



**USA NATIONAL
SAI WOMEN'S RETREAT
2023**



STUDY GUIDE



A humble offering at the lotus feet of Shri Sathya Sai Baba

USA National Women's Wing

"If women are given due recognition and encouragement, they will shine with brilliance in all fields and will serve the house, country, and the entire world gloriously, contributing to the welfare of the entire humanity."

Glory of Womanhood, Divine Discourse, April 19, 1998

Introduction

This is the first in a series of study guides based on the theme for National Sai Women's Retreat; 'Women are the Beacons of Light'. Women expand as bright 'Beacons of Light' and exemplars on the path to Self-Realization by living the InSAIde powers.

We begin with the InSAIde Power of 'SACRIFICE.' This study guide is a collection of quotes from Shri Sathya Sai Baba's divine discourses and writings.

Sathya Sai Baba emphasizes that women's sacrifice is selfless and calls women "The embodiments of sacrifice." He further speaks about the sacrifices women make as mothers who raise noble leaders and finally, they sacrifice everything for acquiring God's love which ultimately leads to Self-Realization. Women use these innate powers to become the beacons of light for not only to their families, but to the society and the nation as well.

May our Divine Mother Sai bless us all as Beacons of Light to use our InSAIde Powers as a force for good on this golden road together.

With Love,

Women's Wing Study Guide Committee

Women are the Beacons of Light

(InSAIde Powers of Women)

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'SACRIFICE'

*"Na Karmana, Na Prajaya, Dhanena,
Thyaganaikena Amruthathwa Manashuh"*

(English Translation Below)

"Neither spiritual deeds as ordained by scriptures, not begetting worthy offspring, nor earning wealth will confer relief from the cycle of birth and death. Sacrifice alone can bring immortality (*amrithathwa*). This is the truth proclaimed by the Vedas. Mental readiness to do sacrifice (*thyaga buddhi*) coupled with absolute selflessness should mark one's service. This is the only highway to reach *Parama Pada* (God's abode).

**Recognize the Principle of I, Sri Sathya Sai Baba
August 5, 1999**

"You must understand that when you limit your desires, keep the welfare of society in view, and seek to discharge your duties, you will be realizing the objective of combining enjoyment with sacrifice. In fact, the bliss that is derived when one renders service to others is beyond measure. It is by such sacrifice that real joy is experienced. When anything is done in expectation of a return, such joy cannot be got."

**Summer Showers, Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 24
May 24, 1991**

Women have the strength of mind and the courage to fight for the country and bring about harmony and peace. So, Valmiki who described women in many ways said that women are the very embodiment of sweetness. What is the main reason for this sweetness? It is the quality of sacrifice in her that makes it sweet. The mother is prepared to go to any length and sacrifice for the sake of the children. She will sacrifice even her life to protect her children. This sense of sacrifice is there only in the women. The father will say it is alright when the children are suffering from some disease. The mother tries hard to protect them. The quality of sacrifice makes her to be known as the embodiment of sacrifice.

Men do not have the same spirit of sacrifice as women. If any problem arises, men come forward with initial enthusiasm, but it is only women who resolutely fight until success is achieved.

**Ladies Day Divine Discourse, Sri Sathya Sai Baba
November 19, 1995**

Sacrifice Everything for God

Mira was the wife of Maharana of Chittor. She was always seated in Krishna's temple, forgetting herself while chanting His name. One day, Emperor Akbar came to the temple and offered a gold necklace to Lord Krishna. Mira accepted it and put it around Krishna's idol. Akbar was an enemy of Maharana. When Maharana came to know that Mira had accepted a necklace for Krishna from his enemy, Akbar, he became very furious. He took it as an insult and threw her out of the temple. Mira felt very sad.

Mira was in a dilemma, whether to give up Krishna or her husband, Maharana. She resolved that she would not give up Krishna even at the cost of her life. Then she wrote a letter to Tulsidas seeking his advice in this regard.

Tulsidas sent her a reply: "From the worldly point of view, you should respect your father, mother, preceptor and husband. But when it comes to God, everything else is secondary. God alone is important. Bharata left his mother Kaikeyi for the sake of Lord Rama. Prahlada gave up his father Hiranyakasipu for the sake of Lord Narayana. Emperor Bali forsook his preceptor, Sukracharya, for the sake of God. So, there is nothing wrong in giving up your husband for the sake of Krishna." Taking the advice of Tulsidas, Mira left her husband.

**Women Symbolize Sacrifice Sri Sathya Sai Baba
May 6, 1999**

Questions and Reflections

- 1) What does sacrifice mean to you?
- 2) Reflect on one thing you sacrificed today for someone in your life (home, work, family)?
- 3) What qualities are you willing to sacrifice for God?
- 4) Discuss the ways to sacrifice for God

The Pleasure of Sacrifice

The Isavasya Upanishad proclaims that all pleasures (bhoga) should be enjoyed with a feeling of renunciation (thyaga). Upon casual enquiry, pleasure and renunciation seem to be opposites. A renunciant does not crave for pleasure, and a pleasure seeker cannot even entertain thoughts of sacrifice! Therefore, you might ask, how can one enjoy pleasures with an outlook of sacrifice.

