons learnt take us a step closer to our goal: liberation. Don't get me wrong. I am not a masochist. I am simply making an attempt to speak about the other side that we often tend to overlook (a very natural human inclination). There are various viewpoints that attempt to elaborate on the purpose—and reason—behind all the unpleasant experiences we undergo. Some attribute it to karmas, others speak of it as being a test, some others consider it to be a routine part of life, and there are still others who welcome suffering as a cherished gift. A gift? I hear you ask. Yes, a gift. I will get to that a little later in this article.

As long as we live in body consciousness, we will never understand the reason behind our circumstances, and to a great extent we don't even control their presence in our life. What we control, however, is our reaction to these circumstances. Bringing negative thoughts will make you feel exactly that: “unhappy”. Positive thoughts on the other hand will elevate your spirits and give you the sense of happiness you seek and deserve.

The lowest periods of our life should be used to learn how to avoid future mistakes and to progress toward the goal of human life: evolution to divine consciousness. Have you noticed how compassionate we become during trying circumstances? We suddenly start to not only understand, but also feel the sorrow of others. Great teachers often liken suffering to fire and speak of it as being a great furnace of life where real gold (soul) is purified and molded in a form worthy of adoration. When we graduate from this phase, our inner splendor is revealed in all its glory.

Turning inwards is the only way to permanent happiness. Suffering compels us to turn inwards, breaking free from the iron grip of worldly attachments. No matter what religion you follow, lives of saintly incarnations in your own religious philosophy will serve as beacon lights. You will not find a single saint or incarnation who did not have to suffer in the physical sense. Did Jesus not have the power to prevent His crucifixion? He could have averted the entire episode. But He did not; instead, He embraced the torment with great joy. He knew that this suffering would lead Him back to God and give Him an everlasting life of eternal bliss. It is for this reason that saints and great beings embrace suffering as a divine gift—an opportunity to get closer to God. Not only Jesus, every divine being embraced suffering with equanimity. Moses, Buddha, Krishna, Rama, Baba, Pope John Paul II—all these incarnations joyously accepted what came their way. Their blissful nature was not in the least tainted by worldly sorrows.

Once Krishna asked Kunti, the mother of pandavas, to seek a boon. Kunti grabbed the opportunity and asked for a life full of difficulties and sufferings. Normally, people would seek happiness, yet she acted quite to the contrary. The all-knowing Krishna knew her intentions, yet for the sake of the world He asked her the reason behind choosing such an unusual boon. The wise Kunti explained that it is only during trying times that one constantly remembers the Lord and seeks His grace and proximity. The Lord too, during tough times, is closest to us, carrying us safely through a phase that we can never dream of getting through on our own.

Do not ever lose hope in life. Take this opportunity to realize your own inherent divinity. Turn inwards and enter the gates of bliss that await your return. Tough times won't last forever. Bliss is your birthright; strive to achieve it in this birth itself.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

“Kaarunyam paramam thapah” (compassion towards all beings is the highest spiritual discipline). Man is the crown of creation; he is the highest among living beings. Therefore, he bears a great responsibility. He has to love other living beings, serve them and save them, for they are his kith and kin, and they too have the Divine Principle as their core. But, man is proving himself worse than animals due to self-centeredness, conceit, envy and anger. Though man is endowed with the virtues of compassion, charity, sympathy, fortitude and joy, he has given up these virtues and become inhuman in conduct and behaviour.” - Baba

PUJA SPONSORSHIP

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Satyanarayana Vrata.....	\$81
Vahana Puja.....	\$15
Annadan.....	\$251

To sponsor pujas, call: (718) 461-0454.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August

Mon., August 15: India's Independence Day
 Fri., August 19: Raksha Bandhan
 Sat., August 27: Sri Krishna Janmashtami

September

Wed., Sept. 07: Ganesh Chaturthi/Vinayak Chowthi
 Sunday, Sept. 18: Onam
 Tuesday, Sept. 27: Shirdi Sai Baba Jayanthi

WANT TO RECEIVE SAI SANDESH VIA EMAIL--FREE?

Receive Sai Sandesh, FREE, in your inbox every month. You will also receive regular announcements about the temple's activities.

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Once there, submit your email address. It takes less than a minute to sign-up.

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 1 p.m 29th and 1st Ave. For more information, call the temple at: (718) 461-0454.

