



Harmonious Homes

———— Human Values Parenting ————

Guide 4: May 2022

A Mother's Role

Part 2 of 2



Sri Sathya Sai Educare, SSSGC-USA

Module 4, Part 2

In Part 1, we discussed a mother's role as the first embodiment of the Divine, and the first teacher and role model for her child. In Part 2, we'll discuss Swami's teachings on the importance of mother as the primary care-giver, and as the center of the home and family and the foundation of society.

Mother - the primary care-giver

Given the importance of the mother as the earliest role model and best example for her child, Swami is very emphatic that, as far as possible, this role should not be delegated to a hired substitute. The child will attach himself or herself to the one who cares for him or her, and learn their habits by observation and through interaction with the care-giver.

"The mother herself should look after the children during the early years; if the child is handed over to servants and ayahs, it will learn their habits of living and speech and will weep only when they die, not when the mother dies! For, the child starts loving the ayah more than the mother, who has shoved them on to another as a nuisance and a bother! The mother must herself prepare food for the home; for, food that is prepared with love and served with a smile is much more sustaining and strengthening than food cooked by a hired woman and served by a disgruntled refractory kitchen boy!"

- Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 9-13, 1969

Swami emphasizes the importance of mothers being the primary care-givers of their own children, even when and especially if the mother is highly educated and has a career of her own. A mother may utilize her education and knowledge in many ways for the benefit of her children, but giving her time and attention to caring for her child, especially when the child is very young, is paramount.

"Again, I will insist that the educated woman must herself run the home, and shoulder all the burden of nursing and nourishing the members of the family. The Anandha that can be derived by unselfish scattering of Love is a rare elevating experience. It is a very valuable Sadhana."

- Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 11, Ch. 28, 1971

“Today, women, because they are educated, compete with men to take up jobs. There is nothing wrong in going for a job. However, they must take care of their home needs before taking up a job. When wife and husband go to offices, who will look after their children at home? If the mother is not at home to guide them properly, the children go astray. If both parents go out for jobs, they may be able to satisfy their desire for money, but there is every possibility of their children getting spoiled because there will be nobody at home to discipline them. Whatever moral values you have learnt, you have to teach your children. Whatever you have studied will have value only when you care for your children's progress.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 35, Ch. 19, 2002

Given the importance of the mother as the earliest role model and best example for her child, Swami is very emphatic that, as far as possible, this role should not be delegated to a hired substitute. The child will attach himself or herself to the one who cares for him or her, and learn their habits by observation and through interaction with the care-giver.



“But, in the modern world, it is necessary for the women to share the burden of maintaining the family with their husbands, so the women should also pursue studies as much as possible and take up suitable jobs to share the burden of the family. It would smack of selfishness if the males prevent them from going to work for which they have acquired the requisite qualifications.....Nowhere in any sacred text is it stated that women should only cook and not do work like men. As a matter of fact, even man has to learn cooking and house-keeping to help his wife in times of need.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 31, Ch. 13, 1998

Discussion Questions

1. Does Swami's advice for working mothers differ from your current approach and understanding? If so, how?
2. If you have chosen to pause your career in order to stay home and look after your children, how has this decision impacted your children? Your family? You?
3. With Swami's teachings in mind, how can a mother in today's world achieve balance between home, her children and her career?
4. How can the mother and father work together to nurture their children?

Mother - the center of the home

A mother's teaching and example must be bolstered by the atmosphere and environment she fosters at home.



"The home is the abode of Dharma, which protects and safeguards the country. The home is the beacon which illumines the world and sustains it. Women should realise that, irrespective of their education or position, their foremost obligation is to protect the home. For lakhs of students and children who go to school, the mother is the first teacher. From the moment of birth, for every one the mother is the preceptor. If such a teacher leaves her home to teach other children, who will teach her children? For Bharatheeya women, the first duty is to reform the home and run it along ideal lines. The home and the family is the basic social institution everywhere in the world. When the home improves, the whole world will be better."

- Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29-50, 1996

The importance of a harmonious home environment for the optimal development of children and the role of the mother and father in establishing and maintaining a positive, loving home will be further discussed in the next module.

Mother - the Foundation of the Family and Society

Through the proper upbringing of children, emphasis on the blossoming of their innate human values and the development of excellent character, a good mother is the very foundation of a loving family and by extension, a productive, compassionate society.



“The mother is the pillar of the home, of society, of the nation, and so of humanity itself. Mothers should know the secret of mental peace, of inner silence, of spiritual courage, of contentment, which is the greatest wealth, and of spiritual discipline, which gives lasting joy.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 1, Ch. 16, 1958

“Motherhood is the most precious gift of God. Mothers are the makers of a nation's fortune or misfortune. They should teach two lessons, fear of sin and fondness for virtue. Both these are based on faith in God, being the inner motivator of all. If you want to know how advanced a nation is, study the mothers; are they free from fear and anxiety, are they full of Love towards all, are they trained in fortitude and virtue? If you like to imbibe the glory of a culture, watch the mothers, rocking the cradles, feeding, fostering, teaching and fondling the babies.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 8, Ch. 32 , 1996

“Good mothers are more essential than good wives. A good wife is of value only to her husband. A good mother is a national asset.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 16, Ch. 24 , 1983

Discussion Questions

1. Has the material in this module changed your understanding of the role of a mother? If so, how?
2. What teachings can you utilize to enhance your current practice as a mother?



Additional Resources:



[Why is the Mother considered equal to God?](#)



[Why are Women nobler than Men?](#)

References of pictures and Illustrations

- freepik.com
- "Home" drawing by Pavithra Krishnan