The Isavasya Upanishad reveals that when you perform actions without ego and when you experience the world without attachment, no distinction remains between pleasure and renunciation. Work without ego and attachment is selfless work - a pleasurable sacrifice. All selfless work is nothing but delightful renunciation.

Every person must perform actions without the egoistic feeling, "These are the results of my action." When one considers the action as one's own, it is natural to take credit for the results and get attached to them. The Isavasya Upanishad demonstrates that yoga, the path to Knowledge of the Self (Atma Jnana), is the merger of renunciation (thyaga) and pleasure (bhoga)

Upanishads,

Summer Showers, May 24, 1991

First, purify the inner instrument. To this end, it is compulsory to engage in action. Without activities, the mind cannot be purified. The Vedas say: The mind is refined with action (Chittasya suddhaye karmaha). Every person must undertake good deeds to purify the mind. What are 'good actions'? Without an eye on results, without selfish intent, all actions performed are desireless actions (nishkama karma). Nishkama karma is nothing but pleasure with sacrifice (bhoga with thyaga).

Thus, the Isavasya Upanishad elaborates beautifully on the unity of pleasure and sacrifice. We must not be inactive. Action sanctifies the body and time. The goal of human life is to harmonise time, action, cause, and duty (kala, karma, karana, and kartavyam).

How do we use our time? We increase our selfishness, selfishness, selfishness. How then can we expect the union of pleasure and sacrifice (bhoga and thyaga)? Instead of merging thyaga into bhoga, we attain roga (disease) through bhoga! Aspire to be a yogi, not a seeker of pleasure (bhogi). What is bhoga? Eating, sleeping, and living life forgetful of time.

Bhikshannam deha rakshartham, vastram sheeta nivaranam (food is necessary for the upkeep of the body. Food protects the body; clothes shield against adverse weather.)

Upanishads, Summer Showers,

May 24, 1991

The entire Cosmos, consisting of animate and inanimate objects, is dependent on God. The Divine is governed 'by Truth, That Truth is governed by Uthamadheenam (noble beings). The noblest being is Divine. Every human being is inherently noble. It is this nobility that constitutes his divinity. The Divine manifests Himself in human form. There is no need to search for the Divine as a distinct entity somewhere else. Man must strive to realise the Divinity within him. From the earliest times, the sages looked upon human life as madhuram (sweet). This sweet life is associated with Madhava, the Divine and not anything else. We must see that this Sweetness is properly cherished. Only when this sweetness is safeguarded will man be true to his human nature. Without this sweetness, man ceases to be human. To experience this sweetness the spirit of sacrifice is essential. This nectarine sweetness is the outcome of thyaga (sacrifice). As the Vedas declare: "Not by deeds, or progeny, or wealth is immortality gained. It is realised only through sacrifice." Whatever good deeds one may do, whatever wealth one may acquire, without sacrifice the Divine cannot be experienced.

Cherish the Sweetness of Sacrifice

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 27 (1994)

Questions

1. Why does sacrifice need to be done with pleasure?
2. What needs to be sacrificed to attain Bliss?

Mothers are Embodiments of Sacrifice

A Mother's Noble Wish

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was a noble soul. He was born in a poor family. He was living with his aged mother. He used to feel very sad seeing his mother wearing old and torn saris. After he completed his studies, he took up a job and started earning some money. One day he sat by the side of his mother and said, "Mother, please tell me if you have any desires. Now that I have started earning money, I am in a position to fulfil them." She said, "Son, I don't have any desires. It is enough for me if you lead a noble life." After some time, he got a better job and started earning thousands of rupees. Again, he asked his mother to tell him if she had any desires. She said she had three desires and could not live in peace unless and until they were fulfilled. "Ours is a small village, and there are many children who are wasting their time without going to school. So, please construct a small school out of the money you have earned." As per the wish of his mother, Vidyasagar got a school constructed in his village.

Then he asked his mother to express her second desire. "Our villagers are suffering for lack of medical facilities. There is nobody to take care of them when they are afflicted with fever, cough or cold. So, I want you to construct a small hospital." Vidyasagar built a hospital, too.

After some time, he asked his mother, what her third wish was. She said, "The villagers are suffering due to lack of drinking water. They are being afflicted with various diseases as they are drinking polluted water." Immediately, he got a few wells dug and provided drinking water to the villagers.

**Women Symbolize Sacrifice, Sri Sathya Sai Baba
May 6, 1999**

Three Wishes of Mother Easwaramma

Easwaramma had similar desires. Once, she told Me, "Swami, our Puttaparthi is a small village. Since there is no school in this village, the children are forced to walk long distances to attend schools in the neighboring villages. I know that You are the ocean of compassion. Please construct a small school in this village." I asked, where she wanted the school to be built. She said she had a piece of land behind her house. She wanted the school to be constructed there. As desired by her, I got the school constructed.

