

Chapter 27 Service: A Gift of Love

1. A Meaningful Contribution

Charitable service is a component of all major religions. Even people who have no religious affiliation often feel the call to serve others. There is, in most of us, an innate recognition that we are part of society and that we are dependent on and obligated to society.

We also have a fundamental urge to find meaning in life. This urge translates into our desire to contribute to our community. We feel that we should leave the Earth a better place than when we arrived. It is our duty to repay our debt to society and to improve the situation of others. If we will not serve God in the forms of our unfortunate brothers and sisters, how can we seek to realize a formless God?

If you cannot pray for the total welfare of the community around you in whom God lives, how is it possible for you to worship an invisible God? The first thing you have to do is to look after the welfare of the living community around you.

Summer Showers 1974, p.218

2. Service to Self

A sculptor carves off small chips to reveal a statue latent in a block of wood. His efforts gradually result in the emergence of a graceful figure that all can appreciate. It could be said that his skill was used for the benefit of the figure or for the joy of the viewer of the form. But it could be more accurate to say that it was for his own benefit. Each line and curve produced in the wood revealed the image he held within. The effort revealed his skill and the beauty of his vision. It resulted in his own satisfaction.

If we serve, thinking that our action is primarily for the benefit of others, we are incorrect. Service holds the greatest benefit for the one who serves. Others are assisted, but we derive the joy and spiritual lessons from the act. We come to recognize ourselves in others, which widens our compassion and broadens our vision.

第二十七章 服务：爱的一个礼物

1. 一个有意义的奉献

慈善服务是所有主要宗教的一个构成要素。即便是没有宗教信仰的人也常感到服务他人的召唤。在我们大多数人之内都有一种天赋的认知，那就是，我们都是社会的一份子，而我们都依赖社会且对社会有不可推卸的义务。

我们也有一种基本的渴望去寻找人生的意义。这渴望化为我们回馈社会的欲念。我们觉得我们应该把地球打造得比我们来时更加美好。回馈社会并改进他人的生活状况是我们的义务。如果我们不会事神于我们较为不幸的兄弟姐妹的形相之中，我们如何能认知一个无相的神？

如果你不能为神寓于其中的你周遭社群祈福，你怎么可能膜拜一个不为肉眼所见的神？你要做的第一件事情是照顾你周遭人群的福祉。

《夏季浸濡1974》218面

2. 为自己服务

一个雕刻家切除多余的木片以便隐寓于木块中的形象展现出来。他的努力渐渐导致大家都欣赏的一个优美形象的出现。这可以说，他的技艺是用在形象的利益上，或者用在观赏者对那形象的乐趣上。但说得更正确些，这一切都是为了他自己的利益。在木块内所产生的每一个线条揭示他在木块内所持有的影像。这努力展现了他的技艺和他的审美观。这一切都导致他自己的满足感。

如果我们服务，而又想到我们的所做所为主要是为了他人的利益，我们就错了。服务的最大受益者就是服务者本人。其他的人是得到帮助，但我们从中得到喜乐和灵性训示。我们从他人之中认识到我们自己，从而扩大我们的恻隐之心和我们的直觉力。

Service expands our vision beyond our own small ego boundaries. How can we be joyful when those beside us suffer? How can we see their pain and not respond? As we grow spiritually, we recognize that brotherhood is a reality, not simply a pious-sounding theory of churchgoers.

If the individual is deluded into believing that he is saving others, then woe be to him, for there is no other at all. All are One; one man's sorrow is everyone's sorrow. The fundamental flaw is the ignorance of man. If only he was wise, he would have known that all individuals are waves on the surface of the selfsame ocean.

Sathya Sai Speaks 3, p.68

3. Service as a Spiritual Discipline

When we call to mind various spiritual disciplines, or sadhanas, service is usually not the first one we think of. We commonly cite meditation, devotional singing, or study of holy books. Yet service is a potent and complete sadhana. Selfless service is a path to God-realization.

When service is performed from compassion, without desire for reward or recognition, it can be a source of unlimited joy. That joy is found in the happiness of another, in the recognition that we are all manifestations of God. When we practice that discipline, we come to see that God is everywhere. The world is the body of God. All beings and all objects are manifestations of his will. When we find the Lord everywhere, we know that we too are God.

