

# SAICAST



'Mirror, Mirror on the wall'

# 04



Dear reader,

It is quite amazing that this will be the final edition of SaiCast, a SWC pre-conference initiative that is part reading/reflection and part-podcast style conversation. We hope you enjoyed reading and listening to our previous episodes. In case you would like to read/listen to it again, please visit <https://sathyasai.us/swc2019/pre-conference-initiatives/saicast>.

**Our last topic of this podcast series focuses on the glory of womanhood.** And this was a tough exercise as our dear Lord has elaborated quite a bit on women and their unique strengths. We hope you will enjoy the final selection of excerpts as much as we have. Questions for reflection as an individual or group and real-life scenarios to facilitate practice of these teachings in our daily lives are also included. The next SaiCast is on Tuesday June 18, hosted by our dynamic duo - Anna Gurevich and Madhuri Manohar. They will be joined by a special guest to reflect further on this topic. In the meanwhile, happy reading and may the mirror reveal your inherent super powers!

Love,  
Team SaiCast



Excerpt from *When Women are Honored*. November 19, 1995

**Among human beings, it is a privilege to be born as a woman.**

All the greater sages, and saints, heroes and warriors were born to women "who made them great". Woman is the Goddess of Nature. Gayathri, which enshrines the essence of the Vedas (Scriptures), is a goddess, venerated as *Veda Mata* (the mother of the Vedas). It is obvious that feminine birth is estimable, adorable and sublime. The Veda also adores the feminine principle in various ways. The Veda declares that where women are honored and esteemed, there divinity is present with all its potency.

The word *Stthree* is made up of three, consonants, "Sa", "Tha" and "Ra". "Sa" signifies the Satwik nature



of women. It represents also the triple aspects of experiencing divinity *Saalokyam* (vision of the Divine), *Saameepyam* (proximity to the Divine) and *Saayujyam* (mergence). "Tha" signifies the Thamasik quality. But this Thamasik quality is not indolence and slothfulness. It includes qualities like humility, kindness and modesty. This means that women begin with qualities like meekness and modesty so that they may serve the family and society in the right spirit. "Ra" represents the Rajoguna. This does not mean pugnacity and querulousness. This quality signifies the preparedness of women, where

necessary, even to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their honor and the honor of their family.

Women who have wielded power in Bharath or other countries have proved themselves to be exceptionally able and successful. There have been many kings in Britain - but no one ruled the country so well as Queen Victoria, her rule was marked by righteousness, prosperity and efficiency. There was no discontent during her reign. In more recent times, Indira Gandhi ran the Government [India] with courage and consummate skill. She was prepared for any sacrifice in the interests of the country. Valmiki (a renowned poet) extolled the sweetness of womanhood. What is the cause of, this sweetness? The spirit of sacrifice is the cause, according to Valmiki.

A mother is ready to sacrifice everything even her life, for the sake of her child. Such a spirit is to be found only among women. That woman is described as *Thyaagamuurthi*, the embodiment of sacrifice.

In this world, all things are transient. Only righteousness and good name endure. How is one to acquire a good name? By revering the mother. Never go against the wishes of the mother. The son who causes pain to the mother' can never' be happy. Hence, earn the blessing of the mother.

Now, for a few words of advice to women. It is found that women are given to excessive talking. From today you have to take a pledge not to indulge in talking. Develop pure thoughts wherever you may be. As today is a sacred day dedicated to women, they should change themselves and help to change the men and the children. They should develop the qualities of sympathy, compassion; love and sacrifice. Study the lives of our great women, who were models of patience, fortitude, compassion and sacrifice. I desire that you should take up the reins of leadership and bring peace and prosperity to the nation by leading ideal lives.



## Excerpt from *The Noblest Quality of Womanhood is Compassion, Summer Showers 1978 (Discourse#22)*

The makeup of a woman is such that she will give protection in spite of many faults. She can also be compared to an educational institution where she will teach patiently like a good teacher, even if the recipient is not willing to learn. She may also be described as a happy home where she is arranging everything without thinking of any discomfort for herself. We can also think of a woman as a person of sufficient spiritual strength by which she can make Aja, Hara, Hari or God himself play like a child before her. She can also be described as one full of sacrifice and compassion.

## Excerpt from *Glory of Bharath's women, Ladies Day, 19 November 1996*

Women must realize the enormous power of the mind for good or evil and see that its power is used only for doing good. The mind can make a person a demon or Divine. The mind is under the control of the intellect. The intellect is governed by the *Atma*. Self-realization will bring about control over everything.

If the mothers take care of the homes on right lines, they will be protecting the nation. Mothers should foster in the children love for truth and righteousness and tell them stories about the lives of great men and women. Only the women of the nation can revive and restore to its glory the ancient culture of our land.

