

14. Limbs of the Divine Body

YOU are called Sevaks (Servant), because you are engaged in *Seva* (Service). What exactly is *Seva*? Is it the way in which *Bhakthi* (devotion) manifests itself, a consequence of devotion? Or is it the cause of *Bhakthi*, one of the methods by which *Bhakthi* is expressed and developed? It is neither. It is not the *sine qua non* of *Bhakthi*, nor is it the result. It is the very essence of *Bhakthi*, the very breath of a *Bhaktha* (devotee), his very nature. It springs from the actual experience of the *Bhaktha*---an experience that convinces him that all beings are God's children, that all bodies are altars where God is installed, that all places are His Residences.

Consider *Seva* as the best Saadhana (spiritual discipline). This is a great chance that you have secured. Your work among these large gatherings is more beneficial for your spiritual development than days of *Japam* or *Dhyaanam*. But do not believe that you can by means of *Seva* re-form or re-shape the world. You may or you may not. That does not matter. The real value of *Seva*, its most visible result, is that it reforms you, reshapes you. Do *Seva* as a *Saadhana*; then you will be humble and happy. Do not strut about that you are improving others; improve yourself. Make *Seva* an extension of your *Japam* and *Dhyaanam*---*Japam* and *Dhyaanam* put into practice, so to say. How can any one contemplate on a God who loves the poor and the grief-stricken and yet be cold when the poor and the stricken are around him?

Serving all types of people is fine education

I do not attach any value to the *Japam* within closed doors; the turning of rosaries by hands that know no help. I do not appreciate the *dhyaanam* that makes you deaf to the agony of pain. *Dhyaanam* should not harden the heart; it should soften it like butter, which melts at the slightest contact with heat. *Seva* is a great opportunity to see the God indwelling in all. Raama could have rescued Seetha unaided; but He chose to grant the *seva* to the *vaanara* (monkey) hordes, for they were the gods who had come to claim that chance.

When you stand forth as a *sevak*---you will have experienced this these days---you meet all types of people; some who are very cooperative, some who are cantankerous, some who obstruct, some who argue, some who threaten, some who question your motive or authority. Contact with them is a fine bit of education. They toughen your character and train you to welcome with equal joy both praise and blame. Let me ask you, what is the one thing that you crave for most? Grace, is it not? *Anugraha* (favour), is it not? So long as your words and deeds are in conformity with *Sathya and Dharma*, so long as your words and deeds are sweetened by *Prema* and lightened by *Shaanthi*, you need have no worry; you have the Grace in ample measure.

Helping people to get *dharshan* (audience), the *dharshan* they seek so ardently, is a laudable *seva*. You are volunteers here to help people crowding in large numbers to get *dharshan* not to prevent them from it. You have to see that they do not mill around, or rush forward or push the older and weaker persons. See that they sit in silent rows so that they can get full *dharshan* when I come. You have to help the infirm, the aged and the sick to enter unharmed and to take their seats.

Do not rush yourself for *dharshan*, as I have seen some of you do, giving up the assignment allotted to you. Do not lose your temper; be sweet and soft, whatever the provocation. Have a smile ever playing on your face. Do not come between Me and those anxious to have my *dharshan*. They may in their resentment push you roughly aside; you have then no right to retaliate. You should reply with a smile, an apology, a polite explanation accompanied, with a

Namasthe and folded hands.

Milestones that mark the road to Sai

I know that those of you who are posted for duty at the outer gates or in the garden, at the *Bhajana Mantap* (devotional singing hall) or the Shoe Counter, feel jealous of those who are in the inner apartments of the bungalow. Some of you go out on errands into the City and are absent from *Bhajana*, etc. I must tell you this. I have no special brand of Grace for those who are at My door, nor do I neglect the man at the gate. In fact, I have no geographical "far" and "near"; My "far" and "near" are not calculated by physical nearness. You may be My side, yet, far; you may be far, far away, yet, very near and dear. However far you are, if you but stick to *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shaanthi* and *Prema*, you are close to Me and I am close to you. Those are the milestones that mark the road to Me.

When your eyes see a ripe mango fruit on the tree, the tongue recollects the taste, the mind craves for it, the back stoops, the shoulders bend, the hand searches for a stone, the fingers clasp it, the arm throws it; and when the fruit falls, the hand picks it, the teeth bite into it, the throat lets it down into the stomach; there and thereafter it is converted into sustenance as a reward for the effort of all and sent as strength to eye and shoulder, hand and fingers, teeth and tongue. Similarly, when you all cooperate to give Me joy, the reward of Grace will be granted to all.