The next day, Easwaramma expressed her happiness over the inaugural function and said that she had one more desire. She wanted a hospital also to be built in the village. She said, "Swami, I don't want to put You to trouble. If You are troubled, the whole world will be in trouble, and if You are happy, the whole world will be happy. So, if it gives You happiness, please construct a small hospital." As per her wish, I got the hospital constructed.

Next day, she came up to Me and said, "Swami, it does not matter even if I die now. I have no more worries; you have fulfilled my desires and mitigated the suffering of the villagers to a great extent." I said, if you have any more desires, ask Me now.

She replied hesitantly that she had yet another small desire. "You know that the river Chithravathi is in spate during the rainy season. But in summer it dries to a trickle and people do not have drinking water. So, please see that some wells are dug in this village." I told her that I would not stop with these small wells and that I would provide drinking water to the entire Rayalaseema region. Easwaramma said, "I don't know what Rayalaseema is. I am satisfied if our village is provided with drinking water."

Easwaramma's sacred love for Swami

She never had put Me to trouble any time. Whenever she asked Me for something, she would come back and ask if she had given any trouble. To all the devotees who came, she used to entreat not to cause any inconvenience to Swami.

This was only the result of her sacred love for Me. That is the greatness of mother's love. That is why she could lead a life of fulfillment and peace.

This is to emphasize that each one of you should make your mother happy. If your mother is happy, Swami is happy.

**Women Symbolize Sacrifice, Sri Sathya Sai Baba
May 6, 1999**

Questions & Reflections

- 1) What noble qualities do women pass on to their children?
- 2) What makes a mother sacrifice everything for her children?

Self-Sacrifice Leads to Self-Realization

First of all, one should have faith in one's own Self. Develop self-confidence, which will lead to self-satisfaction. When you have self-satisfaction, you will be prepared for self-sacrifice. Only through self-sacrifice can one attain self-realization. Self-realization means to realize that you are everything. Self-confidence is the foundation, self-satisfaction is the wall, self-sacrifice is the roof and self-realization is life. No one can live in a building without a roof. A roof cannot be laid without walls and walls cannot be raised without foundation. So, self-confidence, self-satisfaction, and self-sacrifice are very essential for self-realization. Today man has lost Self-confidence. If one loses Self-confidence, one loses everything. Only through Self-confidence can one have the vision of the latent divine effulgence.

The Life Principles of Man, Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 34
[October 9, 2003](#)

The Atmic Principle (*Atma Thatthwa*) can be realized if only one could shed the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'. Today, many people make efforts to realize the Atmic Principle, but their efforts do not succeed because they are unable to get rid of the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'. In fact, they are the obstacles to Self-realization. First and foremost, one has to remove the feeling of 'I' (ego). Then realization will dawn on you. The religious symbol of Christianity (†) also denotes this cutting off of ego. The egocentric assertion of 'I' is the root cause for all sorrows, unrest, and difficulties. One has to realize this truth. The feeling of 'mine' has also to be shed. When a teacher develops a feeling "these are all my disciples," ego will raise its head there also. Hence, the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' has to be removed. Then only can the Atmic Principle be realized.

Develop Faith and Self Confidence to Gain Self Realization, Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 41, July 18, 2008

There are three steps to self-realisation, namely, self-confidence, self-satisfaction, and self-sacrifice. When these three go together, there will be fullness (purnathwa). That is Purnima (full-moon day), when the moon will be spotless, shedding cool light on the world. Only when there is perfect accord between thought, word, and deed does it become truth. Simply giving expression to one's thoughts and lecturing on principles without putting them into practice amounts to empty rhetoric. It amounts to falsehood. Such a person will not become a full individual.

Develop Faith and Self Confidence to Gain Self Realization, Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 41, July 18, 2008

Questions & Reflection

- 1) What is SELF? How do we sacrifice the Self?
- 2) Why do we need to sacrifice the Self?
- 3) How does Self-Sacrifice lead to Self-Realization?

'Self-Sacrifice' – Life Application Take Away Treasure

- Eliminate the six enemies of man: desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy
- Practice Ceiling on Desires. Do not waste money and utilize the savings for service of the needy
- Practice Ceiling on Desires. Do not waste money food and utilize the savings for service of the needy
- Practice ceiling on Desires and do not waste time, energy or money
- Practice JOY: Jesus first, Others next and Yourself last
- Serve your family members with love and detachment and keep your home and surroundings clean
- Engage in selfless service within the Sathya Sai International Organization
- Engage in selfless service with the Sathya Sai International Organization in the wider community
- Participate in the educational programs conducted by the Sathya Sai International Organization for Children
- Help Ever, Hurt Never
- Make friends with Sathya Sai Baba and take Him everywhere with you
- Surrender your likes and dislikes
- Practice giving and forgiving
- See all work as God's work
- Remember constantly that God is the doer, and you are the instrument
- Develop detachment
- "Surrender your ego to the Lord. Give no room for the ego. With love develop the spirit of sacrifice. Sacrifice alone can confer immortality."

Sathya Sai Baba
April 11, 1997