



SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Avatar

DECLARATION DAY 2021



STUDY GUIDE
FAITH AND SURRENDER

Offered with love and gratitude at the lotus feet of
Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
on the occasion of Avatar Declaration Day 2021

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*I ask only that you turn to Me when your mind drags you into grief or
pride or envy. Bring Me the depths of your mind, no matter how
grotesque, how cruelly ravaged doubts, or disappointments. I know how
to treat them. I will not reject you, I am your mother.*

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 12/Ch. 45

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FAITH AND SURRENDER

Faith and Surrender.....2
What is Surrender?3
Attitude of Surrender3
Bad Associations Cause Doubts4
Develop Faith in God5
Hold On to Your Faith Firmly.....5
Strong Faith is Enough to Bring God to the Devotee6
How to Serve?.....7
Service Through Right Action7
Action and Non-Action.....8
Overcome Delusion.....8
Dedicating Action.....9

FAITH AND SURRENDER

Complete faith is most essential if you want to experience Divinity. There should not be even an iota of doubt. One living without faith in the Divine is like a lifeless corpse. I would relate a story to illustrate the power of faith. A young boy used to go from his village to school which was in a nearby town. He had to cross a forest en route to the town. Generally, he used to return home well before sunset. One day, it so happened that he had to leave the school late in the evening and darkness had already set in. The boy was afraid to walk through the forest in darkness and told his mother that he was afraid to walk in the night without company. His mother said: "Why are you afraid? Whenever you are in need of company, shout aloud calling your brother. He will help you." The boy asked her, "Who is my brother?" The mother replied: "He is none other than Lord Krishna. God is mother, father, teacher, brother, relative, friend and all. Whenever you are in trouble

don't hesitate to call on him for help." The boy had full faith in his mother's words. Another day the boy was returning home from school late at night in the darkness. He shouted: "Anna Krishna" (Brother Krishna). After a few moments Krishna appeared before the boy in the form of a lad and told him, "Why do you fear when I am here? I shall escort you home." He accompanied the boy to the village outskirts and disappeared. The boy told his mother how the brother helped him true to her words. The mother said: "He helps not only you, but everyone who seeks his help." From that time onwards, the boy used to call the brother whenever he needed his help and Krishna never failed to respond. Gradually he picked up courage. When you have full faith, God will surely help you and make you fearless. People who have faith in God will never be let down. But those who have no faith suffer.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 27 (1994)

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Questions

1. In the depth of problems sometimes we forget to call upon God. Yet, here is an assurance that He will always be there to guide us. How can we remember that God is always there for us?
2. How to strengthen our faith day by day?

WHAT IS SURRENDER?

When we try to understand the meaning of the word *saranagathi* or surrender, you will note that, in the beginning, Arjuna started asking questions of Lord Krishna, thinking that he is using his own intelligence, his own capacity of enquiry and his own ability of distinguishing right from wrong. He is thinking that he is using his own strength. Because he relied heavily upon his own powers and thought that his own powers were capable of excelling and exceeding God's powers, he landed himself into a difficulty and was not in a position to decide what he should do and what he should not do. As soon as Arjuna found it not possible to go ahead or even to go back; in fact, when all his actions came to a stop, then he turned to Lord Krishna and said, "I will take your orders, I am not in a position to decide what I should do. I am ready to obey you and carry out whatever you want me to do and I will do so with my full heart." Thus he surrendered his thought, word, action, and all, entirely to God. Such surrender is the lesson of the Bhagavad Gita.

Summer Showers 1972

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Questions

1. How can we 'gladly' accept everything that comes our way (in the true spirit of surrender)?
2. How does one nurture and preserve faith in God?

ATTITUDE OF SURRENDER

Lakshmana is a superb example of the attitude of surrender. When Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana went to the forest and reached Chitrakoot, Rama told Lakshmana, "I am feeling tired and Sita is also tired. It is better we stay here for some time. So, I would like you to put up a cottage in which we can stay for a longer duration, if necessary for the whole period of 10 years. You can put up the cottage in any place of your choice." Hearing these words, Lakshmana felt hurt and bent down his head with grief. Noting this, Sita asked Lakshmana, "Why are you perturbed, Lakshmana? Your brother did not speak anything harsh. Why do you feel so?" Lakshmana said, "Have I ever had any choice of my own? I left my mother; wife, and all comforts of life and accompanied you both to serve. I have surrendered myself to Rama. Where is the question of my choice? The command of Rama is what I want to carry out. While so, how can I withstand the impact of Rama asking me to put up the cottage at a place of my choice?" Rama realized the sacred feelings of Lakshmana and the true attitude of his surrender and pointed out the site himself.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 31 (1998)

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Questions

1. How can we develop our faith to the extent where we implicitly obey the Lord's every wish?
2. In our daily life what steps must we take to ensure that in every decision we take, we seek His blessings and approval before executing our tasks?

