

“The spiritual exercise of service is quite distinct. In service, you devote all your energy and attention to the task at hand, for it is a dedicated task. You forget your body and ignore its demands. You set aside your individuality and its prestige and perquisites. You pluck your ego by its roots and cast it away.

You give up your status, your conceit, your name and form and all that they demand from others. This process makes the mind pure.” Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 10, pg122

DISCIPLINE OF THE MONTH - SELFLESS SERVICE

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE PROGRAM

MAY 2011

Dear Sai Youth,

Over 60 years ago, May 25th, 1947 to be exact, Swami wrote a letter to His brother, Seshamma Raju. The brother had previously expressed strong concerns about the future of their Sathya, who had dropped out of middle school and now a young adult with no skills that a secular world would embrace for success. In this prophetic letter, Swami declares His mission emphatically to one and all. Here is an excerpt-

"I have a 'task,' to foster all mankind and ensure for all of them lives full of bliss. I have a 'vow,' to lead all who stray away from the straight path again into goodness and save them. I am attached to a 'work' that I love, to remove the sufferings of the poor and grant them what they lack. I have a 'reason to be proud,' for I rescue all who worship and adore me, aright. I have my definition of the 'devotion' I expect, those devoted to me have to treat joy and grief, gain and loss, with equal fortitude. This means that I will never give up those who attach themselves to me. "

Ever since, Swami's life has been a silent saga of "selfless living" and "unconditional loving" - reminding us for now and for eternity that our relationship with Him is always "heart to heart, love to love."

Perhaps, it is no coincidence that the spiritual discipline for this month is "Engage in selfless service". The compassion Swami has for humanity manifests as selfless service and propels every single act of His. We hope that this newsletter and the study circle guide will serve as an effective tool for you to understand the Sai model of selfless service. We pray that the inspiration we derive from Swami, who is the ideal example for 'love in action', will guide us towards leading sanctified and purposeful lives!

These last two months have witnessed an unprecedented outpouring of love and prayers from all over the world for our Dear Swami. Never before has humanity witnessed such dignified resolve, unity of purpose, and unwavering determination to seek His love within! With Swami, who is still with us as our inner guide, let's earnestly resolve to put His teachings into practice so that our lives become His message!

Jai Sai Ram!





The WHAT, HOW, WHY of Service*

**Excerpts and Highlights from Mr. Srinivasan Srirangarajan's talk in the Divine physical presence on September 30, 2003. Mr. Srirangarajan is currently a faculty member of the Sri Sathya Sai University, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus.*

Transcript and recording of this talk can be found at:

http://media.radiosai.org/Journals/Vol_03/07JUL01/wtsseva.htm

http://dl.radiosai.org/TALK_SRIRANGARAJAN_2003_09_30.mp3

“WHAT is Service?

Now what is service? Is it mere work? We always work, if not for others, then for ourselves. But then what is it that transforms this work into service? Let us recall what Bhagavan has mentioned about service. Work can be transformed into service only when it follows certain conditions; only when it is carried out in a particular way and Bhagavan lays so much stress on service that He says **‘Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray’.**”

HOW should service be done?

As mentioned above, certain ‘conditions’ transforms work into service. Swami gives us 5 tips on how best to achieve this. We should:

1. *Have Feeling of Oneness*
2. *Offer Every Act to God*
3. *Have Pure Selfless Love for God*
4. *Do Silent Service*
5. *Focus on Quality Not Quantity*

These are further explained in Mr. Srirangarajan's talk in the link above.

WHY should we serve?

Bhagavan very clearly says that one very important component of service is to never be under the impression that you are serving others; you are in fact serving yourself and it is for your own good.