You should believe that service is a path to God-realization. Service activities are to be undertaken not for the sake of the Sathya Sai Organization nor for the sake of society. They are purely and essentially for your own sake – to transform your own lives and redeem yourselves.

Sanathana Sarathi, Sept.84, p.232

服务扩张我们的视力或直觉力，以至于超越我们自己小我的界线。当身旁的人受苦时，我们如何乐得起来？眼见他们痛苦，我们能无动于衷吗？随着灵性的成长，我们体会到兄弟情谊是一个实体，而不仅是一个上教堂做礼拜者夸说自己虔诚的论调而已。

如果一个人迷了心窍而认为他正在救赎别人，那就让他自作自受吧，因为所谓的别人是完全不存在的啊！大家都是“一”；一个人的哀伤就是每一个人的哀伤。人的基本缺陷就是他的无知。只要他有智慧，他就知道个体是在同样自性之洋的海面上的波浪。

《沙迪亚赛说》第3章68面

3. 以服务为灵修法门

当我们想要执行各种灵性修习（Sadhana）时，我们第一个想到的往往不是服务。一般上我们都想到坐禅，赞唱圣歌或读经。然而，服务确是一个强有力和完整的灵修。无私服务是证悟神的一条康庄大道。

以仁心去服务且不求回报或表扬，这种服务可以成为无限喜乐的源头。那喜乐可以在他人的快乐中以及在“我们都是神的彰显”的认知中寻获。进行那灵修之后，我们就处处可以看到神了。世界是神的身躯。一切生命和一切物质都是神之意愿的彰显。若处处见到神，我们就知道我们也是神了。

你应该相信，服务是“证悟神”的一条康庄大道。服务活动不是为了沙迪亚赛机构也不是为了社会而执行的。它们基本上纯粹是为了你自己的缘故——改造你的一生和救赎你自己。

《永恒的战车御者》1984年9月，232面

With time and practice, service becomes an indispensable part of spiritual life. Through service, we learn to see God in all people and all things. Whatever our creed, service opens our hearts and lets the divinity emerge. We can forget our own needs and open up to the needs of others. How better can we serve God than to alleviate the suffering of his children – and to protect the well-being of Earth and all its creatures?

Service to man will help your divinity to blossom, for it will gladden your heart and make you feel that life has been worthwhile. Service to man is service to God, for God is in every man and every living being and in every stone and stump.

Sathya Sai Speaks 4, p.178

Service is an excellent arena for the reduction of ego. In service, we must consider the needs of others. We must learn to accept criticism and to persevere despite all obstacles. This spiritual proving ground enables us to see if we have been successful in reducing our anger, impatience, and greed. It allows us to gauge the depths of our compassion and understanding. Spirituality should not exist only in our minds: spiritual principles must be practiced and made strong by the courage of our convictions and self-sacrifice. This type of service reforms us into images of divinity.

But do not believe that you can by means of seva (service) reform or reshape 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 sadhana; then you will be humble and happy.

Sathya Sai Speaks 5, p.327

The task of eliminating the self-serving ego is not quick or easy. But through service, we learn to negate the pull of the senses toward the objects of wrong desire. Attachment to material pleasures inflates the ego and makes it difficult for us to experience the atma. As a cure to this tendency, service is ideal. It reduces attachment and keeps us mindful of the needs of others and all the kingdoms of nature.

假以时日和勤于实行，服务变成灵性生活的一个不可或缺的一部分。透过服务，我们学会在所有的人 and 物之中看到神。服务开启我们的心而让神性呈现，完全不管你的信仰是什么。我们可以忘掉自己的需要而满足他人的需要。有什么服务神的方式能比得上减轻祂的子女的痛苦——及保护地球环境和在其内的生命体？

服务人群会帮助你的神性开花结果，因为它会使你心情愉快，心境开朗，并使你觉得此生无憾。为人服务即是为神服务，因为神寓于每一个人，每一个生命体，及，每一个石头和残枝之内。

