

Chapter 23 Suffering: Pain with a Purpose

1. Our Cue to Move On

Pain is a sign that something is wrong. When we feel bodily pain, we know that we have been injured or we are sick. It is a warning to us to examine the cause and repair the damage. Mental or emotional suffering is also an indication of need. It prompts us to change our attitudes and ideas. Joy is our natural state. No one is surprised when a baby is happy, but when the baby cries we rush to find and eliminate the cause.

Suffering is a reminder to us to press on until we reach the goal of self-realization. When we fall short of our spiritual aims, suffering reminds us that we have not yet discovered our true nature of joy and wisdom. Suffering is a spur which starts us on the spiritual path and keeps us active in spiritual practice. It teaches us the lessons of loving wisdom and compassionate understanding. It impresses on us the need for strength and fortitude. Suffering is pain with a purpose; it alerts us to seek God-realization before our time expires.

It is grace; those who suffer have my grace. Only through suffering will they be persuaded to turn inward and make the inquiry. And without turning inward and making inquiry, they can never escape misery.

Conversations, p.110

2. The Causes of Suffering

In India, a simple method is used to catch monkeys. A banana is placed inside a large pot that has a narrow neck. A curious monkey will come to examine the pot. When he discovers the fruit inside, he reaches in to grasp it. Holding the banana, he can no longer remove his hand through the narrow neck of the pot. In his greed, the unfortunate monkey will not let go of the fruit, even though it results in his capture.

第二十三章 承受痛苦：带有目的的痛苦

1. 前进的信号

痛苦是某事有差错的信号。肉体痛苦时，我们知道我们有伤或有病。这是一个警讯，让我们检查引起事故的起因并对症下药。精神上或情绪上的痛苦也是一种必须加以注意的征兆。这促使我们改变我们的态度和观念。喜悦是我们自然的状态。没有人会对一个婴儿的快乐感到惊讶，但当婴儿啼哭时，我们自然就会赶去看看到是什么原因并把问题解决。

受苦提醒我们勇往直前直到我们达到明心见性的目标。未达到灵性目标之前，受苦提醒我们还得探索我们喜悦与智慧的真实本质。受苦是一种刺激，促使我们步上灵道并维系我们在灵性上的活动。它灌输我们充满爱之智慧和慈悲之理解的教导。它加深我们对力量与毅力的需要。受苦是带有目的的痛苦；它警惕我们要在有生之年步上灵道以达明心见性的境界。

就是恩典，受苦的人得到的就是我的恩典。只有通过受苦，他们才会反求诸内。而若不向内探求，他们绝不能避开苦痛。

《会谈》110面

2. 受苦的起因

在印度，人们常用一种简单的方法去捕捉猴子。他们把一根香蕉放在一个有着狭窄壶颈的大壶内。一只好奇的猴子会前来查看大壶。当牠发现壶内有一根香蕉时，牠便伸手进去拿。握住了香蕉，牠就不再放手而手就再也离不开狭窄的壶颈。基于贪婪，不幸的猴子不愿放下香蕉而终被捕捉。

We are like that monkey when we are held captive by our wrong desires. We grasp for material treasure, but in the long run our craving gives us only suffering. Selfish desire prevents us from being satisfied with ourselves as we are. It keeps us from realizing our true divine nature. We hold tantalizing images before our eyes and then we suffer because we cannot attain them. Desire keeps our minds spinning. It allows us no opportunity to find peace.

People suffer because they have all kinds of unreasonable desires and they pine to fulfill them and they fail. They attach too much value to the objective world. It is only when attachment increases that you suffer pain and grief.

Sathya Sai Speaks 1, pp.42-43

Suffering also results from our past misdeeds. Through many lives lived in ignorance of spiritual principles, we have built a store of karma. The consequences of those previous actions pursue us like an unpaid debt. Through carelessness or evil intent, we may have added to the suffering of others, and even in this life the results seek us out. After the last log is thrown on a fire, the fire continues to burn for some time. But when we gain detachment, we can be unaffected by the heat. Usually suffering does not originate in external events; it stems from our attachment to results. Two people who suffer a similar loss may be affected very differently.

Strike a green tamarind fruit with a stone and you cause harm to the pulp inside, but strike the ripe fruit and see what happens. It is the dry rind that falls off; nothing affects the pulp or the seed. The ripe sadhaka (aspirant) does not feel the blows of fate or fortune; It is the unripe man who is wounded by every blow.