Mr. Srirangarajan's talk explicitly defines the benefits of doing service as taught to us by Swami. Service benefits us because it:

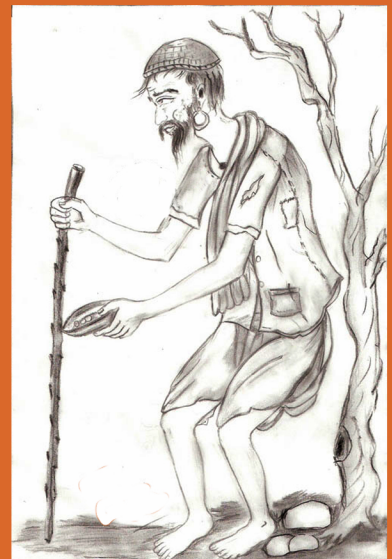
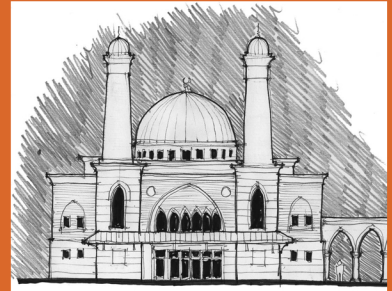
1. *Helps reduce our ego*
2. *Leads to self transformation*
3. *Helps us become sensitive to other people's concerns*

The Lord cares for the feeling behind the act

Abdullah was sleeping in a corner of a mosque in Mecca, when he was awakened by the conversation of two angels above his head. They were preparing a list of the blessed and one angel was telling the other that a certain Mahbub of Sikandar City deserved to be ranked first, even though he had not come on pilgrimage to the Holy City. Hearing this Abdullah went to Sikandar City and found that he [Mahbub] was a cobbler, repairing the shoes of people. He was famished and poor; for, his earnings barely sufficed to keep flesh and bone together. He had by severe sacrifice piled up a few coppers during the course of years.

One day, he spent the entire treasure to prepare a special dish, which he proposed to place before his pregnant wife as a surprise gift. When he was proceeding home with the gift he heard the cry of a starving beggar who seemed to be in the throes of extreme hunger. Mahbub could not proceed any further; he gave the pot containing the costly delicacy to the man and sat by his side, enjoying the blossoming of satisfaction on his haggard face. That act gave him a place of honor in the register of the Blessed, a place which pilgrims to Mecca who had spent millions of dinars in charity could not secure. The Lord cares for the feeling behind the act, not the fanfare and the fuss.

CHINNA KATHA A SHORT STORY FROM SWAMI



YOUNG ADULT TESTIMONIAL PREMA KITCHEN



As you may be aware, Alabama has the highest density of homeless population in the country. The homeless shelters across Birmingham are doing a stupendous and selfless task of providing, clothing, temporary accommodation, food, counseling, and career services for them. The homeless shelters are in constant need for assistance from the communities. As a group, it was a great opportunity for us to connect with the homeless community. Even though it was the biggest project for our small youth group, the challenges we faced only strengthened us.

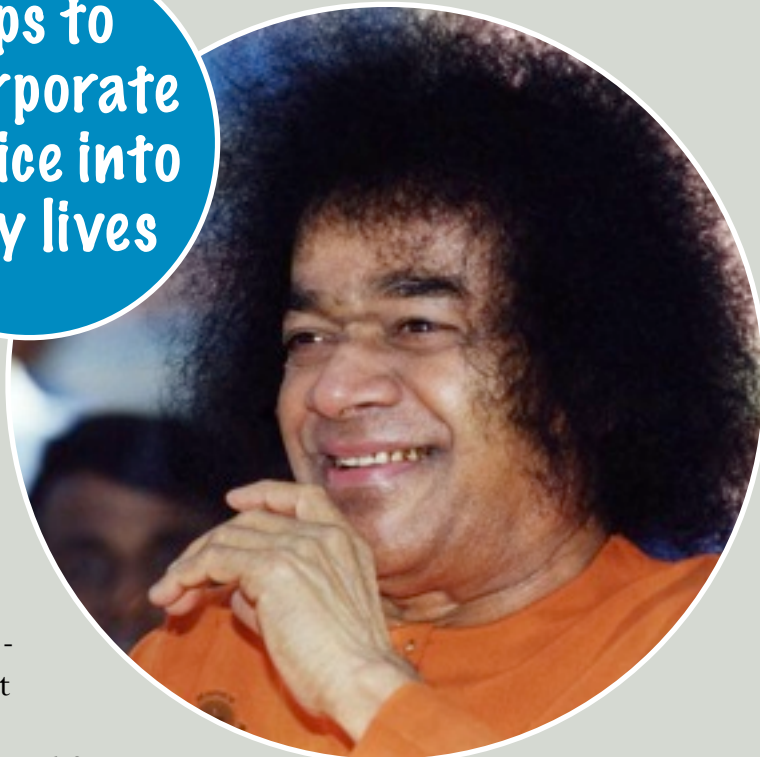
Inspired by Swami's model for students in His University, our humble aim was to cook and serve healthy food, with purest of thoughts. The youth and the elders came together to cook food for approximately 220 fellow brothers, sisters and children. Swami very lovingly calls it '**Narayan Seva**', which literally means service to God! Cooking food as a group, while chanting and remembering Baba, and infusing our selfless love into the food, definitely has a positive impact on mind, body, and atma (MBA). As many of the homeless population are subject to despair and pain, our prayers and love are much needed for them to stand up again on their feet. It was truly a service to our selves and a blessed opportunity to share His love with our underserved brothers and sisters!