《沙迪亚赛说》第4章178面

服务是一个优越的活动场合，对消减自我有莫大的帮助。在服务中，我们必须考虑到他人的需要。我们必须学会接受批评并且持有坚忍不拔的毅力去面对障碍。这灵性的试验场使我们察知我们是否已经成功地减低我们的愤怒、焦躁和贪婪。它让我们探测我们的仁慈和谅解的深度。灵性不应该只藏于心念之中：灵性原则必须付诸实行，并以勇于担当和自我牺牲而加强。这一类的服务把我们改造成圣灵的形象。

然而千万不要相信，你可以靠服务去改造或重新塑造世界。你或可或不可，那都不重要。服务的真正价值，其最明显的功效，是在于改造你，重新塑造你。要视服务为灵修般地去执行；那你就变得谦虚和快乐了。

《沙迪亚赛说》第5章327面

消除自私自利的心态不是一件快速而容易的事。但通过服务，我们学会打消感官之受到错误物质欲望的吸引。对物质欢乐的执著造成自我膨胀，乃至使我们更难以体验到“阿特玛”（Atma，真我）。要治疗这倾向，服务可谓是理想的良方了。它减轻执著并使我们留意他人和大自然的需要。

Seva is the best sadhana for eliminating the nefarious pull of the mind towards desire.

Sathya Sai Speaks 7, p.272

Eliminating the mind's pull toward desire is a major aspect of spiritual endeavor. The benefit of service is that it directs us away from too much self-concern. It is one of the few practices which allows us to escape from the cycle of concentrating on our own needs. When we work for the benefit of others, the Lord looks after our needs.

Selfless service is a more exalted means of spiritual progress than such other ways as meditation, bhajan, and yoga. This is so because when we undertake meditation, japa (repetition of the name of God), or yoga, we do so for our own benefit and not for the good of others. These are aimed at subjugating one's individual desires and securing happiness for oneself. What we should aspire for is the attainment of the good of others without any desire for personal gain.

Summer Showers 1979, pp.5-6

4. Motivation for Service

God will not ask you, "When and where did you do service?" He will ask, "With what motive did you do it? What was the intention that prompted you?" You may weigh the seva and boast of its quantity. But God seeks quality, the quality of the heart, the purity of the mind, the holiness of the motive.

Sathya Sai Speaks 11, p.195

Love is the best motivation for service. Love for others and love for God inspire us to true service. Through selfless work for others, we broaden our love and direct it to the God in others. There is no way to serve God except to serve his creation. For what can we give to God? We can offer only our love, intelligence, and labor to those in need.

就阻止心念受到欲望的恶毒拉扯而言，服务是最好的灵修（*sadhana*）。

《沙迪亚赛说》第7章272面

消除心念之被欲望所牵扯是致力于灵修的一个主要的层面。服务的功德在于引导我们远离太过只顾自己的心态。它是少数几个修习法门之一，使我们脱离只顾到自己需要的阶段。为他人所需而服务者，主必照顾其所需。

无私的服务是比坐禅、峇赞和瑜伽更为崇高，而灵性进展更为快速的法门。原因是坐禅、持名或瑜伽等修行仅为自己的利益，不是为他人的好处而执行的。所有这些旨在顺从个人的欲望而从中给自己谋取快乐和满足。我们应该渴望为他人谋求福利而不是为自己谋求利益。

《夏季浸濡》1979年，5--6面

4. 服务的动机

神不会问你，“你何时何处做服务工作？”祂会问，“你服务的动机是什么？是什么意图促使你服务？”你或许秤一秤服务的重量而以其量自夸。但神要的是质，心的实质，念的纯净和动机的崇高。

《沙迪亚赛说》第11章195面

爱是服务的最佳动机。对他人的爱和对神的爱激励我们献身于真正的服务。透过无私的服务，我们扩大我们的爱并将之导向寓于他人之内的神。除了服务神的创造物外，别无其它服务神的方式。因为我们能给神什么？我们只能奉献我们的爱，智能和劳力给那些贫困者。

It (service) is the very essence of bhakti (devotion to God), the very breath of a bhakta (devotee), his very nature. It springs from the actual experience of the bhakta – 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.

