



SAI SANDESH

The official monthly newsletter of

Om Sai Mandir

A Non Profit Organization

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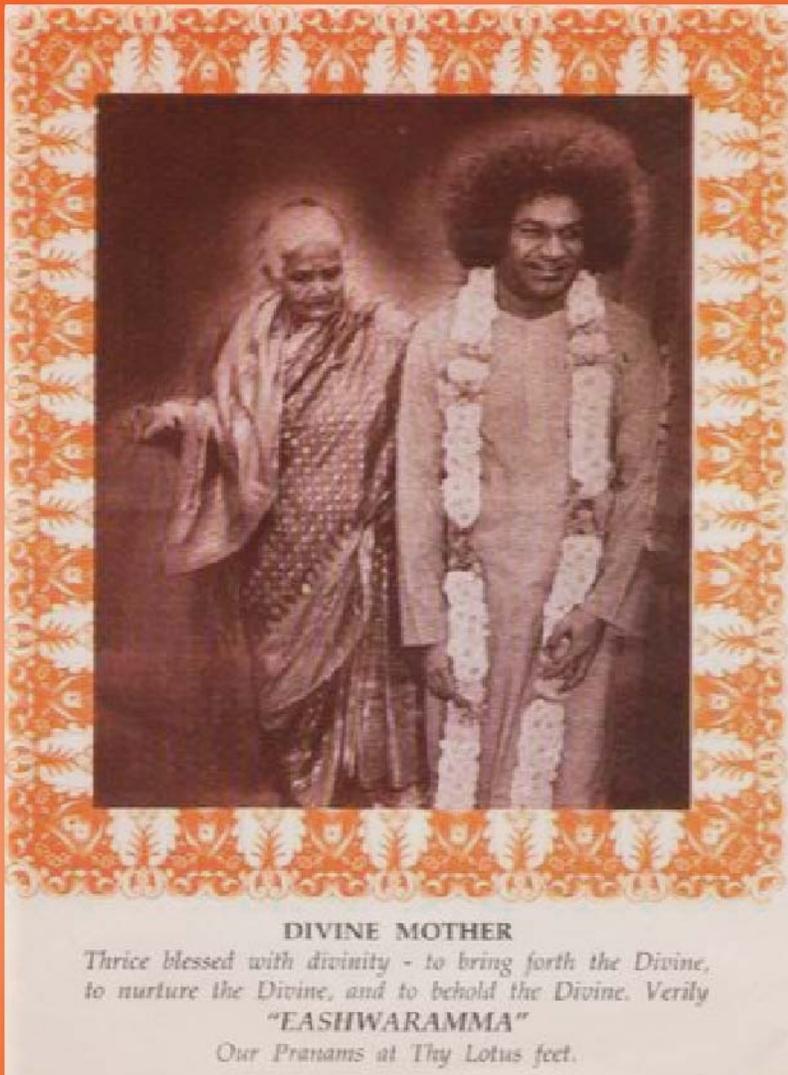
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April & May 2009

Easwaramma Day Special

Volume 6, Issue 4 & 5



Difficulties Draw Us Closer to God

By The Sai Sandesh Team

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. The feeling that “I am suffering” is nothing but our response to a situation or circumstance and, in reality, we control how you feel, not the situation. Painful experiences can only affect us to the extent we allow it to, nothing more than that.

Unpleasant circumstances, however long their duration, do not last forever. They are like dark clouds that clear quickly, revealing the clear sky of spirituality. It is the law of nature that after every night there is day. The sun must rise at dawn. Just before dawn, however, the night is darkest. In the same manner, know that when you are in the darkest phase of life, dawn (happiness) is close.

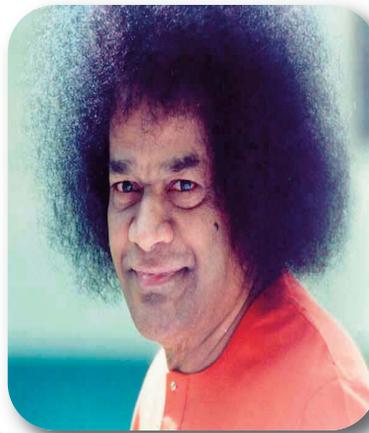
A king once made an announcement that anyone who would carry on his shoulders a buffalo and walk all the way to the top of a mountain would win riches and many other royal favors. The offer was attractive to many but none thought it possible to carry the beast, let alone walk with it to the top of a mountain.

None came forward to accept the offer and so the monarch lost hopes. One weak-looking young man finally came forward and declared that he would easily accomplish the feat. All wondered as to how this young lad would ever be able to meet the challenge. The lad had, however, had unshakable faith in God.

