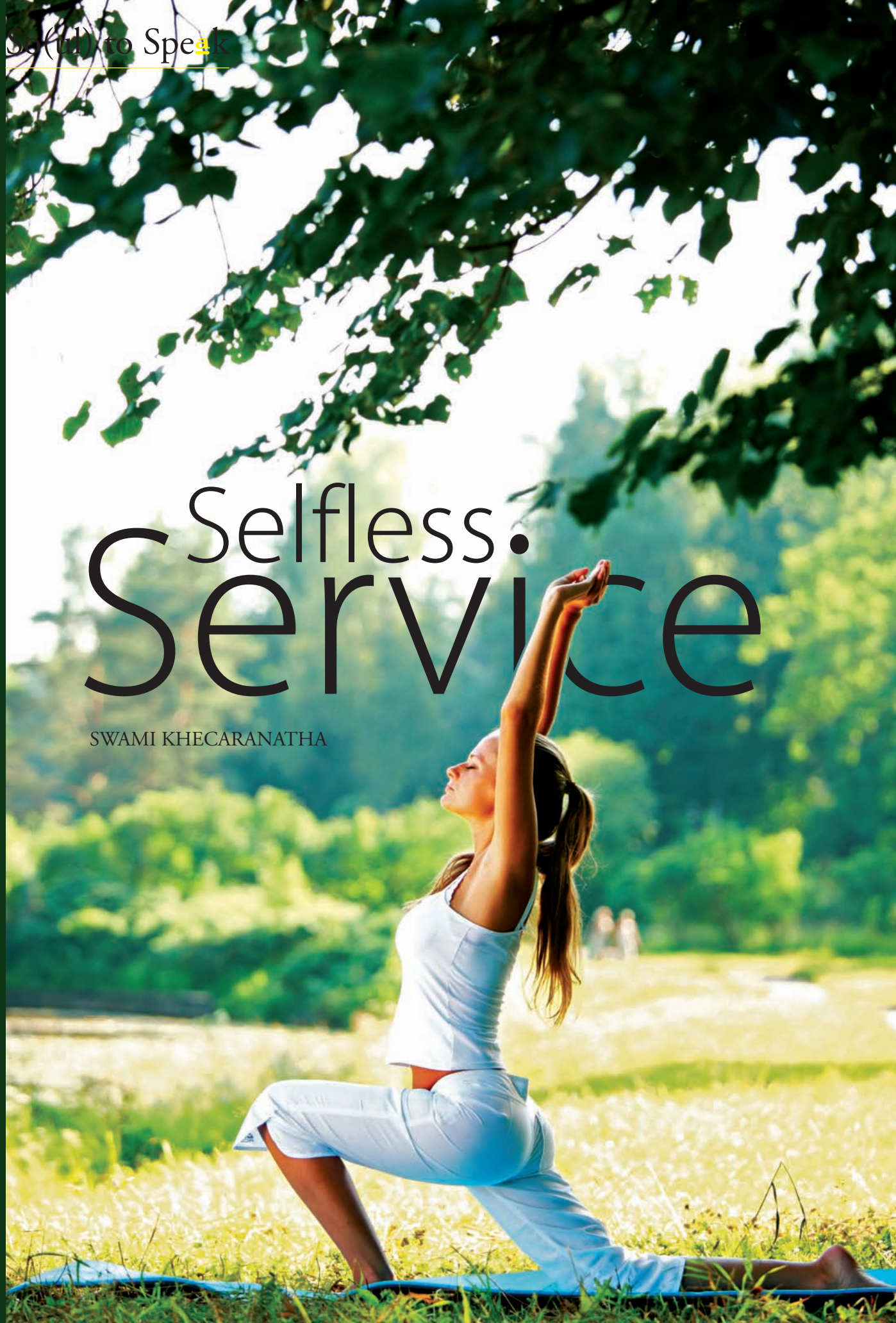


# Selfless. Service

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Grace is a gift from God. We have been given the opportunity to know and love the Divine—to experience a lifetime of growth and celebration. In return, we offer our gratitude and selfless service. Selfless service, or *seva*, comes from an open heart and is centered in a profoundly simple place within. The desire to serve arises from the merging of our heart with the heart of God, in a state of complete surrender. Selfless service is simply the natural expression of the love, gratitude, and devotion we feel. We can't help but think, "How can I give back to the life that has given me this joy?" The Indian saint Bhagavan Nityananda expressed this beautifully when he said, "As is your devotion, so is your liberation." Service is a reflection

One of the primary ways we can knock the walls down is by deciding to truly give of ourselves—and to do so when it's wanted and needed and especially when we don't want to give. But we *do* give, because it expands our boundaries. It really requires that we open our hearts more. Isn't this what we say we want? We get past our limitations when we serve and surrender.