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

THINK OF A PLAN

In one village a feud was going on for long between two groups of people for one reason or another. One resident of that village who had two acres of land was growing grapes and selling them for his livelihood. He did not belong to either of these fighting groups. But both the groups opposing each other came to this individual and they started pressurizing him to join their respective party. So, under compulsion he joined the party which contained a larger number of evil-minded people. Few months later, this honest fellow was arrested by the police along with all the other members. As a result there was no one to look after his grape garden. The vines having no water for weeks shriveled and began to wither away. There was no fruit and, therefore, there was no income and food for his wife and children at home.

In the jail, this man used to get one post card every week from his wife. The rules and regulations of the jail were such that letters received by the prisoners would not be censored while letters posted by the prisoners would be censored. Once, his wife wrote to him: "You seem to be well looked after in the prison but have you thought of our miserable condition? Since you left home our grape garden is dried up and there is no one to till the land and prepare the land for the next crop. Nor have I any money to set the land right. Even now, the children and I are half starved. So, if you suggest some method by which I can get the dried up land soil tilled, only then I and the children will have something to eat in the near future at least. Please let me know."

As soon as he read the letter, he felt very sad. But he could hit upon a plan. He wrote to his wife thus: "Do not worry, I have not ever told you about a treasure trove, a vessel containing a lot of gold coins which I had put down below in the rut in our garden. You simply have to dig it up and make use of the coins." This letter had to be censored and the jail superintendent read it. He did not post the letter. He got together all the prisoners and told them to dig up the whole grape garden with a view to find the treasure trove. In a short time the entire garden was dug up. But they did not find any treasure trove.

On the third day there was a heavy rain and that year (grapes) yield was very good. The wife was very happy. She sold the grapes and got plenty of money.

At the end of six months, the husband was released from prison. As soon as he came home she eagerly questioned: "How did you manage to send so many men to plough the land?" The wife had not received her husband's letter, so she did not know about his plan. The husband replied: "Yes, by the grace of God I could think of a plan and make them believe about the treasure trove. Let us thank God."

What is the inner meaning of this story? This individual, this cultivator, had 2 acres of land. Man has two inches of heart. In our heart there are two groups; the bad qualities and the good qualities. These two groups are clashing with each other. In between the Jiva, the householder and owner of the heart, at first was not seduced by the two parties. But later he was pulled towards one group. Jiva has a wife; she is Nivrithi and her children Pravirithi. Because the Jiva joined one group he had to be in jail. That is bondage. However, he realizes that the field of heart had to be cleansed (ploughed) to find the wisdom - gold. To get that wisdom all the prisoners (those in bondage) have to dig the field of heart. After the process of digging and cleansing one reaps the harvest of bliss. So what is it that is essential? Purification of the field of heart by means of prescribed sadhanas.

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

DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES

Mr. D.M. Dotiwala (74), who retired as a Sales Executive from the Tata Oil Mills (Pvt) Ltd, relates a few of his experiences of the Divinity of Bhagavan in his own words.

"We have been devotees of Shirdi Sai. Though we had been hearing about Sri Sathya Sai, we had not paid much attention to it.

My wife, Mrs. Parin D. Dotiwala had darshan of Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Brindavan and returned much impressed. She visited Prasanthi Nilayam with one of our family friends, Mrs. Peethavala and returned a devotee of Bhagavan. Under her influence, I, too, gravitated towards Bhagavan.

In the year, 1982-83, I sat for darshan at Brindavan. One devotee from overseas was sitting by my side. I noticed that he was weeping.

'What's the matter?' I asked.

'I came here seven days ago with a letter to Bhagavan, explaining all problems we are facing', he told me, 'but Bhagavan did not take the letter. He did not even look at me. My return flight is booked for this evening. If Bhagavan does not take my letter, I have no hope left and will have to return to my land disappointed and depressed.'

Meanwhile, Bhagavan came along the darshan line. Swami did neither take the letter nor look at him. He went and sat on His throne. Bhajan began and also ended after half-an-hour with arati. Bhagavan started to walk back along the darshan line to His abode. When He came to us, He paused and told the overseas devotee by my side, 'come in the evening.'

'Congrats', I said after Bhagavan had left, but my friend did not look elated.

'My flight is at 6 p.m.', he said, 'if I come for evening bhajan, I may miss it.'

'Forget about the flight', I counseled, 'this is more important. It is a chance of a lifetime. Who knows, the flight may get delayed?'

In the evening, we sat side by side in darshan line.

Bhagavan came and proceeded to His throne. After the bhajan, He was returning to His abode. When He came to us He paused.

'What is your problem?' Bhagavan asked.