-Region 3 Young Adults



- ❖ Smile! [Serving Mankind Inspires Love Everywhere]
- ❖ Wake up in the morning and ask Swami, "How can I serve You and others today?"
- ❖ Offer everything to God. Every act becomes an act of service with the right attitude. Service can be done in any way to anyone.
- ❖ Think of the people you are interacting with on a daily basis. Ask yourself, how can you make their day better?
- ❖ Recycle - carry a reusable bag and silverware with you to reduce the use of plastic bags and plastic ware.
- ❖ Be prepared - Keep some non perishable goods - water bottles, granola bars etc handy to give out whenever you see a hungry person.
- ❖ Be Bold and let go of any pre-conceived notions and fears - Swami always says, "Why Fear when I am here?" Sometimes an act of service may force us out of our "comfort zone" momentarily, but always keep in your heart that you are doing His work and He will look after you.

Tips to incorporate service into daily lives



Sai YA USA Pilgrimage

We are pleased to announce that the preparations for the USA YA pilgrimage which was blessed and approved by our Beloved Bhagawan will continue as planned. Information regarding exact pilgrimage dates, registration etc is forthcoming.

Theme: "Living in Sai"

Now is the time to follow the path that has been chosen by Him, with faith, love, discipline and confidence. As Sai Young Adults, if we want to change the world, we must first change ourselves. To facilitate our own spiritual transformation, we will continue on the Spiritual Discipline program we started three years ago, in preparation for the Third World Youth Conference, 2007.

Dates(s):

Bhagawan's birthday

Duration:

Tentatively one week to coincide with the Thanksgiving holiday

Attendees:

USA Young Adults (18-35 years) and YA Advisors

acronym

S selfless (for example)

E

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V

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C

E

HELP CREATE AN ACRONYM FOR SERVICE

Please email your acronyms to info@saiyausa.net



May 2011

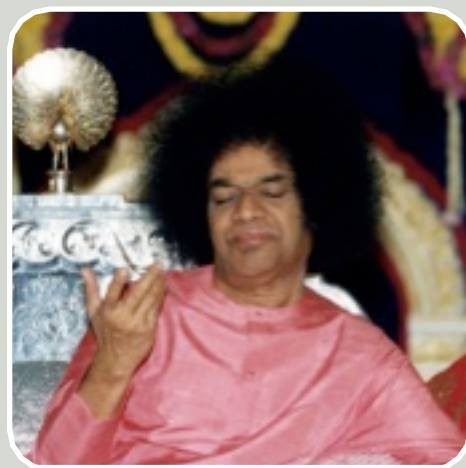
STUDY CIRCLE



**THE
SCIENCE OF
KINDNESS**

**SANDEHA
NIVARINI**

**ACTIVITY -
PLAY
WRITTEN BY
SWAMI**



Workshop Activity

Start the study circle by chanting 3 Oms. Feel Swami's Love and Light in your hearts and visualize the Light fill the entire room engulfing everyone present in the room. Continue on with chanting 3 Gayatris as a group.