Sathya Sai Speaks 5, p.237

We endlessly pray to the Lord for his grace. But how can we expect to receive grace if we will not lift our hands to help others? We earn God’s love by our selfless actions. To progress on the spiritual path, it is more important for God to love us than for us to love God. We earn his love and grace through selfless service. Sai Baba sets an example of endless giving, never expecting anything in return. We must graduate from spiritual grade school and follow the example. How better can we repay our debt for the blessings we receive than by giving in turn to others? The stream only remains fresh when it gives away the water that it receives.

The Lord is pleased only when you do things the Lord desires! How else can you win his grace? How else than by nursing and nourishing, succoring and saving his children?

Sathya Sai Speaks 7, p.196

When we start, it is difficult for us to know how to serve. We must carefully appraise our abilities and choose an appropriate field of service. We must learn to be selfless and caring, but just as important, we must be effective and truly helpful. Our service should match our skills and training.

You must have not merely enthusiasm to serve, but the intelligence and the skill; then only can you be efficient and useful. Enthusiasm without efficiency is often a source of loss and grief.

Sathya Sai Speaks 5, p.125

The quantity of work done is not important. What is important is that service is motivated by pure ideals. We should serve others as we would serve God himself. The one who serves must act without selfishness, anger, or greed. The servant must act without desire of reward or recognition.

服务是对神虔诚 (*bhakti*) 的精髓，是虔诚者的真正气息，他的真实本质。它起自虔诚者的实在的体验 -- 一个说服他相信，‘一切众生皆神之子女，一切肉身皆安装神之神台，一切地方皆神之住所’ 的体验。

《沙迪亚赛说》第5章237面

我们永无止境地向上祈求圣恩。但如果我们不向他人伸出援手，我们如何能期盼获得圣恩？我们因无私的服务而赢得神的爱。迈进于灵道上，神爱我们比我们爱神更为重要。我们通过无私的服务来赢取神的爱和恩典。赛峇峇立下了一个无极限施与的好榜样，从不期盼回报。我们必须从灵性班毕业并遵主圣范。除了把所得的恩典转给他人外，还有什么更好的方式让我们回馈我们所得的恩典？河川不断地把得到的水送出去，所以它才能保持清新剔透。

唯遵主旨意始能取悦主！还有什么方法能赢得祂的恩典？除了看护和滋养，援助和救度祂的子女，还有其他更好的方式吗？

《沙迪亚赛说》第7章196面

当我们开始服务时，我们感到真难下手。我们必须谨慎判断我们的能力而选择一个适合的服务领域。我们必须学会不自私，予以关怀，同样重要，我们也必须讲求效率和助益。我们的服务应该配合我们的技术和训练。

仅仅热心服务还是不够，你必须拥有智能与技艺，然后才能有效和有用地达到成效。热心而无效率常导致损失和哀叹。

《沙迪亚赛说》第5章125面

所完成的工作的量并不重要，重要的是，服务是出于崇高的理想。要服务他人一如服务神。服务者必须排除私心、愤怒或贪婪，必须在不求回报或不在乎表扬的情况下进行。

When judging the service done by a member...it is not the quantity or the number of individual instances that matter; they do not count at all. Judge rather the motive that led him to serve, the genuineness of the love and compassion with which the seva was saturated. The explanation that appeals to Swami is that you did the seva with no taint of ego, and that you derived unsurpassed ananda (joy) as a result.

Sathya Sai Speaks 10, p.220

There are many tests for practitioners of service. As in the other spiritual disciplines, the Lord tests us to see that our selflessness is strong and genuine. We must learn to serve despite criticism and obstacles. Our wills must be strong enough to overcome ego and inertia. Obstacles appear to test and strengthen our resolve.

The Lord, too, will provide many tests to ensure that your faith is firm, that your spirit of seva is full and universal. The weaker practitioners of this seva sadhana will soon be shaken by these tests and stray away from the right path.

Sathya Sai Speaks 10, p.219

5. Crossing the Ocean

During the daytime, a window opens our vision to the horizons. At night, it reflects back only a picture of ourselves. The mind is like a window. It has no color or quality of its own, yet it reflects all that we see. If the light of our intellect is focused outside, it reveals the whole world. If it shines only on ourselves, it reflects a narrow vision of our ego. The act of service helps us to focus outside ourselves. It shows us that we are an inseparable part of the divine creation.