Every Sai Sevak is a limb of the Sai Body

You are all My Limbs, nourished by Me. You constitute the Sai Body. Sai will send you sustenance, wherever you are, whatever your function, provided you give Sai the things Sai considers sweet and desirable, like virtue, faith, discipline and humility. Be happy that you are a limb of the Sai Body. Do not complain that you are the foot and so have to tread the hard ground. Do not be proud that you are the head and so, up and above. It is the same blood-stream, the stream of *Prema* that circulates in both; the function of each is as valuable as the function of every other limb. The function of each limb is also unique, remember; so do not give room to despondency. Your part is something special, which only you can play. You cannot walk on your head; you cannot think with your feet. Whatever your position, win Grace by your virtue, that is the main gain.

There is no wealth more satisfying than contentment. Eat your fill, you cannot eat more. If you are forced to eat more, it becomes a torture. There is a limit which you cannot overstep without injury to yourself. Find out your measure, your limits, your bounds, and act, do not develop jealousy towards others, whose measures are more, who have less limitations, less narrow bounds. Hold firm the step which you have reached in *Saadhana*; then transfer attention to the next. Have a clear vision of the goal. March on.

Seva of Sai and *Seva of Sai Bhakthas* (devotees) is the same. When you serve the *Sai Bhakthas*, because they are *Sai Bhakthas*, you see the Sai in them, you seek to please the Sai in them, you revere the Sai in them. It is like serving a temple where Sai is installed, a room where a picture of Sai is adored. Throughout this period of *Seva*, you think only of Sai; so this training helps you to purify your impulses, defy your thoughts, canalise your devotion and expand your Love. These are big steps in *Saadhana*, laudable victories.

Concentration is needed for success in every operation

When you are engaged in the simple operation of threading a needle, note how much concentration is needed for success. The fingers have to be steady, the eyes fixed and clear, the

end of the thread screwed into a point, the needle's eye kept unshaken. The same care has to be taken when any other operation is to succeed. The Name of the Lord is the Bow, which you lift when you raise your voice in *Bhajana*. The mind is the arrow you fix; so fix your eye on *Brahmam* the target, and with single-pointed effort, shoot. Then the goal can be realised.

I find many young persons here. I am glad that the *Seva Samithi* (service society) has given them this valuable experience. There are men volunteers and lady volunteers' so I must tell you another point on which I am very particular. You must consider others as your own brothers or sisters. I dislike flippant prattle, casual conversation and even face to face grouping of men and women, at all times, and more specially during spiritual gatherings or occasions. You must be models of straight and courteous behaviour. You must be good and appear good to every one. External beauty and charm are flimsy, they are ephemeral. Real beauty consists in virtue, self-control and selflessness. *Sundaram* (beauty) arises from *Shivam* (goodness) and *Shivam* from *Sathyam* (Truth). Be guided by this rule.

Be saturated with devotion to God and man

It has been suggested that a permanent body of volunteers be set up, who can be called upon whenever I visit this place, so that the meetings I address and the *Bhajana* Sessions where I am present may be conducted with minimum inconvenience to all. I suggest that the purpose should be much wider and more expansive. The *Sathya Sai Dhal* (volunteer corps) shall be the model for all other cities. The members must be saturated with devotion to God and man; they must have the skills which can make them better instruments.

I want them to be *sevaks* all the time in all places, not merely when I visit the city or at the places where I address meetings. How can they withhold their *seva* (service activity) on the pretext that I am not present in Bombay? Every *seva* done with sympathy and skill to any one in distress anywhere in this world is *Sathya Sai Seva*.

If a *Sathya Sai Seva Dal* man or woman finds a person swooning on the road, or suffering pain or agony when going towards college or office, it is the duty of the finder to render all help possible to relieve the suffering. Do not ignore it and walk on. The Dal must be eager to serve and trained to serve, for service from those who take My Name must be intelligent and sincere.

A *sevak* must be neither elated nor dejected; he must adhere to the middle path. When Raama asked Hanumaan to proceed towards the Southern region and described the dangers of the route, he was not dejected; when He gave him the ring to be handed over to Seetha, he was not elated that he had been chosen for the supreme task and given the glorious chance. He just obeyed. Sufficient unto him was the order of his Master, "Go." Hanumaan is the ideal volunteer; efficient, humble, silent, serviceable, intelligent, eager, devoted.

Develop *Bhakthi* (devotion) and *Shraddha* (faithful practice) by means of *Naamasmarana* and *Japam*. Practise silence and sweetness. Serve all as *Saiswaruupa* (embodiments of Sai); that is the best plan to realise the Sai in you.

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You must have a separate room or comer where you do Japa or dhyaana every day, so that the spiritual fragrance might infuse higher thoughts during the process. If the place is changed, it will

be like changing the company; the cumulative effect of association will be squandered. Parents and elders must see that their sons and wards are corrected on the spot, whenever they forget or deviate from the path.

Sathya Sai Baaba