Sathya Sai Speaks 4, p.273

Joy and suffering are inseparable companions. Both are natural consequences of our attachment to objects of desire. When we get the things we want, we are happy. If we do not get them, we are sad. When we acquire inner peace, we are not buffeted by the ups and downs of the world. We then acquire spiritual peace that is not conditioned by desire for earthly prosperity. With time, we learn to accept joy and grief with equal-mindedness. Then we avoid unnecessary suffering.

如果我们因错误的欲望而被囚禁，我们就像猴子一样了。我们迫不及待地想得到物质珍品，但最终我们的渴望带给我们的只是痛苦而已。自私的欲望阻止我们满足于现状。它阻碍我们认知我们神圣的本质。我们抓住的是在我们眼前可望而不可即的影像，然后我们会因不能如愿而痛苦万分。欲望使我们心神不定，旋转不停。它不给我们机会去寻找心境的平和。

由于各种不当的欲望，人们渴望实践之但都失败了，而陷入痛苦的深渊。他们太执着于物质世界的价值。只有在执着增大时，你才承受痛苦和哀伤。

《沙迪亚赛说》第1章42-43面

承受痛苦也源自我们过去的恶行。通过许多世对灵性哲理的懵然无知，我们建立了一个业的储存库。那些过去的行为果报紧紧地追讨我们欠下的债务。出于大意或邪恶意图，我们或已给他人带来痛苦，就这一点，我们甚至也可能尝到现世报。最后一堆柴薪投入火中之后，火继续燃烧一段时间。然而，若我们达至舍离的境界，我们就不会受到其热的影响。一般上痛苦不起自外在的事件；它起自我们对结果的执着。遭受类似折损的两个人可能有不同的感受或影响。

用石头敲击一粒青绿的罗望子果实，你会伤到果实内的果肉，但敲击成熟的果实来看看会有什么结果。脱落的是干瘪的外皮；果肉与果核不受影响。成熟的求道者不感到命运的冲击；只有不成熟的人才受到任何打击的伤害。

《沙迪亚赛说》第4章273面

乐与苦是形影不离的同伴。两者都是对物质欲望执着的自然结果。得到我们所要的，我们乐；得不到，我们不乐。获得内在平和之后，我们就不会被生活上的起起伏伏所冲击了。然后，我们就可以获得心灵的平和，而心灵的平和是不为对世俗繁荣之欲望所左右的。假以时日，我们学会以平常心看待苦与乐。然后，我们就避免不必要的痛苦了。

Joy and grief are the obverse and reverse of the same experience. Joy is when grief ends; grief is when joy ends. When you invite a blind man for dinner, you must set on the table two plates, for he comes along with another man who will lead him in. Grief and joy are inseparable companions.

Sathya Sai Speaks 4, p.85

3. Tests of Character

We admire gnarled old trees that grow on lofty peaks or wave-pounded shores. Their twisted limbs and weathered bark paint a picture of courage and aspiration. Their roots dig into barren earth, clawing out an existence from near-barren beginnings. We respect such stalwarts far more than the pampered saplings of fertile valleys.

And yet we seek ease for ourselves. We resent the buffetings and salt spray that etch our own experience. We reject the hardships that endow us with our own unique character. But we must stand up to such trials. Our reaction to difficult situations is a test of our readiness to tread the spiritual path. How we deal with joy and suffering shows what we have learned and the strength we have developed.

Tests are a natural and necessary part of the razor-edged journey. Without tests, we would be unable to demonstrate our merit. Only by taking the tests can we pass on to higher stages. God, in his wisdom, does not let us graduate from one level without testing our fitness to move on. Progression to higher lessons too early would only result in the possibility of a fall later.

Being students, you know very well that the university has prescribed certain examinations at the end of every academic year. Do you ascribe this system to any desire for persecuting you? Do you think it is a sign of displeasure? You know that they are conducted so that you can be promoted, don't you? The yogis, sadhaks, and aspirants are being tested by God only to promote them.

Sathya Sai Speaks 9, p.72

苦与乐是同样体验的正反面。苦尽乐来，乐尽苦来。如果你邀请一瞎子共进晚餐，你必须同时准备两个盘子，因为他有另一人带他过来。苦与乐是不可分割的同伴。

《沙迪亚赛说》第4章85面

3. 性格的测试

我们欣赏长在巍峨山顶或惊涛猛拍的岸边的多节瘤古树。它们弯曲的树枝和饱经风霜的树皮绘成一幅象征勇敢和渴望的画面。它们的根深入贫瘠的土地，以便在艰苦的环境中求存。我们尊敬这样的坚定毅力远甚于在肥沃山谷中养尊处优的幼树。