The joy of service grows and blossoms into detachment. When we serve God in others, we find that the Lord is resident in our own hearts also. Desire for personal gain vanishes and we experience lasting happiness. If the essential step of service is not practiced, then how can we know the joy?

在评判一个成员所做的服务时 --- 关键不在于量或个人实例的多寡；这些都不重要。宁可谈论带领他服务的动机，服务所洋溢的爱与仁的真诚。斯瓦米所欣赏的论点是你所作的服务没有任何自我的痕迹，而你从中获得无比的福乐。

《沙迪亚赛说》第10章220面

服务者会面对许多考验。如在其他灵修中一样，主试探和观察我们的无私是否坚强和真实。我们必须学会即便受到批评和面对障碍，我们仍勇往直前，继续服务。我们的意志必须够坚定以抗拒自我和惰性的侵蚀。障碍的出现加强我们的决心。

主一样也会给你诸多考验以确定你的信心是坚定的，你的服务精神是圆满的和普遍的。那些意志薄弱的服务者很快就被这些考验所动摇而偏离正轨。

《沙迪亚赛说》第10章219面

5. 横越海洋

白天，窗户打开我们的视野；黑夜，它只反映回我们自己的图像。心念有如一扇窗户。它没有自己的颜色或素质，然而它反映我们所看到的一切。如果我们的智能之光集中于外在，它就展示整个世界。如果它只照着我们自己，它反映我们自我的一个狭窄的影像。服务行动协助我们聚焦于我们的外在。它给我们展示，我们是神圣万物的不可分开的一部分。

服务的喜悦发展成舍离。如果我们服务神于他人，我们发现主也寓于自己的内心。于是，个人得益的欲望消失了，体验持久的福乐也达致了。若不实行服务的基本步骤，如何能理解喜乐？

One cannot cross the ocean of this cycle of births and deaths by visiting many sacred places, nor can one do it by performing japa and studying sastras (holy books). It is only possible to do so by performing seva, or service.

Summer Showers 1973, p.75

The spiritual fact is that we can grow only by expressing love in action. The inspiring truth is that we should be grateful to those who allow us to serve them – who have given us an opportunity to approach closer to God. And most humbling and most exalting – because all exists in Oneness – is the fact that when we serve others, we are actually only serving ourselves!

Questions for Study Circle:

1. What is service?
2. Why should we serve?
3. What kind of service should we do?
4. Whom do we serve?
5. How does service help us to find God?
6. Is it possible to serve God in other people?
7. How can service reduce our negative qualities?
8. Can we love God and not serve others?
9. Does service please God?
10. Is self-realization possible without doing service for others?

References for Further Study

1. Gita Vahini, pp.242-243 (Sathwic, rajasic, thamasic charity).
2. Jnana Vahini, p.36 (Service is not fruitful apart from spiritual practice).
3. Sathya Sai Speaks 5, p.208 (One cannot serve when the senses drag him away).
4. Sathya Sai Speaks 5, pp.327-332.
5. Sathya Sai Speaks 6, pp.79-82, 272-278.
6. Sathya Sai Speaks 8, pp.1-4.
7. Sathya Sai Speaks 9, pp.130-133 (Service brings many benefits, including grace).

一个人不能凭借参访诸多圣地或凭借持名念经和研读经典就得以横越这生死轮回的海洋。只有执行服务工作才得到解脱。

《夏季浸濡》1973年，75面

灵性的成长只有把爱表现于行动上始可获得，这是不争的事实。令人鼓舞的事实是，我们要感激那些让我们为他们服务的人 --- 他们给我们机会更接近神。而最谦卑和最令人兴奋的是 --- 基于万物是一体 --- ‘服务他人无异于服务自己’ 这个事实！

学习圈的问题:

1. 服务是什么？
2. 为什么要服务？
3. 应该做哪一类的服务？
4. 我们为谁服务？
5. 服务如何协助我们找到神？
6. 有可能服务神于他人之中吗？
7. 服务如何能减少我们负面的德性？
8. 能在不服务他人的情况下爱神吗？
9. 服务取悦神吗？
10. 不服务他人能明心见性吗？

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8. Sathya Sai Speaks 10, p.54 (Service is the most effective means to reduce ego and realize brotherhood).
9. Sathya Sai Speaks 10, p.94 (You do service for your own benefit).
10. Sathya Sai Speaks 10, pp.97-99.
11. Sathya Sai Speaks 11, p.113 (Service is worship offered to the Lord).
12. Sathya Sai Speaks 11, pp.198-200.
13. Summer Showers 1973, pp.75-85.
14. Summer Showers 1974, p.216 (One should not incur debt to do service).
15. Summer Showers 1979, p.9 (Merit acquired from service cannot be gained even from rigorous austerity).

Knock - the doors of Grace will open. Open the door - the Sun's rays waiting outside will flow silently in and flood the room with light.

- Baba

敲门，神恩的门就会打开。打开门，外面的阳光就会静静的流入，充满室内。

- 峇峇

Here at last is a clear and accurate guide to the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. *Pathways to God* presents these teachings according to topics such as meditation, selfless service, peace, love, etc. Each topic is supported by numerous quotations from the writings of Sathya Sai Baba.

Revered throughout the world for his miracles, love and service, Sathya Sai Baba has become a legend in his own time. Never in modern history has a holy man swept so fully into the life of seekers in all parts of the world. Indeed his name and his message promise to bring about a new age in man's spiritual understanding.

Pathways to God provides the complete structure for an inspiring study circle. The provocative questions and the extensive references at the end of each chapter help clarify the reader's understanding of the material. It is an invaluable aid to the beginner as well as the advanced student.

“This book is a gold mine for anyone seeking to understand life and spirituality, if indeed we can separate the two. Jonathan Roof has provided us with easy access to the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba. The topics he has chosen are the ones that are commonly questioned by new aspirants as well as by long-time seekers. Here we are given an opportunity to read about these topics and a chance to continue our individual research through Reference Notations for Further Study.”

Bea Flaig, Educator, EHV Staff Developer

“I personally enjoyed reading Pathways to God, and consider it a valuable addition to the growing body of literature about Sai Teachings. The author includes many quotations of Baba that clarify important points about how to conduct a good Study Circle.”

William M. Harvey

最终呈现于此的是对斯里沙迪亚赛峇峇教导的一个清晰而明确的指南。《归神之道》是依据坐禅，无私服务，平和，爱等论题而提供这些教导。每一个论题都得到沙迪亚赛峇峇所说的诸多语录的支持和论证。

他的神迹，爱和服务受到全世界的尊敬，沙迪亚赛峇峇在其所在时代已成为一位传奇人物。在近代史中，从来没有一位圣哲像他一样那么全面地席卷世界各地的求道者。他的名和他的福音确实有望给人类在灵性悟知上带来一个新的时代和阶段。

《归神之道》给一个启发性的学习圈提供完整的架构。每一章的结尾都有激发人心的问题和广泛全面的参考资料以协助读者澄清对素材的理解。对初入门者或高班学生而言，这不啻是一个无价的帮助。

“对任何探讨生命和灵性的人而言，此书是一座金矿。乔纳森罗夫提供了我们一条易于了解沙迪亚赛峇峇教导的捷径。他所选用的论题是初入门的求道者以及资深的求道者所共同质询的论题。在此，我们获得一个机会去阅读有关这些论题并且有机会通过‘深入探讨的参考注释’继续个人的研究。”

比弗莱克，教育工作者，人类价值教育培训员

“我个人乐于阅读《归神之道》并认为，对正在增大的有关赛教导文献的主体而言，它是一个价值非凡的附加物。作者概括了许多峇峇的语录；这些语录给有关如何办好一个成功的学习圈，澄清诸多要点。”

威廉哈维

The thirst for worldly goods can never be appeased; trying to satisfy it makes it only more acute.

- Baba

那股对世间之物的渴求，永远无法满足。试图去满足它，只会令那种渴望更加尖锐。

- 峇峇