3) Give an example of Sai literature you have chosen for daily reading.

Previous Study Circle Review:

Review the last month's study circle material on reading Sai Literature and share experiences (including challenges and success) on how reading Sai literature has transformed your daily life. Consider the following questions before moving on to this month's Service Discipline Program.

- 1) How can one transform him/herself by reading Sai Literature or participating in study circles?
- 2) Did you have any challenges incorporating this element in daily life?

SDP Discipline of the Month: Engage in Selfless Service as a group

One way to infuse selfless love into service is by practicing the act of kindness. As described by the excerpt below, the spiritual effect of "Kindness" is affirmed by science! The following section has 3 components. We ask that each group tailor it to their needs and use it as workshop (at a retreat for example), study circle, etc. The 3 components include: 1) "Science of kindness" 2) Sandeha Nivarini excerpt discussion 3) Fun activity - play written by Bhagawan

"The Science of Kindness"

"Only a life lived for others is worth living." - Albert Einstein

By Janae Weinhold, Ph.D.

Kindness isn't just a fluffy, feel-good, warm-fuzzy concept. It is a powerful, energetic experience that transforms both the giver and recipient at such deep levels that some say it can work miracles. You can read accounts of these miracles at the "Kindness Stories" link on this site. Kindness works miracles that can be validated with scientific principles drawn from the quantum sciences of biology, physiology, psychoneuroimmunology and physics.

First let's look at the biological and physiological aspects of kindness. When we open our hearts and reach out to others in kindness, our brain releases endorphins—the morphine-like chemicals that produce the feelings of exhilaration known as the "runner's high." Acts of kindness, according to researcher Paul Persall, also cause your brain to release "Substance P," a neurotransmitter chemical that blocks pain. These two powerful physiological processes have an immense influence on our body/mind/spirit and the way that we experience life.

A steady flow of endorphins and Substance P through our bodies strengthens our immune system, keeps us feeling happy, joyful, optimistic and energized. This heightens our sense of well being so that we feel calmer, more centered and focused no matter what kind of stressful events might be happening around us. Physiologically, these brain chemicals improve circulation, reduce blood pressure, increase body warmth and improve weight control. Kindness helps us relax so that we can connect with others and with our own good feelings.



Other researchers discovered that the reverse is true. When we are angry with others, the flow of these "feel-good" chemicals stops. They are replaced by cortisol and adrenaline, which create fight, flight and freeze behaviors associated with trauma and stress. When they are flowing through our bodies, we have a "short fuse" that makes us feel irritable, hostile, helpless and depressed. Long-term exposure to these chemicals depletes the body's organs, lowers the function of the immune system and leads to disease and illness.

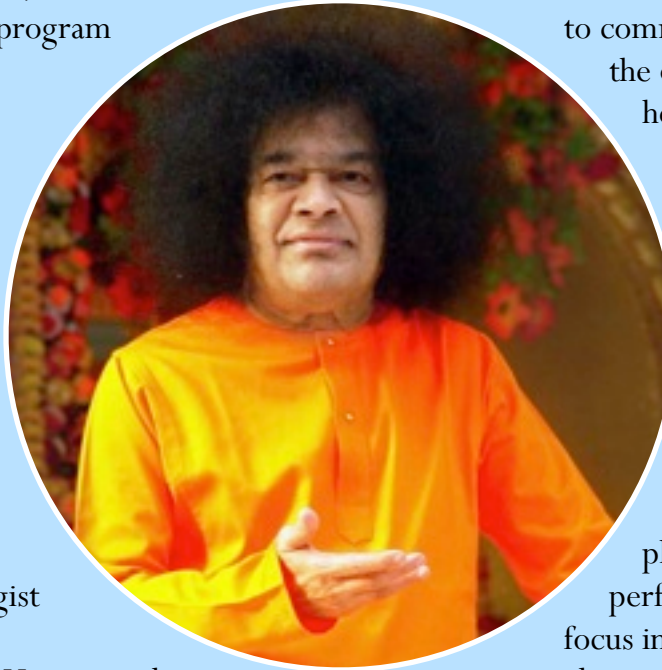
Now let's look at acts of kindness from an energetic perspective. Kindness that comes from a place of deep love, joy, gratitude and appreciation stirs deep emotions that actually influence our DNA. Experiments at the Institute of Heart Math revealed that DNA changed its shape according to the feelings of researchers trained to generate and feel strong emotions.