Have full faith in God as your Indweller. Develop pure sublime love. That alone will be lasting. All other qualities come and go. Learn to live in love. Women are the fountain-source of love. *Bhakthi* (devotion) is considered a feminine quality while *Jnaana* (wisdom) is considered masculine. Let me not be misunderstood if I say that for the presence of all the male devotees present here, women alone are responsible. It is they who by their sacred feelings brought their menfolk here. Their work is sacred in every respect. They seek not only to sanctify their lives but the lives of all others in the family.

Wherever women are honored, there is prosperity and happiness. Women should never be slighted or treated with disrespect. A home in which the housewife sheds tears will be bereft of all prosperity. This is the ancient conception of the role of women in the home.



## Excerpt from *Glory of Womanhood- April 19, 1998*

The scriptures have ascribed seven virtues to women as a class: *Sathya* (truth), *Prema* (love), *Dharma* (righteousness), *Santhi* (peace), *Sahana* (tolerance), *Ananda* (bliss), *Svanubhuti* (spirituality). Women can control the whole world by themselves by virtue of their inherent qualities of love and spirit of sacrifice (*prema bhava* and *thyaga bhava*).

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. Women have hidden power immanent in them. You have to encourage them to exhibit their talents.



## Excerpt from *Heroic Mothers and Noble Sons- May 6, 1996*

### *Role of the Mother*

The Bhagavath Geetha lists seven attributes to the feminine principle Fame, Wealth, Speech, Wisdom, Intelligence, Fortitude and Determination. The Mother principle, which embodies these seven potencies, is highly sacred. Wherever you turn, you will see manifestations of the feminine principle in Nature.

The mother fosters the child in the womb and goes through all travails to protect the child. There is no greater love in the world than maternal love. Hence the ancients accorded the highest honor to the mother and declared: "*Maathru dhevo bhava*" (Esteem the Mother as Divine) and. "*Pithru dhevo bhava*" (Esteem the father as Divine). For every person the first preceptor is the mother. It is from the mother that a child learns its first words of speech, the first steps in movement and many other primary lessons in behavior. Hence, the mother stands out as the reflected image of *Prakrithi* (Nature).

It is in her role as mother that there is the highest expression of a woman's strength. Children should recognize the supremacy of maternal love, which is equal to Divine Love. Revere and love the mother. That is the meaning of Mother's Day. The parents are living symbols of God. Children must make them happy.



### *Women's Inner Strength*

We have innumerable examples of the strength displayed by women in the world. As against three potencies attributed to men, women are said to have seven potencies (according to the Gita). Can you call as weak Savitri, who made the Lord of Death restore to life her dead husband? Can Anasuya, who transformed the Divine Trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva into three babies and played with them, be called an *abala* (weak woman)? Sumathi was a great lady who stopped the sun from rising, because her husband was predestined to die the next morning. Could she

be termed as *abala* (weak)? No. Was Draupadi, who bore with fortitude for 14 years all the ordeals her husbands' went through, a weak woman? Can Seetha, who shared with Rama all hardships of life in the forest and achieved ultimate victory, be called weak? Can Gargi, who could carry on the debate with the Raja yogi Janaka is a dauntless spirit, be called a weak woman?

Though physically women may appear weak, in reality they are full of strength. As the embodiment of the three *gunas* ("qualities of nature": *sathvik, rajasic, thamasic*), women are endowed with exceptional strength. Even in the spiritual field women display their boundless capacity.

## Excerpt from *Masculine and Feminine Natures, Dharma Vahini*

The Feminine Principle is spoken of as the illusion imposed upon Himself by the Lord, as the energy with which He equipped Himself out of His own will. This is *maya*, the feminine form. This is why woman is considered the embodiment of the highest energy (*Parasakthi Swarupa*).

Women, who are the repositories of the embodiment of energy (*sakthi swarupa*). How full of fortitude, patience, and love is their nature! Their self-control is seldom equaled by men. They are the exemplars and leaders for men to tread the spiritual path. Pure selfless love is inborn in women.



Women who are full of knowledge, who are cultured, who are bound by love, and who are keen on discriminating whether their words and deeds are in conformity with dharma - such women are like the goddess Lakshmi, bringing joy and good fortune to the home. Chastity is the ideal for womankind. By the strength derived from that virtue, they can achieve anything. Chastity is the crown jewel of women. That is the virtue for which she has to be most extolled. Its beneficent consequences defy description. It is the very breath of her life.