My friend held the letter up in his hand, keeping it on his palm flatly. Bhagavan put His palm on it covering the letter and began talking to the devotee. I used to hear that when Bhagavan speaks to anyone in darshan lines, no other person can listen to Him, even if one sits by the side of the person to whom Bhagavan speaks. I learnt by experience the truth of it that day. Even though I was sitting by his side, I could not follow what Bhagavan was telling him.

After a few minutes, Bhagavan left. But the letter was still there in the hand of my friend. However, he did not appear sunken for Bhagavan not taking the letter. On the other hand, he was elated.

'What did Bhagavan say?' I asked him.

'He did not take my letter, nor even read it', my friend began, 'but He touched upon all the thirteen points I mentioned in my letter. Importantly, He mentioned the points in the same order in which I wrote. It was amazing. And, He solved all my problems.'

'Then, hurry up,' I told him, 'you may catch your flight. May be it is delayed today, who knows? Better take a chance.'

'I don't think I would catch the flight', he said, 'however I will take a chance as you said.'

Next morning I came for darshan and he was there again.

'What happened?' I asked, 'did you miss your flight?'

'I went to the airport and approached the check-in counter with my ticket', he told me, and 'the clerk seemed surprised and quietly returned the ticket.'

'Am I late?' I asked, 'has the flight left?'

'The flight left all right, but you are not late', he said laughing at me, and 'you are 24 hours early. Your ticket is booked for tomorrow and not for today.'

I was stunned. I was quite sure that my ticket had been booked for yesterday. But, Bhagavan changed the date - not only on my ticket but on the entire online system of airline reservations across the world. He not only solved all my problems but also saved my ticket - not to speak of the most invaluable thing, the bonus darshan today.'

I was grateful to Bhagavan for allowing me to be a witness to this splendid leela of His."

-- Mr. D.M. Dotiwala

(As narrated to Mr. B. Parvatala Rao at Prasanthi Nilayam on 28.06.2005)

Source:

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

TEMPLE JOURNAL: GURU POORNIMA (THURS., JULY 21, 2005)



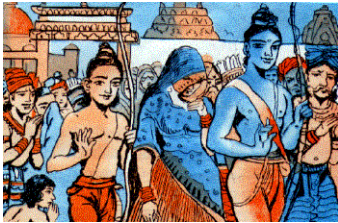
CHILDREN'S CORNER

Sai Ram,

Story on Lord Rama continued...

The news about Rama's exile to the forest spread like a wild fire in the kingdom. Lakshmana, the brother of Lord Rama was very upset but Lord Rama reminded him that one should always obey parent's wishes. Lakshmana said "if you are going then I will follow you too." Lord Rama agreed to take Lakshmana with him. Lord Rama then asked his wife Sita to take care of his mother in his absence. Sita replied "Please don't leave me alone, a wife's place is always besides her husband, so please take me with you too." Lord Rama agreed to take Sita with him too.

Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana left Ayodhya in the evening on a chariot with Sumantra. People of Ayodhya ran behind the chariot crying out loudly for Lord Rama. After a long journey, they finally reached the banks of river Ganges. When the



chief of the village heard that Lord Rama was in the village, he arranged for all the comforts in his house and invited Lord Rama to stay with him, but Lord Rama politely told him that he cannot accept all these luxuries, as he had promised his father and mother Kaikeyi to lead a simple life in the forest. The next day, the three of them boarded on a boat to cross the river and asked Sumantra, the charioteer, to return to Ayodhya and console his father. But by the time Sumantra reached Ayodhya, King Dashratha had died, crying until his last breath "Rama, Rama, Rama."

Bharatha, who was visiting some relatives, was asked to return to the kingdom, as he was to be crowned the next king as per King Dasharatha's orders. When Bharatha returned home he soon learned about everything that had happened in the past few days and was very upset with his mother. Bharatha then left Ayodhya to bring Lord Rama back.

When Bharatha met Lord Rama, he informed him about the death of their dear father and requested Lord Rama to return to the kingdom. Lord Rama said he cannot come back because he had promised his father to live in the forest for 14 years. Since Lord Rama was firm on his decision, Bharatha asked Lord Rama to give him his sandals. Bharatha said, "These sandals will represent you and I will just perform the duties and responsibilities in your absence." Lord Rama agreed to it and gave Bharatha the sandals. Bharatha then returned to Ayodhya and placed Lord Rama's sandals on the throne and performed all the duties and responsibilities. Meanwhile Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana moved to the banks of river Godavari and built a hut and led a simple life.

Courtesy:

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

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AN APPEAL

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