In this experiment, researchers held some human placenta DNA (the most pristine kind) in containers from which they could measure changes in it. When the researchers felt gratitude, love and appreciation, the DNA in the containers was observed to relax

and the strands unwound and became longer. When they felt anger, fear, frustration or stress, in the presence of these containers, the DNA responded by tightening up, becoming shorter and actually switching off its codes. If you've ever felt "shut down" by negative emotions, now you know why. When your DNA switches off, it closes down your body's "growth" program and activates your body's "defense" software. The HeartMath Institute researchers found that when they shifted to feelings of love, joy, gratitude and appreciation, the DNA relaxed, unwound and lengthened, which switched their codes on again.

The work of quantum biologist Bruce Lipton also takes this phenomenon a step further. His research indicates that our body's "computer" can only be in "growth" mode or "protection" mode and that it cannot be both at the same time. A lot of the stress that humans encounter over the course of a day is the result of our DNA turning off and on again and again. The more that we are able to sustain the flow of the "feel-good" chemicals generated by acts of kindness, the more that our DNA relaxes, the healthier, connected and creative we are able to be. This allows our centered and caring energy to ripple around us and influence the energy field of others.

Gregg Braden describes this as the Isaiah Effect, which is our ability to alter the web of energy known as the "universe." He says that living cells communicate through this web and that it is not affected by time and distance. This is behind the assertion by Barry & Janae Weinhold that basic energy of the universe is love. They say that when you can open your heart to love others and be



loved, you experience what they call "lovevolution," or the ability to evolve and grow. Valerie Hunt's research on human energy fields also validates not only our ability to communicate through telepathic "mind-field" transmissions, but she also says trees, plants and animals all do this. In the far distant past in our evolution, humans were once able

to communicate telepathically. Since the development of the left hemisphere of the brain and the intellect, we have lost it.

Now we seem to be reclaiming it as a species and learning how to use telepathy consciously.

So, here's a recipe for dealing with interpersonal, economic, political, ecological and planetary stressors. Make performing acts of kindness a

focus in your life. Look for ways to extend your love in the smallest ways—

looking into the eyes of a child, stroking a plant as you pass by it, being compassionate while speaking to the Customer Service person, say please and thank when you transact with people and cutting people slack when you can see that they are at their edge.

As you do this, you may find yourself slowly becoming intolerant of the "feel-bad" chemicals and experience a growing dependence in your body/mind/spirit to the "feel-good" ones. Once you realize that how you feel and interact is a choice, you can use your consciousness to direct the flow of your life. It is also true from both psychological and from spiritually based research that what you focus on, you will attract more of into your life. By focusing on being more kind and recognizing the kindness of others, you will be able to consciously attract more kindness and joy into your life. This is real enlightenment!

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY:

Now that you understand the scientific foundation of kindness, we invite you to take the Kindness Challenge. For one or two days or for a week, focus on being kind and see for yourself how it changes your body/mind/spirit. Keep a daily journal of what happens to you.

SUGGESTED GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS/QUESTIONS:

1) a) Do you agree with the scientific foundation of Kindness mentioned in the article? How do you define the same from spiritual perspective?

b) "Kindness that comes from a place of deep love, joy, gratitude and appreciation stirs deep emotions that actually influence our DNA." Do you think kind thoughts and acts can change you internally?

