



Dear reader,

Welcome back to SaiCast, a SWC pre-conference initiative that is part reading/reflection and part-podcast style conversation. We hope you enjoyed reading and listening to the first episode, 'Grace Under Pressure.' In case you have missed it, please visit <https://sathyasai.us/swc2019/pre-conference-initiatives/saicast>.

Our second topic is '**Inside out- spirituality, service and self.**' We have curated two thought provoking excerpts from discourses given by our dear Lord. Also, included are questions for reflection as an individual or group and real life scenarios to facilitate practice of these teachings in our daily lives. The next SaiCast is on Tuesday May 21 and will be hosted by our dynamic duo-Anna Gurevich and Nandini Kalyanasundaram. They will be joined by a special guest to reflect further on this topic. In the meanwhile, happy reading and may the love flow from inside out!

Love,
Team SaiCast

Excerpt from Spiritual Significance of Loving Service – Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 28, 1995



A pure, unwavering, compassionate heart, truthful speech, and the use of the body for dedicated service to others, are sublime qualities in a human being. You should all realize that the human body has been given to you solely to render selfless service. Such service broadens the heart, destroys the ego and generates bliss.



There is no meaning in professing to respect human values without observing the rule that you should cause no harm to others in any form whatsoever. God loves those who serve others because He is in all of them. Whomever you may serve, consider it as service to God. Divinize all your actions. Treat every action you perform as God's work.

Service can assume any form. What a mother does for her child is service. A husband and wife render mutual service. In this sense all are servants. God is the only Master.... In rendering service, see that you do it for the satisfaction of your conscience and not to impress others. Treating service as an offering to the Divine, do it perfectly.

Remember that God is watching every one of your actions. Be your own watchman to scrutinize what you do. When you do everything to satisfy your conscience, you are well on the way to Self-Realization.

Cultivate this love. This is the service you have to render. The bliss which you experience should be shared with others. Enjoy the love I confer on you. It is totally free from self-interest. Receiving selfless love, make your love unselfish.

Excerpt from Born to Serve, Inaugural Discourse at the All India Sai Active Workers' Conference, Sathya Sai Speak, Vol 20, 1987

You have to recognize that life is meant for selfless service and not to be lived for selfish purposes. Only through such service can the oneness of mankind be experienced. Unselfish service is the sheet-anchor of Karma Yoga (Divine dedication through Action) ...Every individual has to realize the paramount importance of selfless service. The spirit of service should be coupled with readiness for sacrifice. Only then it can be called selfless service free from any taint of self-interest. Such service lends savor to life. Universal love sustains life by its nourishment. Love is the life-breath of man. Magnanimity of spirit lends fragrance to life. However eminent a person may be, he has to realize that the main purpose of life is to render dedicated service to one's fellow men.

It is the weak, the destitute and the helpless who need to be served. Even in rendering service to such persons, there should be no feeling that we are serving 'others'. We should feel that we are serving the Lord Narayana (Divinity) who dwells in them. When service is rendered in a total spirit of dedication, with concentration of thought, word and deed, the heart gets sanctified. Without purity of the heart there can be no spiritual progress.

The first requisite, therefore, is to get rid of all the bad thoughts, the selfishness, pride and other undesirable qualities from the heart so that the spirit of love can find its rightful place in it. Only a heart filled with love is pure and holy. Hence you should take up service activities in a loving spirit. You should not be concerned about name or fame. Do not go after name or distinction. Concentrate your mind upon achieving your objectives. Fill your heart with love and engage yourselves in service. The man who cannot do service to others is not a man at all.

We must consider that we have taken birth only to render service to society as a sacred duty. Whatever small service we may do, if we do it in the right spirit, serving with no thought of self, we shall be doing something commendable and worthwhile. An act of service by itself may be a small thing. But it must be done wholeheartedly. Just as a cow transforms whatever it may consume into sweet, wholesome milk, any kind of service rendered with a pure heart will result in great good. You should not have any returns in view in rendering service. "This is my duty. I am born to serve"--it is with such an attitude that you should take up service.

