

PRACTISING MANSA SEVA
Dadi Janki

SENDING ...

When we use the term *mansa seva*, we are talking about service with the mind, but the mind is deeply connected with the heart. The mind creates thoughts, and the heart has feelings. If a thought arises but there is not that feeling in my heart, how can I serve? Or the other way round, if there is a feeling but there isn't the thought, then again how can it work? Service happens through honesty, through compassion, and through feelings of love. It is the heart's desire to do something. It feels that it is necessary that I should do this.

Everyone is engaged in action; there is nobody who can stay without action. But when we use the word *service*, then the motivation behind the action is love and compassion – that's what makes us serve. Spirituality helps in terms of service. When we say spiritual service, then it is the *spiritual being* we are serving, but the service will happen through the body.

From childhood I have had feelings of service, and I have found it very pleasurable to be able to serve, whether it was serving the poor or serving the sick. I have seen how God has served all of us souls, and God has transformed us souls through His service. Service has to be altruistic, without the thought of "I." I have to forget myself. I cannot even have the thought that I am serving because I want the good wishes and blessings of others. I am simply serving. Automatically, as a result of this service, I become worthy of receiving the blessings of others.

In 1989 when I was living in London, I received a message from the founder of the Brahma Kumaris to be forwarded to Uncle Steve Naraine who was in San Francisco preparing to have a second open-heart surgery. The message called on him to go beyond the somber predictions of the medical community and to focus his mind on the spiritual dimension of what was going on in his life. Before sending the message on, I added a note reminding him of the role played by life's drama -- that we cannot control the events of life, but we can choose to respond to events with a deep faith that whatever is happening to us will bring benefit.

I know Uncle to be a person who never has doubts and for whom the thread of Godly love has never diminished. Because of his love for God and his faith, I knew everything would be fine. I knew that God would take care of everything and would make the right things happen. There was such a strong pull of Godly love that the thought arose that I should travel to San Francisco personally. The plans for the trip came together naturally and quickly without any obstacles coming in the way. It really felt as if God was making it happen, and the power of Uncle's honesty and love was the stimulus to move everything.

I was taken from the airport directly to the hospital where he was recovering from the surgery in the Intensive Care Unit. At the time of seeing Uncle in the Intensive Care Unit, there was no conscious thought that I was actually doing anything or serving in any way. Instead, there was a very powerful sense of God's presence and sharing the experience of God. I took great inspiration from the doctor. I understood the total humility with which he was serving, and that he didn't really even want the acknowledgment of thanks, and so I actually did not see him. I am sure he must have felt a "divine power" working through his hands.

In the history of my relationship with Uncle Steve, there has always been a very deep spiritual connection of love and affection from the moment that he came to this study with the Brahma Kumaris. I don't even think that it was a question of serving that soul. I would say that it is more a matter of mutual respect. When I emerge the soul of Uncle Steve in front of me, there are simply sweet feelings of helping those who are part of the spiritual family. When one is close to God, then one is able to sense when others are also close to God, and so there is a feeling of great love for each other. He has his own spirituality and his own relationship with God, and so what help could I give? Recognizing a soul who has his own close relationship with God, the feelings in my mind were of great happiness and simply wanting to offer support.

When one recognizes the specialties of each one, the virtues of each one, then this increases the feelings of friendship and a shared bond of service together. It is a connection of deep, spiritual, Godly love for each other, which is part of the *sanskar** of the soul. Of course there are other souls who are in situations of karmic bondage or who have some weakness, and it is important to give them that spiritual love to support them and help them. Sometimes there are souls who feel hopeless, and it is important to serve them with the mind and fill them with hope again. This is very essential service. It is subtle service to awaken hope in someone who has lost hope. Others may have a great deal of ego. So on the one hand, there is that inferiority complex; but on the other side, there is the superiority complex -- they think they are better than others. Those souls don't think they need any help, but there is a deep feeling of compassion for them and the thought, "Let me help them so that they can be free from ego." They should be able to experience a realization of truth through good company. That also gives help to souls. It is not right that I should leave them and forget about them. It is my duty out of that sense of love that I should try to help them so that they are able to see themselves. They perhaps don't know the value and the importance of humility and truth. With love and tirelessness, one should be ready to serve such souls.

So there are three different varieties of service through the mind that I have just mentioned:

- Service with feelings of love and mutual respect for one who already has a close relationship with God,
- Service with feelings of love and support for those who are feeling weak, and
- Service with feelings of love and compassion for those who don't believe they need any help.

Service through the mind is unlimited. The feeling is, "Let every soul receive whatever it is they need at the time that they need it." Then there is unlimited service. My mind really has to be very open and generous, so I don't have the thought that I have tried to help them, but I don't see any results or they are not showing any signs of changing. I must not keep that thought. But with love let me continue. I must not notice negative comments or criticisms, but I must be tireless so I don't give up serving through the mind.

The spirit of service creates that perfect image of the self. One enjoys being an instrument to serve. It is an opportunity to use God's virtues and God's powers in the self. I don't have these; they are not natural within me at this time. They are the gifts from God as my inheritance, and if I can use them, then it is my great fortune to be able to do so.

**Sanskar* is a Hindi word depicting the invisible blueprint of thoughts and assumptions that govern our actions.