2) Swami once said, "Service is the highest spiritual discipline. Prayer and meditation, or knowledge of scripture and Vedanta, cannot help you reach the goal as quickly as service can. Service has a double effect: it extinguishes the ego and gives bliss." Swami strongly emphasizes selfless service to those in need as the highest means for enhancing one's own spiritual growth and development.

a) What is the role of spirituality in the service work you do?

b) When you serve, you may feel happy. However, if you feel "I did it", you may be boosting your ego. How do you balance your thoughts during and after your activities?

3) Swami invites individuals to study and observe Him as He lives a life of selfless service for all. "You can observe Me and My activities; note how I adhere to righteousness, moral order, truth, and universal compassion. That is what I desire you to learn from Me ... My Life is My Message."

a) What is the primary message you would like your

life to represent?

b) How do you make your service truly "selfless"?

3) Swami has said, "How can anyone contemplate on God - who loves the poor and the grief-stricken - and yet be cold-hearted when the poor and the grief-stricken are around them?"

a) What practices can we implement in our daily lives that adheres to Swami's teaching of recognizing the divine in those who are suffering and neglected in society?

b) Being kind and serving when things are going well may seem easy. How can we perform acts of kindness during times of personal stress?

4) Swami once professed, "Do not believe that you can by means of service reform or reshape the world. You may or may not; that does not matter. The real value of service, its most visible result, is that it reforms you, reshapes you." Can you share an experience in which a service activity or project caused a personal transformation for you?

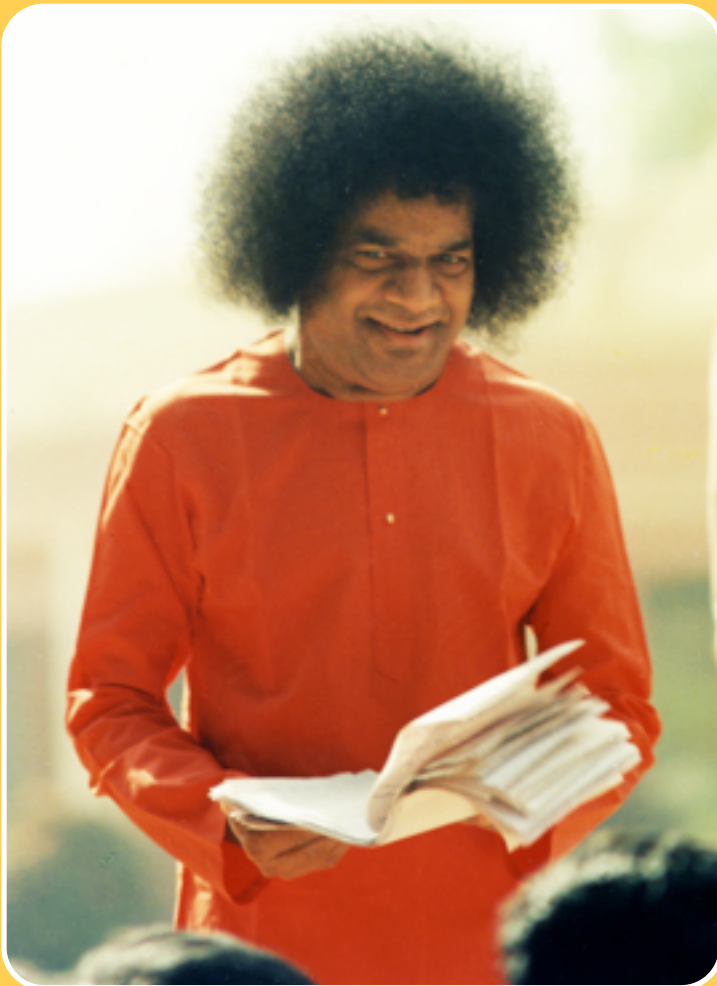
5) Swami assessed, "Establishing a deep spiritual grounding for doing service is as important to its overall success as understanding of your own motivation for getting involved and the limits of what you might hope to accomplish."

a) What is the role of self-awareness in service?

b) How do you define your motivations for service, as well as the limits of your abilities in serving others (i.e. self-care)?

