



Sabka Maalik Ek

SAI SANDESH

The Monthly Newsletter of Om Sai Mandir

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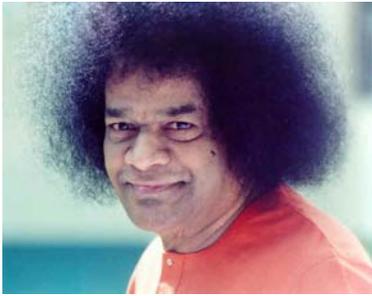
Love All, Serve All

September 2005 Issue



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THE SCHOOL CALLED EARTH



The planet that we call earth is really an institution where we gain momentum on the sacred path, our journey toward self realization. In essence, the experiences we gain here, in our physical form, are

meant to usher us toward the understanding that all physical/sense-perceived phenomena are perishable and ultimately lead us to misery and suffering. The lessons learnt in the school called earth are very valuable and greatly contribute to our progress toward our spiritual destiny.

The perception called “sorrow” and its counterpart “happiness” are really educational tools, teaching us the lessons of equanimity and impermanence. Why were the dualities sorrow and happiness referred to as perceptions? Generally, the term perception refers to something that is not real and subject to change. Our mistaken association with our bodies causes us to get so deeply involved with the opposites of joy and sorrow that we take them to be real. They are not; they are only passing clouds. Take a look at your own lives; wasn't every sorrow or joy you experienced temporary? Didn't it pass just the way it arrived? Some of these experiences lasted for a very long time, while others were of a much shorter duration. Yet, none were permanent.

With each passing experience, however, you became wiser, more mature, and more compassionate. The transformation to these adjectives were only possible because of life experiences. They were indeed great teachers.

Nature as a teacher. Nature is indeed a great teacher. Hot, cold, rain, drought, night, day—all these are the dualities that nature puts forth to man. All of these have a purpose, a higher purpose. Through these dual experiences we learn the great lesson of equanimity; that is the purpose of these dual experiences. Our life too is replete with such dual experiences.

Mother earth has a great role in the universe. It is here that we learn life's lessons and get detached from the dualities that life throws at us and progress to the stage of equanimity—the gateway to liberation. Every

experience we create for ourselves takes us a step closer to this goal.

It is only when children are growing that they feel candies and toys are the purpose of life. Take a toy away from a child and he would think that was the end of the world. As they grow, however, they realize that toys and candies are not everything. In a similar manner we, as adults, are attached to the bigger toys that this world offers and as we grow spiritually we realize that all the material things we ran after all our lives were really only toys and candies in comparison to the real goal of life: God.

Night and day must alternate. After every night there must be day and after every day there must be night. That is inevitable. Life also has its share of nights and days, but the spiritual individuals will learn to use the torch of God's grace to continue surfing through the darkest nights of life.

Failure is the catalyst for growth. One grows only after failure. With every failure we evaluate causes and make an attempt to learn from our mistakes and as a result we grow.

Saints, the great ones, always welcome sorrow with a smile. They know that suffering is a great means to get closer to the Lord. Take the example of Jesus. He was crucified and yet He smiled and prayed to God to forgive those who subjected His body to pain. He was (is) a great master who maintained equanimity even in the face of physical death. The result? Today, He is universally recognized as one of the greatest masters and one who helps millions reach the shore of bliss.

It is only by going through the school called earth that we can enjoy the bliss offered by the supreme.

This learning on earth is internal, though, and takes place without our realizing it. Remember no one fails in this school. The school is so built that all learn without fail and progress. Some souls complete this journey in one life, whereas others would require several lifetimes. Just as a child studies hard and gets promoted if they study hard, if we study hard (undertake spiritual discipline/prayers), our progress will be much faster and the goal much closer. We are all in the stage of schooling. Welcome sufferings with a smile; with every experience we get closer to our goal: perfection. Bon Voyage!

UPCOMING EVENTS

September

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

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

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.

To sign-up, simply visit the temple's website at:

<http://www.omsaimandir.org>

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.