然而我们还是好逸恶劳。我们怨恨那些蚀刻我们的体验的风雨冲洗和盐巴喷射。我们拒绝苦难，即便苦难能带给我们独特的性格。然而我们必须勇敢面对考验。对困境的反应是我们做好准备步上灵道的一个测试。我们如何对待苦与乐揭示我们已学到的道理和我们已培育起的力量。

试炼是险峻旅途的自然而必需的一个部分。没有试炼，我们无以展现我们的优点。只有接受试炼，我们始能攀登更高的境界。神不会让我们不经测试我们是否合格继续前进就从一个阶段步入另一个阶段。升级得太早只会造成以后重又掉落的可能性。

作为学生，你很清楚，大学规定年终时必有一些考试。你不会视这制度为对你的虐待吧？你认为那是一个不愉快的征兆吗？你知道这些考试之所以执行就是为了让你们提升，不是吗？瑜伽师，求道者都受到神的试炼以提升他们。

《沙迪亚赛说》第9章72面

When we suffer difficult situations, we may feel that God does not see our plight. In fact, that is when God is watching us most closely. He gives us an opportunity to show our strength and fortitude. He watches closely to determine our faith in the face of obstacles. If we are to be given higher work, our strength must first be tested so that a disaster does not occur later.

Some of you feel neglected by me when disappointment or trouble comes upon you. But such obstacles alone can toughen your character and make your faith firm. When you hang a picture on the wall, you shake the nail and find out whether it is firm enough to bear the weight of the picture. So, too, in order to prevent the picture of God (his image in your mind and heart) from falling and being shattered to bits, the nail (i.e., God's name) driven into the wall of the heart has to be shaken to ascertain whether it is firm and steady.

Sathya Sai Speaks 7, p.444

4. An Opportunity for Growth

Birth is a painful experience for mother and child. Growth almost always involves some suffering. As we grow older, we learn many difficult lessons. Uncertainty and mistakes inevitably accompany new experience. However, that is no reason to avoid new experience. The pain of growth yields the satisfaction of progress. The comfort of stagnation gives way to the odor of decline.

By suffering the consequences of incorrect action, we eventually understand what gives lasting joy and what causes pain. We learn to appraise our actions and motivations more realistically. Material values recede and transpersonal values gain in importance. We see that through suffering we learn compassion and develop a sweet-tempered disposition. The needs of others grow in importance as our own become less important. The experience of pain and loss adds to our sweetness.

当我们陷入困境时，我们或许觉得，神看不到我们的困境。其实，神一直在紧密地观察着我们。祂给我们机会去展现我们的力量和毅力。祂紧密地观察以确定我们面对障碍的信心。如果我们被托以更崇高的任务，首先我们的能力必须被测试以避免日后灾难的发生。

当挫败或困扰降临时，你们有一些人会觉得我忽视了你们。然而，只有这样的障碍才能使你的个性变得刚强并使你的信心变得坚定。当你要挂一张图画于墙壁上时，你试一试，摇一摇铁钉，看看是否够坚硬去承受图画的重量。同样，为了避免神（祂的影像寓于你心中）的图画掉下以至于破碎，插入心墙的铁钉（神的名号）必须试一试，摇一摇以确定它够坚定和安稳。

《沙迪亚塞说》第7章444面

4. 成长的机会

诞生对母亲和孩子而言都是一个痛苦的体验。成长总是包括某种痛苦。当我们长大时，我们学会许多艰苦的教训。不可避免地，不确定和错误会伴随着新的体验而至。然而，没有必要回避新的体验。成长的痛苦带来进步的满足。停滞的安适屈服于衰退的气味之下。

借承受错误行为的果报，我们终于了解什么会带来持久的喜悦而什么会引起痛苦。我们学会更加实在地判断我们的行为和动机。物质价值消退而超越人的价值则取得重要地位。我们看到，通过痛苦，我们学会慈悲并培育温和亲切的性情。对他人的需要日渐注重，而我们自己的需要则变得比较不重要了。痛苦与损失的体验增加我们的温馨甜美。

The sugarcane should welcome the cutting, the hacking and the crushing, the boiling and the straining to which it is subjected; without these ordeals, the cane would dry up and make no tongue sweet. So, too, man must welcome trouble, for that alone brings sweetness to the spirit within.

Sai Baba Avatar, p.58

When we suffer pain, it is usually for our benefit. If we are given a chance to pay for our misdeeds – and take it – we are truly attending to our spiritual growth. Grace prescribes the cure; pain is the taste of the medicine.

If a mother has two sons and one of them is sick, she will give the sick son only bitter medicine, while she may give the other son anything that he may ask for. If she gives bitter medicine to one son and sweets to the other, it is not because the mother likes one son more than the other. The mother realizes that it is for the good of the sick child to take bitter medicine, and so she gives him a bitter medicine, but not because she likes him less.

