Seva Bhav

Service with an Attitude

Chinmaya Mission started in 1950 with one thought, one concept, one vision of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. We all feel indebted for it and probably never imagined its expansion this far and wide. This seed was well planted and nurtured for us to experience how it branched out beautifully into CM-DFW where we all currently serve.

Although our teachers are our front end system, there are countless other volunteers in background supporting and enabling us to operate smoothly. It is indeed heart warming to see their vigor and vitality to understand His vision and propagate the vision. Some of our youngest volunteers are the BV kids who serve as teachers, bookstore operators, walkathon ambassadors selling t-shirts, and numerous other roles they play. It is akin to the little squirrel who did it’s level best to help build the bridge for Lord Rama to cross over to Lanka. No effort is too small. My heart is fulfilled simply looking around to see this army of volunteers and their contributions to belong to the vision.

Currently we offer eleven sessions across CM-DFW locations. Nine of these are offered at three centers (Chinmaya Saaket, Chinmaya Chitrakoot and Frisco) along with two more at the Bhutanese community center. This growth is certainly not possible without seva (service) from the army of volunteers.

Rol – What’s in it for me

This seva movement, or serving, is a Jnana Ganga to wash out all our impurities. We are the ultimate beneficiaries, and if by chance others also benefit, consider it is a bonus! Don’t fall trap to thinking of improving world and making colossal change through your seva. Focus on yourself. You will see your own transformation through your commitment to shashtra (scriptures) and vichaar (contemplation).

Seva has to be seen in light of multiple factors. Three of them are listed below:

1. Comprehensive View

Seva should be performed in light of knowledge. Understand your role in the larger scheme of events. For example, in our scriptures, there are stories of a rishi Swami Paramananda and his students that point out the silliest impacts of serving in absence of knowledge. What teacher says and what the students understand is so different! In absence of comprehensive understanding of Seva, the service provided will be hilarious. Once the teacher asked the students to message his feet. He falls asleep as they massage his feet and suddenly woke up to see the students get into a fight. They were upset about the obstacles in their service and unable to massage the assigned feet because the teacher’s own legs crossed over each other in his sleep. So one student was ready to chop off the leg that obstructed his service; and the other student was ready to crush the leg that prevented him from massaging his assigned foot. All this in spirit of Seva! But that narrow interpretation is not the answer. Be focused on your role in relation to understanding where you fit in the larger picture.
2. **Love and Compassion**

Secondly, have compassion towards the ones served. The basic two-fold qualifications for a Balavihar teacher is to have love for kids and love for Sanatana Dharma. Teachers value Sanatana Dharma enough to pass in to next generation simply because they realize how much it has helped them. Love and compassion are most crucial. Anyone can serve. But serving with love it is an act of giving without any expectation; giving without taking. Many people get frustrated and ask “How long should I keep giving?” We should do it and serve as long as it takes. It is the intensity of love matters; you are the role model. Keep giving until it ignites a sparks in their understanding.

3. **Self Transformation**

More important than who we are serving is the focus on your own self. Don’t serve because someone needs it; but serve because it is your own necessity to serve. Growth is in this attitude alone. If the feeling of superiority creeps up and you focus on the haves and have-nots, it will become a cause of your own agitations. These feelings of inequality will create constant restlessness in you and you will not experience peace, tranquility or joy. Attitude of superiority creates distress and disturbances within you. So instead, your motto and focus should be on how you can give without getting established in the incorrect attitude. Self growth through seva is most important. When one is established firmly in that conviction, there won’t be any more comparisons popping up. It’s not what we do that brings joy; rather, it is our attitude or seva bhav that evokes the joy. We even say it through our pledge - … *Producing more than what we consume and Giving more than what we take* ....

**Summary**

When we serve with this comprehensive view and understanding, we will undoubtedly express with love and humility. Presence of these factors leads to natural reverence. It is a holy communion when there is both love and respect. You can see plenty of examples in competitive teams or human relations in general where they may have respect for each other but there is no shared love. When you infuse the relation with love plus the respect, there is so much empathy and compassion that flows naturally.

Aligned with this vision, we can create joy and peace. Let us invoke Pujya Gurudev’s blessing to stir up the spirit of joy. Understand His vision and make this place a platform to cherish love and grow.

Hari Om.