PUJA SPONSORSHIP

Archana.....	\$11
Abishekam.....	\$51
Satyanarayana Vrata.....	\$81
Vahana Puja.....	\$15
Annadan.....	\$251

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

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

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

“Without courage, firm conviction and strong determination, no purpose is served by routine Sadhana (spiritual exercises) undertaken mechanically. On the contrary, a person who never swerves from his determination even under trying circumstances, is called a Dheera (hero) and such a person wins the grace of the Lord. We should try to seek fulfilment in our daily life by anchoring our mundane activities in spiritual values. One must follow the dictum, "Hands in the society and head in the forest". That is to say, whatever be the activities you are preoccupied with in society, you must be steadfast in holding on to the spiritual ideals. This is the true sadhana, which will bestow lasting peace on you. Remember that you are the changeless Atma (spirit). All your sadhana should be directed towards establishing yourself in this firm conviction and unwavering faith, culminating in your life's fulfillment.”
 - Baba

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, yet, 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 our own dear Lord...just look inside.

GOD IS...

Once a king wanted to know answers to three questions about which he had been contemplating for a long time. One day the king raised these questions in his Court Hall. The questions were: Where is God? In what direction does He cast His look? What does He do? None could answer these questions. The King then summoned with due honor a sage to his court. He asked the sage to answer these questions.

The Sage replied: "Like butter in the milk God is everywhere." To answer the second question the sage asked for a lamp. He lit the lamp and asked the King: "In which direction does this lamp shed its light?" The lamp sheds its light in all the directions," replied the king. The sage said, "Likewise God is effulgence itself and His vision is not directed to a particular place or person. He is all seeing." The king asked: "What does He do?" The sage said: "Since I am in a way instructing you in spiritual matters, I am in the position of a preceptor, you a disciple. So we have to exchange our places. Are you prepared for this?" The king agreed and came down from his elevated position and sat on the seat in which the sage sat. The sage said with a twinkle in his eyes: "This is what God does. He brings down the mighty and elevates the humble. He can make the poor rich and the rich poor. He can do anything. He is all pervading. He is all seeing and Omnipotent." The king was very much pleased with these answers. He expressed his gratitude to the sage and honoured him in a fitting manner.

Like the king in the story, every one of us should try to understand the true characteristics of God: God is Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent.

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

DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES

Mr. K. Ramachandra Rao (73), who retired as a Senior Officer in the Social Welfare Department, relates a few of his experiences.

“This was around the sixties. I was then working at Gannavaram. We had no children even 12 years after our marriage. My wife was worshipping all the gods and goddesses in the temples. ‘You have gone to so many places,’ one of my friends who is a Sai devotee asked me at Gannavaram one day, ‘have you gone to Prasanthi Nilayam? Please do go there and have Darshan of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.’ I applied for one-month leave and went to Prasanthi Nilayam along with my wife. We used to go there daily morning and evening for darshan and bhajan. Swami was calling many persons for interviews, but He did not call us. We learnt a few bhajans there and returned to Gannavaram after a month’s stay. At that time there was no bhajan mandir at Gannavaram. We started one. Gradually it picked up strength. We went to Prasanthi Nilayam again in the same year. We stayed for one month. Though my wife prayed to Bhagavan intensely, Swami did not call us for interview. We returned. By that time we shifted to Eemani. There also we founded a bhajan samaj. We also formed a bhajan samaj in our native place Ponnakallu and also in Telikonda. We went to Prasanthi Nilayam again in 1970. This time Swami called us for interview along with 40 members. Except us, all others were from abroad. As we entered, Swami, told me, ‘you please be aside for a few minutes as I talk to these people.’ So, my wife and I sat in a corner. At that moment, a thought crossed my mind, ‘here are people from different countries speaking different languages. How does Swami talk to them?’ Swami called each of them and spoke to them. I did not understand the language in which Swami was conversing. All of them were showing prompt response by way of smiles and excitement as if all of them clearly followed Swami. After talking to them, Swami called us.

He looked at me and asked, ‘has your doubt been cleared?’ I was stunned. How did He know what I was thinking a few moments ago? ‘He did not study beyond primary classes. He does not know any language except Telugu. How can Swami talk to foreigners? This is what you were thinking. Isn’t it? Now your doubt is cleared, I hope’, Swami told me with a smile. I felt so dazed by this astounding Divine experience that I completely forgot what I wanted to ask Swami. My wife, however, prayed to Swami, ‘Swami, we have no children...’ Swami began, ‘I know’; Swami replied, ‘you are doing good work, conducting bhajans, and participating in seva activities.