BAD ASSOCIATIONS CAUSE DOUBTS

When one surrenders, according to the circumstances, the devotee becomes subject to some doubts and mental agitations. For instance, in the Ramayana, when Rama and Lakshmana were going in search of Sita, suddenly Lakshmana felt tired and told Rama that he was fed up with the search for Sita and would like to go back to Ayodhya to have a more comfortable time. Rama smiled and said, "Let us proceed. I shall explain everything later." How did Lakshmana, who previously had declared that Rama was everything to him and that he would not live without Rama even for a moment, suddenly develop this attitude? How did this concern for bodily comfort arise?

After they had walked some distance, they sat under a tree. That moment Lakshmana felt the pangs of repentance. He realized

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Questions

1. To be surrounded by good people is really the Grace of God. How do we ensure that we always keep good company?
2. How can we lead an exemplary life and become good company to others?

his mistake, clasped Rama's feet and said' "Brother! Forgive me for what I had said. I cannot understand how this bad thought came to my mind. What is the reason?" Rama then replied' "Lakshmana! The region through which we passed recently was the haunt of Shuurpanakha who used to rest under the tree there. That place was surcharged with all her evil qualities. Those vibrations aroused in you the bad thoughts. The moment you came out of the place, your inherent good nature asserted itself." The lesson of this incident is that people will have to be careful about their association with certain places or persons. Eschew bad company. Be away from places where evil qualities are rampant. The vibrations from a place affect persons who frequent them.

[Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 28 \(1995\)](#)

DEVELOP FAITH IN GOD

Faith is the first and foremost quality that man inherits by birth. He develops faith in his mother in the first instance. His mother may scold or beat him, yet his faith in his mother remains firm. That is the greatness of the love of a mother. Man should develop as much faith in God as he has for his mother. But unfortunately, he lacks such firm faith in God.

Today, man has faith in everything in the objective world. For example, when a news item appears in the newspaper that so and so died in Russia under such and such circumstances, we believe that news without an iota of doubt. How did we believe that news? Who gave this news to us? It is only through the newspaper. We are able to believe the newspapers, but we are unable to believe an experience born out of eternal truth and its practice in daily life. In order to develop firm faith in the eternal truth, we have to cultivate noble qualities. This is our foremost duty. By doing so, our faith in God also increases. Unfortunately, today we are setting aside our faith in God and believing in what others say. We thereby are entering the wrong path. We have to develop self-confidence first. Only then can we develop faith in every aspect of God's creation.

[Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 37 \(2004\)](#)

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Questions

1. What steps must we take to cultivate noble qualities?
2. How can we develop absolute faith and trust in God's words?

HOLD ON TO YOUR FAITH FIRMLY

Only when there is faith can you achieve anything in life. Even now, there are several people who have progressed in life with firm faith in Jesus. Some people develop faith when their desires are fulfilled. If their desires are not fulfilled, they lose faith. This type of attitude is not good. Keep your faith firm, irrespective of whether your desires are fulfilled. Preserve your faith carefully. Faith can work wonders. It can make a blind person see; a dumb speak. Do not at all doubt the power of faith. Some incidents happening in this world may shake your faith in God. But, if you hold on to your faith firmly you can boldly face any situation.

[Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 40 \(2007\)](#)

One must have such strong faith in God. This is not something one can give or take. Some people pray, "Swami, give me deep faith." But this is not a give and take business. You yourself have to develop faith. If you are hungry, you have to eat food to satiate your hunger. It is you who has to take medicine to cure your illness. Similarly, you have to develop your faith with love for God

[Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29 \(1996\)](#)

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Question

- How can we develop unwavering faith in God in spite of challenges and difficulties?

STRONG FAITH IS ENOUGH TO BRING GOD TO THE DEVOTEE

Egotism is the mightiest enemy that has to be overpowered and destroyed. When Rama was proceeding from one hermitage to another in the forest, the *rishis* (sages) who were expecting Him to visit them made elaborate preparations to receive Him; they prepared lists of grievances to be presented to Him, and hoped to win His Grace by competitive pomp and adulation, by exhibition of superior asceticism! The old woman, Shabari, who was the attendant of the sage Mathanga, was told by her dying master that Rama will be passing that way and so, she longed in sincere anguish that she must be spared until she could wash the Lotus Feet of Rama with her tears. The sages sneered at her audacity and laughed at her foolish hope. Rama visited the hermitage of the egotistic ascetics on

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Questions

1. What an amazing faith Shabari had in her Master! How can we develop such strong faith that we yearn to follow all His teachings and instructions?
2. How can we develop such inspiration?

his way; they read out the verses of welcome they had composed; they presented a petition in which they had listed the atrocities committed by the *Rakshasas* (demons); they complained that the river water which was their only source of supply was contaminated and had become undrinkable. Rama told them in His reply that the water will be rendered pure and potable as soon as they stop reviling Sabari and start appreciating her simple, sincere yearning for God. Shabari had strong and steady faith; that was enough to bring Rama to her lowly hut. Austerity, scholarship, power, authority, experience, riches - these are handicaps that obstruct the acquisition of that simple, sincere Faith that God will accept.

[Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 8 \(1968\)](#)

HOW TO SERVE?