He purchased a baby buffalo and made it a daily practice to carry it on his shoulders. He would walk with it in the market, trek the mountain, and spend a lot of his time with this baby beast. As the buffalo started growing, so did the lad's strength and ability to carry it. This went on for some time until the buffalo was fully grown. By this time the boy had grown so strong, he carried it to the top of the mountain with utmost ease, as if the buffalo were a mere toy. Not only did he win many royal treasures, he also won the admiration and respect of the entire kingdom.

Our difficulties are like that. They are very heavy to carry but if we adopt the right attitude, be persistent, and keep our faith in God they make us stronger and ultimately lead us closer to God.

“Those who suffer have my grace so they can overcome those sufferings,” declared Sainath. In fact, once Kunti, the mother of Arjuna, specifically requested Lord Krishna the boon that she may suffer difficulties, always. When questioned about the strange nature of her boon, she responded: “Lord, it is only in times of sorrow that one calls out to you from the bottom of the heart and you, too, never fail to give succor to your children. You always beset them and shower your unlimited protection. It is only so that I may remember you always that I sought the boon of a life with hardships.”



The lowest periods of life should be used to learn how to avoid future mistakes and to progress toward the goal of human life: evolution to Divinity. Great teachers often liken suffering to fire and

speak of it as being a great furnace of life where real gold (soul) is molded in a form worthy of adoration.

Turning inwards is the only way to permanent happiness. Suffering compels us to turn inwards, breaking free from the iron grip of worldly attachments. Did Jesus not have the power to prevent His crucifixion? He could have averted it. But He did not; instead, He embraced the torment with great joy. He knew that this suffering would lead Him back to God. 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.

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.

Easwaramma -- The Chosen Mother

By The Sai Sandesh Team

Who could be holier than the divine mother who was chosen to give birth to the Lord Himself? Swami has declared during several discourses that He chose Mother Easwaramma to be the instrument for His incarnation. Mysterious indeed are the ways of the divine. The purpose for which He chooses individuals for His mission is known only to Him. The ignorant writer, however, makes a humble assumption that the Lord may have wanted to establish the ideal of motherhood through the divine Easwaramma – and what a lofty standard the Lord has established. If a fraction of mothers follow Easwaramma’s example, the world would be full of selfless heroes who would transform earth into heaven.

The mother’s past life. When the Lord had descended on earth during the Dwapara Yuga as Sri Krishna, there was a gopi who used to look at the infant Krishna with the highest level of motherly devotion. Her love was so sacred that the Lord was moved and instantly granted her the boon of being His mother in the Kaliyuga. This gopi was reborn as Easwaramma and was the chosen mother for the Sathya Sai avatar.

Antecedents. Around 100 miles from Puttaparthi is a village called Kolimikuntla. In this village lived Subba Raju, an ardent devotee of Easwara. He had fondly built a temple for the Lord. Soon after, a bright daughter was born to him and was named Easwaramma. Once Kondamma Raju (Swami’s grandfather) went on a pilgrimage and also to visit his distant relative, Subba Raju. The elder son, Pedda Venkaappa Raju, accompanied him. On their arrival, Kondamma Raju found the place arid and unsuitable for cultivation and also dangerously infested with dacoits. He requested Subba Raju to sell his lands and move to Karnatanagapalli, on the opposite bank of the river Chitravathi in Parthi. He also proposed the marriage of Pedda Venkaappa Raju with Easwaramma, who was then only fourteen. Within three years, Sheshama Raju, Swami’s elder brother was born, followed by Venkamma and Parvatamma. Soon after, the mother lost four children; elders made attempts to propitiate the divine for release from this sorrowful state; prayers were offered in the local temples and the distant place of Kadri. When Easwaramma entered her eight pregnancy, her mother-in-law, Lakshamma,

offered a series of pujas to Lord Sathyanarayana and prayed for a grandson.

The conception. The Sai avatar, like previous divinities, was not born the human way. Easwaramma had mothered seven children before the Lord was born to her. Once when Easwaramma was near a well drawing water, when a big ball of blue light came rolling toward her and entered her as she fainted.

The boons. Unlike ordinary mortals, Easwaramma did not ask Swami to bless her with material opulence or luxuries, nor did she ask for the smallest favor for herself. On the contrary, she would beseech Swami to bless others; often devotees would request her to plead on their behalf to Swami, which she humbly did. On seeing that the village did not have a school, hospital, or water facilities, she requested Swami to do something for the local villagers. Swami instantly granted her those three boons and as a result of her selfless desires, today Puttaparthi has free hospitals, educational institutions, and water facilities that serve thousands of villages across the district.