Your husband is attending to his official duties well. Continue like that. Forget about children. Because of your karmic load, there is no chance for you to beget children.’ We were very disappointed. My wife did not leave things at that. She clung to the Lotus-feet of Swami and began to pray and cry almost hysterically for children. Swami is mercy personified. He relented and said, ‘all right. You will have children’. We returned home happily. In 1973, we were blessed with a daughter. We took her to Prasanthi Nilayam. ‘Call her Sai Lakshmi’, Swami told us. When she was five years old, she went to Prasanthi Nilayam with my parents. ‘Sai Lakshmi!’ Swami called her when she was playing a little away in the sand opposite mandir. When she came to Him, He took a new slate and wrote ‘Aum’ on it. We came to Prasanthi Nilayam after this once. During Darshan, my wife thought, ‘if Swami blesses us with son!’ Swami granted her prayer, perhaps. We were blessed with a son, Sai Krishna. He too went to Prasanthi Nilayam when he was five years old with my parents. Swami called him by name and did aksharabhyasam.

In 1983, we celebrated the anniversary of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Ponnekallu. I was taking photographs. I took photographs of the speakers as well as audience. When the film was developed and printed, we were amazed to find Bhagavan seated among the audience. What our eyes could not notice, Bhagavan allowed the eye of the camera to spot. Once I went to Prasanthi Nilayam and overstayed there. That was the time of payment of salaries. The office of the District Public Relations Officer, Machilipatnam sent me the salary by a cheque through registered post. They sent it promptly by the 1st of the month, but I did not return from Prasanthi Nilayam till the 10th. I was concerned about the cheque. Normally the postman has to return the registered post after seven days to the sender, if the addressee is not available. I was afraid that my absence without leave would be established beyond doubt if the registered letter went back. On return, the first thing I did was to contact the post office. Instead of my apologizing to them, they began apologizing to me. When the registered letter came, some one in the post office misplaced it. Only on the day of my return, they noticed it. ‘Kindly sign on the acknowledgement with back date,’ they asked me. How wonderful are Swami’s leelas! Swami, in His infinite compassion, made the clerk in the post office misplace the letter, and allowed it to surface only after my return!”

Source:

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

TEMPLE JOURNAL: SRI KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI (SAT., AUGUST 27, 2005)



CHILDREN'S CORNER

Story on Lord Rama continued...

Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana lived in Panchavati, near the bank of the river Godavari. Surpanaka, the sister of king Ravana also lived in Panchavati. Ravana was a very powerful demon king. One day Surpanaka saw Lord Rama and fell in love with him. She asked Lord Rama if he would marry her. Lord Rama smiled and replied that he is married but his brother Lakshmana is young, handsome, and is away from his wife and so she should ask him. Surpanaka approached Lakshmana but he replied, "I am Lord Rama's servant, I cannot marry you." Surpanaka got very angry and attacked Sita but Lakshmana quickly intervened and cut her nose with his knife. Surpanaka was terrified and ran away with her nose bleeding. She ran to her demon brothers Khara and Dushana.

Both the brothers got angry and marched toward Panchavati with their army and attacked Lord Rama and Lakshmana. Lord Rama and Lakshmana fought against their army and finally killed everyone.

Surpanaka was very angry and finally went to her brother, King Ravana. He was outraged to see his sister's condition. Surpanaka described everything to Ravana and also told him about how beautiful Sita was. Ravana got excited and wanted to see Sita. So he made a plan to abduct Sita.

Ravana went to see Maricha to get his help in abducting Sita. Maricha had the power to transform into any form and was also able to imitate any voice. Maricha was afraid of Lord Rama, but Ravana convinced him to help him in abducting Sita.

So Maricha took the form of a golden deer and wandered near Lord Rama's hut. Sita was attracted to the deer and requested Lord Rama to get the deer. Lakshmana was suspicious about it and wanted to warn Lord Rama but it was too late. Lord Rama went after the deer and instructed Lakshmana to stay with Sita. Soon Lord Rama realized that it was not a real deer and that it was Maricha. Before dying Maricha imitated Lord Rama's voice and shouted "oh, Lakshmana, oh Sita, help!"



When Sita heard Lord Rama's voice she asked Lakshmana to go and help Lord Rama. Lakshmana was not convinced, he knew Lord Rama was very powerful and would not call out for help. But Sita forced him to leave. Lakshmana agreed to leave but on one condition. He drew a line and asked Sita to not step outside the line until he returns and Sita agreed.

(to be continued...)

Courtesy:

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

**DEVOTEES ARE REQUESTED
TO CONTRIBUTE ARTICLES,
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AN APPEAL

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