The restructuring of our consciousness involves finding a deeper inner awareness, tuning in and feeling it in ourselves, and then extending it outward from our center. When we serve somebody, we are allowing the openness we found inside to expand and make contact with another person.

## Dissolving Our Boundaries

The experience of living in the flow of life and energy dissolves all sense of something "happening to me." It dissolves duality itself—the sense that there is "me" and something "other." As we grow, we continually reach into the experience that there is unity in life, and yet part of us retains the feeling of separation.

To create a more permanent connection with the Divine, we make an effort to reach deeper inside. We meditate more, and at the same time learn to extend past our boundaries, past the place where we feel the discontinuity between the Unity within and the loss of that

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# Service is a reflection of the awareness we connect to in ourselves and what we express in our actions.

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of the awareness we connect to in ourselves and what we express in our actions. We serve because it frees us to know our own Divinity.

Our ego keeps us from this Self-knowledge, and it is fear of losing ourselves that keeps the ego functioning. We live in a box, which defines our life in many ways. We get trapped in patterns, thinking, "This is what my life is. This is what I can or can't do, and this is what I will or won't do." If we wish to extend past these preconceptions, we must exert some effort to break free, because we all carry a resistance and an unwillingness to change. We must huff and puff and blow our own walls down, and not accept the smallness.

This is how we nourish them.

Surrender and service are the easiest things to do if we open our hearts and tune in to the Divine. Then it is not even "you" giving but simply Divinity flowing through you, shedding light on everything. Living beyond desire and attachment does not mean we do not care. Be passionate when you care about something. Be passionate from an open heart and with an open hand. This is the foundation from which we can really serve, because we are not concerned about what we are going to get in return. The work of a liberated person is simply to give, and we can only do this when we have freed ourselves from the selfishness of our own need.

Unity when we engage the world. It is through service that we start to dissolve our separation, those subtle veils of duality.

The concept of service can be boiled down to one simple statement: Selfless service is about giving what is wanted and needed and not what we want to give. That is exactly why it breaks down our boundaries, because in order to really give what is needed, we have to get past our limitations. We have to get beyond the resistance to giving.

Service requires us to open up and push through these boundaries. We begin to move into a state where our identity is dissolved, and we can have a life that is simply an expression of consciousness,

# So(ul) to Speak

of higher awareness. So although selfless service is getting past ourselves and giving to others, we are, in fact, the ultimate recipient.

I've said that service comes from an open heart. If the heart is filled with stuff, then it is not open. It does not matter where the obstructions came from, who put them there, or why they are there. The issue is whether we leave them lodged inside us. If we open our heart all the blocks dissolve. It is truly within each person's capacity to reach a state of openness at any moment, if our wish is profound enough. We seek to completely transcend our problems and fears—to live in a state of simply loving God. It is our ability to not only have that experience but to translate it into action that is the true test of our understanding of, and our commitment to, living in openness.

## Serving the Divine

Service is transcending our personal needs and expressing a devotion and love for God that allows us to surrender to Divine Will. So often, when we hear a statement like that we immediately get nervous. Our reaction is, "*What do you mean? I have to give up what I want?*" However, that is not what the statement implies. It simply means that we have to transcend our



preconceived ideas about what our personal needs are. In surrendering to Divine Will, we may get what we want or we may not. The critical issue is this: Are we able to transcend our preconceptions and live from a state of fulfillment even if we do not end up having the things we *think* we want and need? There is, as Mick Jagger points out, a very important distinction between getting what we want and getting what we need.

We are always serving the Divine. We are serving the freedom that already exists within us, opening to the Divinity that is trying to express itself through us. And although there will be many times when we don't want to serve, the issue is whether we dwell in our resistance or use the opportunity to move past our own boundaries. We learn to get beyond tuning in to our private radio station KAMAT—"All Me, All the Time"—and dial in to KGOD, "All God, All the Time." That's why we serve, regardless of the situation. We do it because we made a choice for liberation, and there is one guarantee that comes with our

wish to serve—that we will have exactly what we need to provide us the opportunity for growth.

If devotion and service are part of the path of finding God, we cannot expect to go down that road without having to get a little bit bigger than we currently are. We should trade our own narrow understanding of what we want and need in this life, for the profound magnificence of what is available to us. Which one do we choose? All too often we attach ourselves to our perceived needs, give life to them, and spend the rest of our lives trying to justify and fulfill our desires. We have such limited capacity to imagine what is possible for us that we attach ourselves to the most

have to serve that situation or serve that person?” We miss the point of *seva*—which is to become selfless! It is said that God’s favorite name for Himself is “The servant of servants.” For humans, service involves emptying ourselves of our limited perspective and understanding so that our own Divinity and freedom can show itself.