6) What are your takeaways from this article and the relevant Swami quotes, and how can you apply them in your daily life?





Sandeha Nivarini

Suggested Sai literature for independent study or optional second study circle. Let us apply the three step process of Reading, Reflection & Regular application learned in the previous study circle to enhance the Service Discipline element.

Excerpt from Chapter 14 of Sandeha Nivarini. Please refer to the text for the entire chapter.

READING

Bhaktha: Another point, Swami! Can one approach the presence of the Lord, only if he has faith in the Lord and only if with the faith he performs Japa, Dhyana, Bhajana and Puja? That is to say, is it not possible to attain that position through the path of Truth the path of Dharma, the path of Prema, the path of Service to others?

Swami: Well, how can the qualities you mention originate without the fear of sin and the fear of God? Are these paths and the qualifications needed for them, ordinary and common? No. They are the doors to the Inner Apartment of the Lord. Those that follow those Paths can easily reach the precincts of the Lord. But yet, there is a difference between relatives and friends! Those who develop only these qualities are friends; but those who practice them, along with devotion to the Name and Form, become relatives, that is the difference. The meditation on the Name and the Rupa helps to strengthen the Gunas also. Without that foundation, the Gunas cannot be strong and firm and pure. The lord's Name and the Lord's Rupa remove the dross from the qualities of man.

Bhaktha: But the Bhaktha and the man with good qualities both attain the same place, isn't it, Swami?

Swami: Certainly. The merely good man becomes a candidate who deserves the place. The goodman who has Bhakthi has a title to the place, he cannot be passed over.

Bhaktha: Swami, there are many people who are active doing various things under the slogan, "The Service of man in the Service of God"; do their deeds entitle them to the place?

Swami: Why do you ask so? Certainly; for those that do service with that attitude. But it is very hard to get that real feeling. Considering others as men, simply saying that "serving them is to serve God," is not sincerity. The mind will then run in two channels. Grasp the glow of Madhava (God) fully; understand that Madhava is in every Manava; believe that service to Manava or Man is serving Madhava only. Then your actions will certainly entitle you to the place. What greater qualification is needed than that? Instead, if "service" is done for name and

honor and fame, and if there is craving in the mind for the fruits of one's actions, then the statement, "Service to man is service to God" has so meaning, not will one get the result expected.

REFLECTION

1. Think of any moments when you have found yourself doing service in a "robotic" manner. How often does this happen and what do you do to change an element so that you are aware of what "Service to Man is Service to God" truly means?
2. Reflect on how various service projects have touched your heart. How did you feel Swami's presence and how did this bring you closer to Him?
3. What are your desires around service, and what are your limitations?

REGULAR APPLICATION

- Contemplate on any key points from the passage which you can directly put into practice in your daily life.
- Brainstorm with your group on how you can make small or large differences at an Individual, Family and Community level in terms of Selfless-Service.
- What is your preference – service at an Individual, Family or Community Level? What are some ways you can make either of these paths of Service stronger or more complete?

Reach out to community organizations to learn what your city/state needs in terms of resources and commit to an effort that rings true to your heart – Truly feel that Service to Man is Service to God.

Fun Activity

Inspired by a play written by Swami

Imagine this! Our Dear Swami was only 12-years old and a 6th grade student in Uravakonda when he wrote the play below and so very sweetly played the lead role of "Krishna." This play was heralded as one of the early indicators of the social reform and spiritual transformation that the Avatar was to bring forth on a global scale in the years to come. What a terrific scriptwriter who informs and transforms! Please feel free to "act" the play in your local YA Groups, and then discuss. Have fun!

Source: *Sathya Sivam Sundaram, by N. Kasturi; Part 1, Chapter: "The Serpent Hill," first edition: page 27-29*

"A word can be said about Sathya and the dramatic activities of the school. Sri Thammi Raju, the teacher in charge, once asked Sathya to write and produce a play in Telugu, and Sathya plunged into the work very enthusiastically. The drama was a great success, not only because the hero of the play was a little boy, a role enacted by Sathya himself, but chiefly because it had as its theme the eternal sin of man, hypocrisy, 'not acting as he feels he should.' "Cheppinattu Chesthara?" was the title, "Do deeds follow words?", to put it in English.