Sathya Sai Speaks 2, p.153

5. Nearness to God

Perhaps the new devotee is surprised to find that all suffering does not end when one finds the Lord. When the initial discovery is made, we might believe that the future can hold only joy and peace. But this is an unreasonable expectation, soon dispelled. In fact, it is by the grace of the Lord that he points out our faults so that we may correct them.

It may be that our pain is increased as we progress more quickly through our “lessons”. This is especially the case for “close devotees”, who are seen as examples of Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings. Each of us must live up to a high standard of behavior. An ideal devotee, such as Prahlada, may suffer as a lesson for others in faith and devotion. That devotee demonstrates the value of the spiritual path in developing equanimity. If we fail to exemplify the high ideals which we espouse, our punishment is strict, for the Lord has

甘蔗应该接受切割，砍劈和挤压以及煮沸和扭折的过程，那是它理应承受的。没有这些严峻的考验甘蔗会变得干枯而不甜美。那么人也一样，必须受到苦难的磨炼，而唯有苦难才给内在心灵带来温馨甜美。

《赛峇峇神化身》58面

承受痛苦对我们是有所裨益的。如果有机会偿还我们的罪行 -- 承受之 -- 我们就真的致力于灵性成长了。圣恩为我们开治疗的药方；痛苦是药的味道。

如果一个母亲有两个儿子而其中一个儿子病倒了，她会给生病的儿子吃的只是苦药而给另一个儿子他所要的任何东西。她这么做不是偏爱。母亲认识到苦口的良药对生病的儿子有益，但不是因为她爱他较少。

《沙迪亚赛说》第2章153面

5. 亲近神

对于一个人归依主之后，痛苦仍未终止，一个新的信徒或会甚感訝异。最初找到神时，我们或许相信未来只有喜悦与平静。但这是一个不合理的期望，很快就化为泡影。其实，主指出我们的错误是祂的恩典，因之，我们才得以纠正。

在通过“教训”而取得更迅速的进步的同时，或许我们的痛苦会因此而增加。对“亲近信徒”而言，这尤其显著；他们被公认为沙迪亚赛峇峇教导的模范。一个理想的信徒，如钵罗赫拉德（Prahlada），他的受苦可供大家作为信心与虔诚的一个训示。那信徒在培育平常心中展示灵道上的价值。如果我们不能证明我们所信奉的崇高理念，我们

taken special interest in our progress and will not be satisfied with meager progress.

People, those outwardly “distant” from Swami, he tells, but not so severely as those “near”. People judge Swami by his “near” devotees and so those individuals must follow very strict standards of behavior.
Conversations, p.111

The Lord does not give his devotees more suffering than they can manage. The Lord protects and nurtures devotees on the path. Whatever suffering may come, it will not be more than the devotee can bear. The Lord is committed to the progress of his dear ones.

God protects his devotees. His devotee is near and dear to God, and he carries the devotee safely through life.
Conversations, p.48

Inner peace alone confers lasting joy. The evanescent pleasures of the material world grant no lasting satisfaction. Our effort must be to experience the fountainhead of self-confidence and detachment which inspires us to greater spirituality. Our enthusiasm of today must grow into steady practice. Regular effort in the face of all obstacles ensures victory. Difficulties on the road must be welcomed as means to secure God’s love and to demonstrate our worthiness to achieve higher goals.

You should not allow yourselves to be overwhelmed in any way by difficulties and sorrows, doubts and disappointments. You must have faith. Have confidence in yourself and strive to understand well the nature of God’s love. To secure that love is the sacred goal of human life.

Sanathana Sarathi, Jan. 1985, p.3

An easy and painless life would offer us little satisfaction. We would never know the exhilarating struggle for achievement or the sparkling joys of discovery. Although suffering is not a virtue and we should not seek it out, it does help us to understand the primacy of the spirit and the illusion of

将得到严厉的惩罚，因为主特别关注我们的突飞猛进而不会满意于我们浅薄的进展。

对那些外在与斯瓦米有“距离”的人，他的训诫就不若那些“亲近”的人严格。人们以斯瓦米的“亲近”信徒来判断斯瓦米，因此，那些“亲近”者必须遵行严格的行为准则。

《会谈》111面

主不会把超过信徒所能承受的痛苦加于信徒。主在灵道上保护和训练信徒。不论降临的是什么痛苦，总而言之，绝不会超过信徒所能承受者。主答应让信徒得到稳定的进展。

神护佑他的信徒。神亲近，也爱他的信徒，而他一路护送信徒一生平平安安。

《会谈》48面

只有内在平和带来持久的喜乐。物质世界的乍现即逝的欢乐不会带来持久的满足。我们必须致力于体验激励我们展现更高灵性的自信与舍离的泉源。我们今天的热忱必须化为稳定的实行。尽管障碍重重，不懈的努力保证胜利在望。路途的崎岖必须视为取得神的爱和展现我们有资格成就更高目标的法门来加以迎接。

