



MEANING

Selfless service or Seva in Sanskrit is a service which is performed without any expectation of result or award for performing it. Such services can be performed to benefit other human beings or society.

Being selfless is always willing to give to others without looking for personal gain. If you give time, money, or things to other people without expecting something in return, that is selfless attitude. Most people agree that the world would be a far better place if there were more selfless behaviour.

The value of selfless service is found in many religions and spiritual traditions around the world. Indian religions refer to selfless service which is thought to advance a person's spiritual growth or development. "Seva" is a Sanskrit word which means service or work performed without any thought of reward or repayment. In ancient India seva was believed to help one's spiritual growth and at the same time contribute to the improvement of a community.

Selfless Service explained by H.H. Sri Swami Sivananda

- God's plan for man's evolution is work. Love of God and service of man is the secret of true life. The meaning of true life is service and sacrifice. Life is meant for service, and not for self-seeking Sacrifice! Do your duties well, sincerely. Your privileges will follow unasked.
- Hold your life for the service of others. The more the energy you spend in elevating and serving others, the more the divine energy which will flow to you.
- Serve. You will rule. Serve humanity with divine Bhava. The cancer of individuality will be dissolved.
- Selfless Service Purifies. What is the object in Seva or service? Why do you serve poor people and the suffering humanity at large? Why do you serve the society and the country? By doing service, you purify your heart. Egoism, hatred, jealousy, idea of superiority vanishes. Humility, pure love, sympathy, tolerance, and mercy are developed. Sense of separateness is annihilated. Selfishness is eradicated. You get a broad outlook of life. You begin to feel oneness or unity of life. You develop a broad heart with broad, generous views. Eventually, you get Knowledge of the Self. You realise the 'One-in- all' and 'all-in-One'. You feel unbounded joy.
- The first step in the spiritual path is selfless service of humanity. Selfless service is the watchword along the road to salvation. Selfless service of humanity prepares the aspirant for the attainment of cosmic consciousness, or the life of oneness or unity with God. Aspirants should direct their whole attention in the beginning towards removal of selfishness by protracted selfless service.
- Through selfless service and charity, develop the heart and cleanse the lower mind. Purify your heart by selfless and humble service of the poor and the afflicted, and make it a fit abode for God to dwell. Selfless service alone can purify your heart and fill it with divine virtues. Only the pure in heart will have the vision of God.
- Grow in love, purity, and self-sacrifice. Live for others. You will attain the state of blessedness. Selfless service and cosmic love are the Ganga and the Yamuna that irrigate the field of the human heart and enable the rich harvest of peace, joy, prosperity, immortality, and Atma-jnana to be reaped.
- Opportunities for Selfless Service. The world is yourself. Therefore, love all, serve all, be kind to all, embrace all. Behold the Lord in the poor, the down-trodden; the oppressed and lowly ones.

- Become a servant of humanity. This is the secret of attaining God-realisation. Seek out the lowly and the miserable; cheer up and bring a ray of comfort to them by serving them unstintingly. Console the disconsolate. Comfort the distressed. You will be blessed.
- Serve your parents, elders, teachers, and guests with divine Bhava. Wash the clothes of your parents, elders, the sick, and the Mahatmas.
- Feed the hungry, nurse the sick, comfort the afflicted, and lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful. God will bless you. Clothe the naked. Educate the illiterate. Feed the poor. Raise the down-trodden. The world is burning with misery and suffering. Wake up, O man! Serve! Serve with love. Serve untiringly. Attain the peace of the Eternal.
- Have a knowledge of homoeopathy or Dr. Schussler's Twelve Tissue Remedies. Now serve the sick and the needy. And with first-aid knowledge, always give first help in all cases of emergency. Get medicine from the hospital or the dispensary for the helpless and deserving neighbours. Visit a hospital daily, if you can, or weekly, and give your best attention to the non-paying wards. Distribute oranges, if you can. Sit by the side of the patient and speak a few encouraging words. Smile awhile. Repeat, if you can, the Sahasranama of the Lord or the like. Tell him that you will meet him 'tomorrow'; and meet him.
- Collect some old clothes and distribute them to the needy. Distribute a few pies to the lame, the blind, and to the hungry mouths as you walk along the street. Serve any social institution for one hour daily without any remuneration.
- Meet your friends and the members of your society in a common place once a week or a fortnight for Satsanga and Kirtana. Develop an understanding heart. Help your younger brothers in the spiritual path. Lift them up. Throw light on their path; Do not expect perfection from them. Be kind to them. They are doing their best, as you are yourself doing yours. You will grow by helping them.
- Finally, think for yourself, how best you can utilise your energy, your intellect, your education, your wealth, your strength, or anything you possess, for the betterment of others who are low-placed in life, and for society in general.