The scene opens, revealing a lady, reading out the Bhagavatha to a number of other women, and explaining the meaning of the slokas (prayers). She says that it is the duty of the house wife to give charity to the deserving, the defectives who cannot earn by the sweat of their brow, and not to the stalwarts who lead idle parasitic lives. The women disperse some time later, and the lady is left alone

with her little son, who has all along been an interested listener. Presently, a blind beggar comes and makes much fuss to attract attention but, he is rebuked and sent away. Then, there comes along a hefty mendicant with a pompous paunch and a polished copper vessel filled with grain and richly caparisoned thambura, and the mother respectfully welcomes him and offers him rice and coins, and falls at his feet, asking for his blessings. The son is non-plussed; he asks the mother why she did not follow what she had herself extolled a few minutes previously and he is dismissed with the curt answer. 'Cheppinathu Chesthara? Can we act as we say?' The mother is irritated by the impertinence of the son who dared question the ethics of adult behavior; she drags the boy to the office room where the father, an Upper Division clerk in some office, is busy with the files.

He gives the son a big lecture on the value of education and how people should study and get promoted from class to class, whatever the difficulties. Suddenly, a school boy pops in and asks for just a rupee to pay his fees, for otherwise his name will be stuck off the rolls and he will fall short in attendance and he will not be promoted. The father says that he has no money with him and shows the boy his empty purse as proof. A few minutes later, a batch of young men, all clerks belonging to his office, thrust themselves in and hold out a subscription appeal calling for contributions for a welcome dinner in honor of an officer, taking charge of their office in a few days! The father is very

jubilant at the idea, says that it must be done very aristocratically so that the new man may be pleased, offers to make a speech and pulling out the drawer of the table, he gives them the huge sum of Twenty rupees!



The child looks aghast at this behavior and asks the father why he went against his own words; why he uttered a lie to the schoolboy; the father turns angrily at the child, and says, 'Cheppinattu chesthara? Should deeds follow words?' He roars at the child and commands him to go to the school, without delay.

The scene now shifts to the school. Sathya, that is to say 'Krishna' of the drama enters school.

The teacher is in a storm of great excitement because the Inspector of Schools is to visit the school the next day. He coaches the children intensively for the Inspector. He tells them that the Inspector may ask, "How many lessons have been done?" and they were all to say, not '23' the actual number, but '32.' He says that he will do, when Inspector comes, lesson number 33, on 'Harischandra'; so, he teaches them that lesson, so that the answers may come quick and fast the next day; he threatens them with severe punishment if any one so much as whispers that lesson 33 was already done in class. 'It must all appear as if I am doing it for the first time tomorrow,' he says, and continues with the teaching of Harischandra's sacrifices for the sake of Truth.

When the class is over, all other boys move out, but Krishna alone remains behind; he asks the teacher

the question he has already asked twice that day; "why do you not follow the advice you give?" and he gets the same rebuff, 'Cheppinattu chesthara? Do you mean to say that the adviser should follow the advice?' Hypocrisy, hypocrisy, hypocrisy, everywhere!

The scene now changed to Krishna's home. It is next day, school-time, but the boy refuses to go. He throws away his books, says that going to school is waste of time, and sticks to his resolve, not to study in school. The distracted parents send for the teacher, who comes rushing in. Then, Krishna says,

'If all that you teach, as mother, father and Guru is only to spoken and written, if all that is learnt is to be discarded when it comes to action, I do not understand why I should learn anything at all.' This opens the eyes of all three and they praise the boy as their "Guru" and decide thenceforward to speak the Truth and act the Truth.

This is the theme of the drama that Sathya wrote at the age of twelve. I have given it in some detail so that reader may have a clear idea of the far-sighted intelligence and the educational enthusiasm of the young Sai."

