

## 49. Honour your kith and kin

VOLUNTEERS! Embodiments of the Divine *Aathma*! Service without idea of self is the very first step in the spiritual progress of man. For, it trains you to transcend all the distinctions artificially imposed by history and geography and realise that the human community is ONE, and indivisible. Learn this truth; experience it in action. That is the duty of the Seva Dhal Organisation. How can a person be held 'divine' (as every man truly is), unless he has established himself in the sense of this Unity and shaped all his actions thereby? Man has been brought forth so that he may enjoy his heritage, namely; the Bliss that comes of the realisation of the One. Any activity solely intended for the individual is, on that very account, barren.

For, the community is essential for the individual, for his very survival. Your service will confer on you and on the community wherein you live untold benefits; it will also bring an invisible but potent benefit, namely, Divine Grace, *Seva* (selfless service) is an important ingredient in the nine-fold discipline of *Bhakthi* (devotion). You can see, sense, understand and sympathise with others who are akin to you, and so, you have greater reason to render them help and service.

### God will not accept hypocrisy

If you do not feel the call at the sight of human distress, disease or deviation from the right, how can you muster the determination and dedication necessary to serve the unseen, inscrutable, mysterious God. When you do not love man, your heart will not love God. Despising" brother man, you cannot at the same time, worship God; if you do, God will not accept that hypocrisy. God is the resident in every heart; so, serve any one, that service reaches the God within him; it brings on you the Grace of God. The heart that does not melt at the sight of persons caught in the coils of ignorance, disease or deprivation has to be labelled demonic; to call it bestial is an insult to the beasts. Give up egoism, sensualism and greed; fill your hearts with renunciation, belief in the glory of the *Aathma* (Self) and Love. That is the means by which you can make yourselves efficient Seva Dhal workers.

Thousands arrive at the Prashaanthi Nilayam during the festivals; among them we have a large number of sick people, the aged and children. You have to serve these visitors with special care and love. Do not go about strutting with pride that you have a badge and a scarf; go humbly among the people with love in your hearts and softness in your speech and sweetness in your acts. It is a badge which a "servant" alone is entitled to wear, not a master lording over others. The badges rest on your hearts, don't they? If your hearts are filled with pride, and a sense of superiority over others who have no badge on their chests, then, the hearts themselves will be affected by the evil aroused by this decoration. When you disregard or disrespect the badge, you are disregarding and disrespecting your own inner reality. The badge and scarf do not entitle you to roam about in the bazaar, or lounge in the hotel outside the Nilayam, indulging in low talk and vulgar habits. It does not allow you to exercise authority over any one or appropriate anything from any one.

It is a call and a challenge for you, to provide comfort and consolation to those in need, to seek out means and methods to increase the ways in which you can help others and contribute to their joy.

### **Serve the community, the Community will serve you**

Be worthy of this gift of Grace; maintain' the high ideals of the Seva Dhal organisation. This opportunity has been given to you out of sheer Grace; it is not given as a consequence of some rule or claim. It does not bind you; it gives you distinction and duty, both. If you have it with you, and yet, -withdraw from service or hesitate to render it, you are 'on the wrong, track. People come to this Presence to get rid of sin and accumulate spiritual merit; if you dishonour the badge, you are retaining the sins and accumulating a lot more. Remember, with each act of Love and Service, you are nearing the Divine Presence; with each act of hate and grab, you are moving farther and farther away. The ideal of service must inspire those in authority, those who possess riches, those who-are endowed with skills and intelligence, leisure and health. Serve the community and the community will serve you. Exploit it and it will exterminate you. Put an end to laziness; bury your clamorous ego; bury the greed for power and pelf; then, you get the qualifications needed for a member of the Seva Dhal.

I know that some people allow others to use the scarf and badge given to them; they do so to escape work or to please their friends. This is very wrong; these symbols of *Seva* are as vital to reach one of you as your own breath. When you give them over, you do great injury to your own breath. Or, there are some, I know, who keep them hidden, out of sight of others, when they drink, gamble, or smoke and indulge in such harmful and shameful acts. This too is despicable.

### **Soft speech reaches the heart quicker**

Now, about some things you have to bear in mind, when you serve the people who come here and stay for the festival. Distribute water to the thirsty; help the aged to find places away from the scorching sun or pouring rain. At the gatherings, arrange to seat the persons who have come from long distances for the first time, eager to take *Dharshan* (audience), in places and rows wherefrom they can see and enjoy the festival in all its aspects. When you meet with cases of illness, report immediately to some doctor and help them to get relief. Do not delay. When your services are called for, do not rush thither in huge numbers; go in as small a number as is required. Too many enthusiastic persons can only hinder the work; and, work in other fields will suffer.

I am *Prema* (divine love), and you should hold on to *Prema* as your method of *Seva* (selfless service). Soft speech reaches the heart quicker and deeper. Reveal in gentle words the reason why you do not allow certain things to be done or you require certain other things to be done. Win the willing co-operation of people, not their resentful acquiescence. Do not rely on harsh behaviour, or violent means. That is a path into which many slide easily; but, they do not realise that they are ridiculed as alsatians or bull-dogs by those who suffer their attentions. Do not also use your status to show favour to your kinsmen, or friends in any manner. All are your kith and kin, in the Sai Family.

This is your home, and the thousands who come to this home are your kith and kin. Welcome them, as you will welcome your nearest and dearest relations; as far as in you lies, make their stay comfortable. This scarf and this badge confer on you the right to declare that Prashaanthi Nilayam is your home. Keep that in mind and do not behave in any manner that will tarnish the brightness of that declaration. That status is a precious gift. Do not overstep the limits imposed by the Organisation; do not disobey the rules laid down; do not deviate from the ideals laid down. March straight on, and reach the goal.

*Prashanthi Nilayam, 16-10-1974*

*Peace is inherent in man. When ego becomes egoism, the Aham becomes Ahamkaar by enfolding itself in a form. 'I'--pure and simple, maintained pure and simple---is still 'being'; it 'becomes' when the I identifies itself with something other: I am a man, I am a monk. I am a student. The 'I' has become an 'ism;' has put on a form, a vesture, which it is loath to give up, the aakaar which has rendered it Aham-kaar, egoist!*

***Sri Sathya Sai***