Her nature. The divine mother was humility and love incarnate. Her compassionate nature often found her interceding on behalf of young children or distressed devotees. Despite being granted the lofty status of the avatar’s mother, she did not show the least pride. On the contrary, she was humility incarnate. Once when Swami was staying at the residence of Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao, the Governor of Kerala, she refused a special invitation to stay at the governor’s residence and instead chose a modest headmaster’s dwelling.

High ideals inculcated. Easwaramma brought up her children in a devotional environment. They were inspired by the stories of God and the high values of ancient India. Forbearance, love, truth, peace, non-violence, righteousness were the very pillars on which she chose to lay the foundation of her children’s future. Her lofty principles were so noble that the Lord Himself chose to bestow her the honor of motherhood, an honor bestowed on only one person – among billions – every yuga (age).

God Is

Source: Oka Chinna Katha

The vision. Once Easwaramma was attending on Swami when she suddenly saw not Swami, but Lord Rama in His place. The experience had a profound impact on her noble character and she completely surrendered her thoughts, words, and deeds at the Lord's feet.

The last moments. Rare is the devotee that thinks of the Lord during the last moments. Even great saints are sometimes tempted by maya and forget the Lord. The simple saint, Easwaramma, however, was no such. During her last moments she called out to Swami thrice; Swami who was then in the shower, responded with equal zeal saying, "coming, coming, coming." Ultimately she passed away on Swami's lap and reached the shore of divinity. What could be a greater death than chanting the name of the Lord during the last moments – a transition befittingly bestowed on the saint who dedicated her entire life to the avatar's service.

Undying love. Though having cast off her mortal coil, Easwaramma makes frequent visits to Swami in her physical form. Students who sleep in Swami's room have often witnessed her appearance when she comes to the room to have conversations with the Lord. In fact during one incidence, Swami told the students that He needed a belt for His dhoti. Very soon Easwaramma appeared with a belt for Swami; such is her undying love for the Lord. Easwaramma's entire life is a message for mankind, a message that finds expression not only through her simple life, but also through the high ideals of motherhood, the selfless service, and the sacrifices she made for humanity. May 06 is Easwaramma's day – also observed as children's day by Swami's devotees – and we offer our humble pranams to the divine mother's holy feet.

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

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

Ekadasa Rudram: Daily 8.30 AM to 11.30 AM

PUJA SPONSORSHIP

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 2009

Tues, May 19: Hanuman Jayanthi

June 2009

Sun, Jun. 21: Father's Day

SAI WISDOM

Pure and selfless love towards all living beings, considering everyone as embodiments of the Divine, with no expectation of reward, is true Love. With this attitude, when one regards divinity as present in all beings, he experiences true love. Whatever be the vicissitudes one may face, whatever be the personal sorrows and privations one may undergo, true love will remain unaffected. Today, the moment a difficulty arises, love turns into hatred. True love is the sweet fruit that grows out of the fragrant flower of good deeds. Love rules without recourse to the sword. It binds without laws. Only one who has such true love can be described as human, for, divine love is the basic quality of a true human being.

Source: Thought For The Day, Prashanti Nilayam, Mary 19, 2009

WORDS OF THE WISE CHINNA KATHA

It was a king's court, the ministers, pundits and artists were all seated in their respective places. The king and his ministers had earned quite a name and fame for their wit and wisdom. One day a sage entered the court. He was given a warm welcome with all honor due to him. The king asked him: "Oh revered one! May I know what brings you here? We are very happy on account of your presence here today." The sage replied: "Oh King, your court is reputed for its wit and wisdom. I have brought three beautiful dolls and I would like to have an assessment and evaluation of these dolls done by your ministers." He presented to the king the three dolls. The king called his senior most minister and gave him the dolls for examination and evaluation. The minister just looked once at the dolls and commanded a royal messenger to fetch him a thin steel-wire.

The minister inserted the wire into the right ear of one of the dolls. The wire came out of the left ear. He kept it aside. He took up another doll and once again passed the wire into its right ear. It came out of the mouth of the doll. He kept that doll in one place. He took up the third doll and inserted the wire, it neither came out of the other ear nor from the mouth. The king and the courtiers were eagerly watching the scene. The minister paying his tributes to the sage said: "Oh revered one." Of the three dolls, the third one is the best. The three dolls actually are symbolic of three types of listening. There are three types of listeners, in the world. The first type listen to every word, only to pass it out from the other ear. The second type listen well, remember it well only to speak out all that they have heard. The third type listen, retain everything they have heard and treasure it up in their hearts. They are the best type of listeners." The sage congratulated the king and the minister on the successful evaluation of the dolls and blessing them both, left the court.