If you have an eye on the fruits of your actions, you are liable to be affected by worry, anxiety, and restlessness. The question may arise: if the fruits have to be given up, how can one manage to live? But why this weakness of heart, this nervousness? He who has assured you, saying, “I will care for your well-being (*Yoga-kshemam vahamyaham*)”, will certainly look after that. He will give the means and the wherewithal. All you must consider is: which is more important, a happy life or liberation from the circle of life and death?

[Gita Vahini, Chapter 5](#)

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Questions

1. How can we give up fruits of our actions when most of the time the actions are performed for the fruits?
2. Explain “I will care for your well-being”....narrate experiences where Swami has looked after especially when you are working on advancing His mission.

SERVICE THROUGH RIGHT ACTION

“When the dharma that has been laid down declines, I incarnate in a human form, from the state of formlessness, in order to revive it and protect it and save the good from fear,” said Krishna. Now, this statement might cause some misgiving. You may ask, will not common people then conclude that dharma is something liable to decline and decay? Will they not condemn dharma as neither eternal nor truth? Well. You will grasp the importance of the task of protecting dharma only when you consider its origin and purpose. God created this world of change on His own initiative, and He ordained various codes for its upkeep and smooth running. There were rules of correct conduct for every being. These form the dharma.

[Gita Vahini, Chapter 7](#)

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Questions

1. Explain the significance of this concept in relation to the practice of one’s Dharma.
2. “You will grasp the importance of the task of protecting dharma only when you consider its origin and purpose.” Please explain.

ACTION AND NON-ACTION

Dhananjaya! People are entitled to be called pundits only if they have seen clearly the distinction between action (*karma*) and non-action. If they have only stuffed in their head what they read in books, they are not pundits. The pundit must have an intellect that grants the vision of the truth. When that vision is gained, all action becomes ineffective and harmless. The fire of wisdom has the power to consume and burn karma. Some people say that a wise person (*jnani*) must perforce suffer the consequences of action in previous births (*prarabdha-karma*); they cannot be escaped. This conclusion is drawn by other people; it is not the experience of the wise person. The wise person might appear to others to be reaping the fruit of past actions, but the wise person is unaffected.

[Gita Vahini, Chapter 10](#)

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Questions

1. How can we translate what we know from the scriptures to daily life?
2. Fire of wisdom has the power to consume and burn karma – explain this statement.

OVERCOME DELUSION

To believe that the Universal that is you is limited and subject to all these un-Atmic characteristics, that is delusion. But remember, delusion dares not approach anyone who has taken refuge in Me. For those who fix their attention on delusion, it operates as a vast oceanic obstacle. But for those who fix their attention on God, delusion will present itself as Madhava (God)! The hurdle of delusion can be crossed by developing either the attitude of oneness with the infinite God or the attitude of complete surrender to the Lord. The first is called the yoga of wisdom; the second, of devotion.

[Gita Vahini, Chapter 13](#)

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Questions

1. It appears that our greatest challenge is to overcome delusion. Explain, with practical examples, what is meant by delusion.
2. How can we remember God all the time and completely surrender to Him?

DEDICATING ACTION

“Do everything in the dedicatory spirit as a tribute to God, for only such acts reach Me”. This raised some doubts in Arjuna’s mind. He asked, “Krishna! You say that you do not make any distinction, that you have neither friend nor foe. Why then are some happy and others unhappy, some strong in body and mind and others weak and sickly, some poor and others rich? What is the reason behind all this? When you yourself are above any distinctions of such type, why can’t you keep all in the same condition? Observing facts as they are, it is difficult to believe that you look upon all without any partiality.” Krishna laughed at this “doubt” that worried Arjuna! “I give expression only to truth. I do not ‘adjust’ My speech to your approval or disapproval; I am not elated when you approve or depressed when you disapprove. I am the same in all. But all are not the same in Me.

[Gita Vahini, Chapter 20](#)

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Question

- How can we be Sincere, Authentic and have the highest Integrity (SAI) at all times?

People engage themselves, by and large, in activities prompted only by the desire to benefit from the results. They withdraw from acts that bring no benefit. But the Gita condemns both attitudes. For whether consequences follow or not, one cannot escape the obligation to be active. People cannot completely give up activity. How then can they avoid being caught up in the mesh of consequences? The Gita teaches giving up all attachment to the fruit of action as the greatest spiritual discipline designed for this purpose. Whether desired or discarded, hoped for or not, every act ends in some consequence, if not immediately, at least after some time. It is inevitable. The consequence may be good or evil, but if the act is dedicated to the Lord, neither will affect the doer. By that sacrament of dedication, the deed is transmuted into a higher order and made divine, holy, sacred. On the other hand, acts performed under the inspiration of the ego will be fraught with bondage.

[Gita Vahini, Chapter 27](#)

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Questions

1. Explain this concept with regard to the manner in which one should work.
2. “By that sacrament of dedication, the deed is transmuted into a higher order and made divine, holy, sacred”. How do we make this ideal a living reality?



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