Modesty is essential for woman; it is her priceless jewel. It is against dharma for a woman to overstep the limits of modesty; crossing the limits brings about many calamities. Without modesty, woman is devoid of beauty and culture. Humility, purity of thought and manners, meekness, surrender to high ideals, sensitivity, sweetness of temper, the particular blend of all these qualities is modesty. It is the most invaluable of all jewels for women. The absence of modesty makes life, for a woman, however rich in other accomplishments, a waste and a vacuum. Modesty lifts her to the heights of sublime holiness. The modest woman wields authority in the home and outside, in the community as well as in the world.



Women have natural aptitude for faith and spiritual endeavor. Women with devotion, faith, and meekness can lead men on the Godward path and the practice of holy virtues. She is truly the representative of divine energy (*sakthi*). Woman should strive to achieve the knowledge of the soul and live every moment in the consciousness of her being only the *Atma*; she must evince always a desire to become one with the divine consciousness.

The home where the woman is such and where the husband and wife are leading their lives in the shade of great ideals, where together they sing the glory of the

name of the Lord and spend themselves in good deeds, where truth, peace, and love reign, where regular reading of holy books is done, where the senses are under control, and where there is equal treatment for all creation prompted by the knowledge of the basic unity of all creation - such a home is certainly Heaven on Earth.

## Excerpt from *Women are the Embodiments of Nobility and Virtue* – August 11, 2000

Prakriti symbolizes feminine aspect of God. Prakriti and Purusha (male aspect of God) are inseparable. As the women are the embodiments of Lakshmi (goddess of wealth), the world will attain prosperity only when they are respected. Therefore, men must treat women with respect, so that they will be respected in turn. You can see it yourself, where there are women of character, there you find all prosperity.

The women of nobility and character are least perturbed by the criticism of the evil-minded people. They do not give scope for any doubts. Their pure heart is their witness and their sacred feelings are their dharma. They follow their conscience and adhere to truth and righteousness. This is the teaching of the culture of Bharat: *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak the truth and follow righteousness). So, first of all fill your heart with love. Then all that you see, hear, say and do will be suffused with love. *Sarvam Prema Mayam Jagat* (the whole world is permeated with love). So, you will find love everywhere. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as is the feeling, so is the result).

All the spiritual practices will yield good results only when they are performed with purity of heart and steady mind. If you have the grace of God, there is nothing that you cannot accomplish in this world.



## SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Swami encourages us to "study the lives of our great women, who were models of patience, fortitude, compassion, and sacrifice." Name role models in your life that exhibit one or all of these qualities. What are ways in which you/we can be more like that role model?
- 2) Swami reminds us that the enormous power of our minds should be used for only doing good. We are amidst negative energy every day (in the form of people we interact with, accidents we avoid, etc). What are ways in which we can channel the power of our minds to doing only good even amidst all the negative energy around us?
- 3) According to Swami, women have immanent power hidden in them. What immanent powers does Swami say women have? What are immanent powers that you see within yourself and other women you interact with?
- 4) "All the spiritual practices will yield good results only when they are performed with purity of heart and steady mind. If you have the grace of God, there is nothing that you cannot accomplish in this world." When we engage in any type of spiritual practice, Swami has emphasized that quality is more important than quantity- i.e. doing it with "purity of heart and steady mind" is of utmost importance regardless of how much you do. In our "busy lives," what are ways in which we can make spiritual practice an integral part of our daily lives? Please share examples from your life.

## IN REAL LIFE

1. In your company you are in a leadership role and you are perceived as a soft-spoken and good person. Because of this, your colleagues don't take you seriously and it always takes double the effort for you to get your point to be heard. This frustrates you.
  - How would you ensure that your frustration does not alter your good nature?
  - Is there a way to use assertive speech & positive thoughts to handle this situation?
2. You are a Sai devotee but your husband does not believe in spirituality or religion. He believes that family and friends should be your only focus and not any spiritual group. You find that your spiritual battery gets drained due to excessive socializing and you feel that you are forced to be in parties in order to fulfill your duty as a wife.
  - Swami says "The home where the woman is such and where the husband and wife are leading their lives in the shade of great ideals, where together they sing the glory of the name of the Lord and spend themselves in good deeds...". How can we ensure that we bring in harmony at home when you are in such a situation?
  - How can one use their inner strength to handle this situation?
  - Is there a way to politely refuse this excessive partying without compromising on your dharma as a wife?
3. Your daughter is in college and she tries to follow Swami's advice- "It is found that women are given to excessive talking. From today you have to take a pledge not to indulge in talking. Develop pure thoughts wherever you may be; "and refrains from excessive talking. Because of this, she is not able to fit into any friend group and finds herself alone most of the time. The only way to have few friends is if she compromises on Swami's teaching and indulges in unproductive and social conversations.
  - In this scenario, as a mother you feel very sad to see that your daughter is miserable without friends and at the same time you do not want her to compromise on her values. What would be your advice to your daughter?
  - If you are the daughter, how would you use your inner voice guide you through this?