'Shravanam' is the first and the foremost among the nine types of devotion. Having heard the words of the wise, we should try to revolve their meaning and message in our minds and put them into practise to elevate our lives.

Ganga Jal Miracle

Devotees are aware that we have been performing Ekadasa Rudra Abhishekam at Om Sai Mandir since June 11, 2007. Since the past several weeks we have been witnessing an astounding miracle. The very Shiv Lingam to which abhishekam is being performed since almost two years is reciprocating the devotion in a very unique and miraculous way.

Much to our amazement, sweet-tasting holy water, Ganga Jal, has been **miraculously** emanating from the Shiv Lingam. This miracle was witnessed by many individuals present during the prayers. The pictures below were taken on Easwaramma Day, when the maximum amount of water manifested from the Lingam. We are immensely grateful for this compassionate act performed by the Lord.



The Power of Baba's Words

By The Sai Sandesh Team



Image: Vikas Nandlal, India

tion, it cannot but fulfill that order with humility and reverence.

The might and majesty of an avatar cannot be comprehended by ordinary human intelligence; it can only be experienced. During their physical incarnation, avatars perform countless deeds that are considered miracles in the mortal realm, but in reality they are nothing but visible manifestations of divine sankalpa (will). This will is not an ordinary one, though, it is so powerful it can alter even the writ of providence and, when necessary, overrule otherwise unalterable cosmic laws. The warmth of sincere devotion can melt God's butter-soft heart in an instant, and in response to a devotee's sincere plea the Lord becomes like a servitor, willing to extend any service possible. When the call is sincere, Swami will alter even destiny and rescue devotee from the clutches of sorrow and pain.

Once, a mother-in-law was fortunate enough to experience this grace. She was a pious lady who had a big family with many sons and daughter-in-laws. Despite experiencing all forms of happiness, she was not at peace, for none of her children were able to become parents. She finally visited Puttaparthi with utmost reverence and placed her sorrow at the feet of the Lord of Parthi. He heard her request with utmost compassion but explained that none of her family members were destined to become parents—that was their fate. She was disheartened but she firmly held Sai's feet and with tear-filled eyes begged Him to intercede. Swami was moved and asked if she believed in Him. She calmly said that His will was supreme and that He could alter destiny itself, if He so willed. Swami was touched by her faith and blessed her. The following year, she

came with beautiful grand children.

During the Shirdi Sai Avatar, a devotee brought several seeds to Shirdi. It was his intense desire to plant trees near Dwarakamai. Baba was reluctant, however, and refused to accede to the request. As time passed, the seeds dried and became incapable of germinating. The devotee was unable to bear his beloved Sai's refusal and could not rest in peace. Day and night, he was suffering in anguish. Sainath was unable to see His devotee suffer in this manner and called him to His presence. Baba asked him not to worry and plant the dried seeds with faith. He declared that even though the seeds had dried, they would germinate into beautiful plants—and they did. Such is the power of Sai's words.

During another instance, Baba's devotee, Shama, was bitten by a snake. Frightened by the imminent death, Shama immediately rushed to His beloved Sai who uttered the following words: "Oh vile bhaturdya (priest), do not climb up. Beware if you do so. Go get away, come down." Shama was disheartened to think that the words were uttered at him, but in reality they were Sai's antidote to the poison. It was a direct command ordering the poison to stop rising. Shama recovered completely. On another occasion, Shirdi witnessed a terrifying storm that threatened to devour the entire village. All its inhabitants rushed to their beloved Lord Sai, who in His utmost mercy came to their rescue. His simple words, "Oh, stop; calm your fury," were sufficient to quell the furious storm in moments.

God is so merciful, He cannot but run for His devotees. He is like the hard-working mother who is always busy performing routine household—in His case, cosmic—duties. Despite her burdens, the mother always provides for the children's needs and keeps a watchful eye on them. The children may not know or realize this. When they are safe or at play, she continues performing her chores, but if a child starts crying inconsolably, she will leave everything and run to console and caress her darling. Likewise, God, who bears the love of a thousand mothers, rushes to rescue children who call Him in anguish. His simple words will allay all fears and fulfill the sincere wishes of His beloved devotees.

OM SAI MANDIR

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Om Sai Mandir is organized exclusively for charitable, religious purposes and is a non profit organization, exempt under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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