

## 24. Serve selflessly, without attachment to the fruits thereof

A set of people with curious ideas have cropped up recently, and they strut about with great pride, for they have no yearning for God, even no use for God; they engage in service (*seva*), and they are satisfied with service! But the essence of service is selflessness and abnegation of the fruit thereof, and these service people have no right to look down upon the godly and the spiritual aspirants as inferior. For that is but reaching for the fruit while neglecting the tree! Selfless service is the final fruit of the Godward discipline. That is the attitude of renunciation of the fruit of action (*who reall*). How can the fruit be gained without the long and laborious nurture of the tree? The very foundation of renunciation of the fruit is love (*prema*) toward all beings, love that seeks no reward. Without spiritual experience of this higher love, selfless service is impossible.

At present, the world is full of people who clamour for good profit for themselves but are unwilling to give good value for the things they receive. They want God, but they are engaged in the cultivation of some other crop! They don't seek God and strive for God day and night; on the other hand, they have installed the god of wealth in their hearts and spend all their time and energy worshipping it and praying for its favour.

How pure is the heart full of devotion (*bhakthi*) to God and love (*prema*) toward all things! Selfless service is possible only by such; the rest only prattle about it and pretend to be impelled by it. Only those who are well established in the faith that all are children of God, that He is the inner motive force of every being, can include themselves in that class of social servants.

Those who say they have no use for God or devotion have egotism as the core of personality and exhibition as its outer rind. However much is written and read, that egotism will not wither away. Ego consciousness leads to self-aggrandizement, and when self holds sway over the heart, no deed worthy to be styled service can emanate from them. It is sheer selfish greed that makes one label the deed as service.

Ignorance will not vanish until this discrimination dawns:

This world is only God and nothing else.  
Everything, every being, is but His manifestation,  
Bearing withal a new name and a new form.

Love this truth, and believe in it. Then you have the right to speak of service (*seva*), devotion (*bhakthi*), and righteousness (*dharma*) as well as the authority to preach these three paths. Knowledge of the reality will show you that service, devotion, and righteousness are all one and indivisible. Without that knowledge, selfless service, etc., become mere exercises in hypocrisy.

Every act done with the consciousness of the body is bound to be egotistic; selfless service can never be accomplished while immersed in the body-consciousness. But consciousness of God (*Deva*) instead of body (*deha*) will bring forth the splendour of love (*prema*). With that as inspiration and guide, one can achieve much good without even knowing or proclaiming selfless in outlook. For such a person, it is all God's will, His play (*leela*), His work.