无论如何，你不应该屈服于困难和悲伤，怀疑和沮丧之下。你必须信心满满。对自己要有信心并致力于理解神之爱的本质。获得那爱是人生的神圣目标。

《永恒的战车御者》1985年1月第3面

安逸的生活提供的满足感不大。我们决不明白，为了成就而付出的令人振奋的努力，抑或，证悟所带来的灿烂的喜悦，是什么一回事。虽然受苦不是一种美德，而我们也不必特地去寻求，它会协助我们了

material glitter. Perhaps we should not be so quick to shun adversity, for through suffering alone do we realize the pain of attachment and the bliss of self-understanding.

Do you think I would confront you with pain were there not a reason for it? Open your heart to pain, as you do now to pleasure, for it is my will, wrought by me for your good. Welcome it as a challenge. Do not turn away from it. Do not listen to your mind, for mind is but another word for “need”. The mind engenders need; it manifested as this world, because it needed this. It is all my plan, to drive you by the pangs of unfulfilled need to listen to my voice which, when heard, dissolves the ego and the mind with it.

Sanathana Sarathi, Aug.74, p.185

Questions for Study Circle:

1. Why do we suffer?
2. Does the Lord test us or do we test ourselves?
3. How can we avoid suffering when faced with tests and burdens?
4. Is it desirable to avoid suffering?
5. When we become a devotee of God, does suffering end?
6. Is it possible to learn life's lessons without suffering?
7. Is it possible to have joy without grief?
8. Can we know the cause of our suffering?
9. Is suffering a result of inner attitude or outer events?
10. Is attachment related to suffering?

References for Further Study

1. Conversations, p.103 (The suffering of saints as an example for us).
2. Conversations, pp.110-111.
3. Sathya Sai Speaks 2, p.153 (Rise up to demands of the test and please the Lord).
4. Sathya Sai Speaks 3, p.20 (Baba takes over the stroke of a devotee).
5. Sathya Sai Speaks 5, p.230 (Tests give confidence).
6. Sathya Sai Speaks 6, p.261 (Hardships teach us).
7. Sathya Sai Speaks 9, pp. 71-76 (Tests).

解灵性的首要以及耀眼物质的虚幻。也许我们不应该那么快地回避逆境，因为只有通过承受痛苦，我们才认识到执著的烦恼和自我体悟的福乐。

你认为我会无故地让你面对痛苦吗？开敞你的心扉迎接痛苦，就如你现在迎接快乐一样，因为那是我的旨意，是我为你好而精心制作的。要视之作为一种挑战而加以接受。不要躲避它。不要听从你心念的使唤，因为心念只是“需求”的另一个字眼。心念产生需求；它以这世界彰显，因为它需要这世界。这都是我的计划，借未满足的需要所带来的剧痛去推动你，从而使你聆听我的声音，而在你听到时，它融化你的自我和心念。

《永恒的战车御者》1974年8月第185面。

学习圈的问题：

1. 为什么我们会受苦？
2. 是主考验我们抑或我们考验我们自己？
3. 面临考验和负担时，我们如何避开受苦？
4. 有必要避开受苦吗？
5. 一旦皈依神，痛苦就终止了吗？
6. 不受苦，有可能学到人生教训吗？
7. 没有哀伤，能得到快乐吗？
8. 我们能知道我们受苦的原因吗？
9. 受苦可是内在心态的一种结果或外在事件的一种结果？
10. 执著与受苦有关联吗？

321 Suffering

8. Summer Showers 1974, pp.102-104 (God introduces an occasional test to determine our strength).
9. Summer Showers 1974, pp.288-289.
10. Summer Showers 1977, p.2 (Joy and sorrow are inseparable).
11. Summer Showers 1977, p.140 (People pay more attention to the pain than to the joy of life).
12. Summer Showers 1978, p.32.
13. Summer Showers 1978, p.166 (Prahlada's suffering).

Whether you are walking on my path, or another is lost, My love for both is equal. For one I encourage to continue his journey, and for the other, I have come to transform.

- Baba

不论是一个遵循我的道路前进的人或是一个迷失方向的人，我给予两人的爱是同等的。前者，我鼓励他继续前进；后者，我来改造他。

- 峇峇