One should strive to help others also to achieve liberation. That is true service. Few have such large-hearted approach today. "Offer services and receive love." This is the recipe for experiencing Divinity.



But today service is not offered wholeheartedly. Few render service with love and hence few receive God's grace. Even their love is self-centered and is not all-embracing. Our love should not be confined to our kith and kin. It must extend beyond the family to society as a whole, then to the nation at large, and finally embrace the whole world.

There can be no sacredness in service, if good thoughts and good feelings are absent. Service as an act of Dharma (righteousness) can be offered only by one who is pure in heart, selfless and equal-minded towards everyone (Samathva). Great devotees in the past exemplified this quality of "Samathva" (equal concern for everyone).

All service should be regarded as an offering to God and every opportunity to serve should be welcomed as a gift from God. When service is done in this spirit, it will lead in due course to self-realization. It is this kind of selfless, spiritually oriented service that is needed today. Shed completely all selfishness and self-interest and enter upon service activities as the highest purpose of life. Service must become your life-breath. You must become ideal sevaks (divine servants) and set an example to the world.

SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Swami explains that "Service can assume any form. What a mother does for her child is service. A husband and wife render mutual service." What acts of service do you perform every day for yourself/at home/at work/at school/in the community?
- 2) Swami reminds us to serve everyone recognizing that everyone is God. When you are 'serving' someone you don't necessarily get along with, what are ways in which you perform that act with love? How do you see the divinity in people you don't know or don't get along with?
- 3) Spiritual progress happens when the heart broadens and gets sanctified. The heart gets sanctified "when service is rendered in a total spirit of dedication, with concentration of thought, word and deed." Reflect and share experiences of your spiritual progress when you have performed service with sincerity and dedication.
- 4) "Offer services and receive love." This is the recipe for experiencing Divinity. But today service is not offered wholeheartedly. Few render service with love and hence few receive God's grace. Even their love is self-centered and is not all-embracing. What keeps one from being involved in selfless service when it is the recipe for experiencing Divinity?



IN REAL LIFE

1. At your Sai Centre they are planning a Christmas baking project. They publish a list of items to be procured and you sign-up to bring all items. There are other members who could not provide any physical help but have been yearning to participate in the Christmas service project by the way of material contribution.

-How can we be sensitive to others feelings?

-What steps one could take proactively to ensure that our enthusiasm to serve does not curb another member's enthusiasm to serve?

-In this situation, how can we apply Sai's teaching - "One should strive to help others also, to achieve liberation. That is true service"?

2. Your friend is very keen on being helpful and useful to others. When you fall sick, even without you asking her for help; she makes sure that she brings you food, drives you to the doctor, gets you medication etc. But when she falls sick, she does not let you help in any way. When you ask, she says that she does not like taking help. This makes you feel obligated and does not make you comfortable. You feel that service should be mutual.

-How can we apply the following Swami's teaching, "The bliss which you experience should be shared with others? Enjoy the love I confer on you. It is totally free from self-interest. Receiving selfless love, make your love unselfish" to this scenario?

3. At work, you find that a new employee is struggling to cope up with his/her assigned tasks. You go out of your way, extend your work day and complete the complex task for them. After a month, you find that your manager has promoted that person as he/she was able to complete that complex task. They have been given some important responsibilities which you know that he/she cannot fulfill and might hurt the project. You had helped that person with the following in mind "All service should be regarded as an offering to God and every opportunity to serve should be welcomed as a gift from God.". But now you find that it is going to hurt your project. What was considered as an act of service has backfired. What will you do?

4. You are a doctor who has just rescued a drug addict from a car accident. There is no immediate danger to life, but they are in constant pain and want painkillers.

-Should you give them painkillers to ease their pain or not, as it might do permanent physical harm due to their addiction?

- In situations like these, is there a right answer? If not, how does one choose the lesser of two evils? What should be your service to them?