The essential question to consider when evaluating our commitment to service is, “Am I serving the highest in me through my actions? Am I liberating the Divine within me?” When we have the courage to ask in these terms, it helps us make a lot of decisions. We learn that the service we do in the world, for our spiritual

ability to truly serve in a detached way, without needing a reward or a response, is beginning to say to God, “Thy will be done. May my will be Your will.”

We must open and change based on what we are being asked to change. Otherwise we miss that opportunity. But this is the power of the ego—to reject even what God is trying to show us. It is vital that you understand what it is you are seeking. Understand the depth of wish required to achieve that goal and the transformation you will have to go through in order to attain it. We must learn our lessons when they are given, receiving whatever messages God sends, whenever he chooses to send them, even if they aren’t easy to

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## Selfless service is about giving what is wanted and needed and not what we want to give.

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meaningless pursuits, thinking they will give us fulfillment. These pursuits are not inherently bad, but in chasing them we don’t allow the magnificence of Divine Grace to penetrate into our awareness.

### Learning to Serve the Highest in Ourselves

It takes a long time to understand the foundation of service—that we are not serving anybody or anything, but simply serving the Divinity that happens to express itself in these forms. There is a parable in which Jesus is knocking on people’s doors asking for food, and nobody recognizes him. Unfortunately, we get caught in the dualistic position of, “Why should I

community, for our teacher, and for the people we know, is all building the muscle, the capacity to ask that question and to eventually answer, “Yes.” Service is not something separate from our life. We don’t live our spiritual life in one dimension and then serve “over there.”

Every aspect of our life is integrated and everything we practice helps to transform us, to crack the walls of duality. Often this change requires a bit of force, and we need help to get past our boundaries. Serving can allow a plan to be revealed to us that is in our highest and best interest—and I think we can all accept that our own plans are not always in our highest interest. The

digest. True service has no pattern to it, and growing spiritually is a perilous choice. If we are not devoted to our freedom, we will not make that choice.

Reaching the juncture where we are ready to begin serving selflessly is a cause for celebration. All the service we’d been doing up until then was essentially priming the pump, getting us to the point when we truly see ourselves. It is in that moment, when we realize we were not being selfless, that we must step up and access a deeper, unconditional willingness to serve. This is when we can really change and become bigger. So we serve as best we can until we get to that point, and then decide what we want to do about



reaching a deeper level of service.

Don't ever let there be a conflict in your mind between serving and growing. Serving and growing are the same. If we do not grow, we will not serve because we will not have the capacity to do so. This is why we start with the person next to us and try to serve them deeply—because it forces us to grow. One trap many people face is that they extend their energy and constantly give and give, so they do not have to face themselves and change. In this case they may be doing something for someone, but they are not really serving others, or themselves. They are not growing in the process, but are acting from some mask of the ego, to protect

a profound love in ourselves and sincerely wanting to expand that and serve a higher purpose. But somehow, between the time we have that experience and the time we walk out our door, we lose the awareness. When we find love within ourselves, the question becomes: Can we translate it into action? Most of what we do is an extension of our restricted, lower self—the part of us that does not experience Oneness. We can't help but reflect that in our actions. When we function from the state of Oneness, there is no individual remaining, and therefore no limitation to our consciousness or our ability to express a higher awareness in action. If we wish

deeper in return. We learn to move past our attachment to our actions or to our situation in life, and are open to receiving whatever God wants to give. Giving and receiving are inseparable.

Our individuated growth is the most profound act of selfless service because we are allowing the Divine to emerge from within us, and this fulfills the very purpose for which God created our life. Wanting to know God is not an act of selfishness. The reality is that it is only God wanting to know Himself. When we surrender our life to serving the Divine, we are absorbed in the expression of Divine Love and can fully receive Divine Grace. We are immersed in and surrendered to the unity of life.

## Don't ever let there be a conflict in your mind between serving and growing. Serving and growing are the same.

something within them. If we are really serving, it is going to expose our agendas.

Sometimes, it seems that in a thousand hours of service, only a small fraction is really an expression of selfless service—and yet, experiencing this state of selflessness is incredible. We know why we are serving, and we work to be in that space again, to create that permanent immersion into selflessness. We get glimpses of it, or even big shots of it, and then it fades away. Moving in and out of that awareness is the process we go through, and we continue to work every day until we are firmly established in a higher place.

We all have some experience of feeling

to transform our awareness, we must serve and experience selflessness, because this is what takes us beyond duality.

In time, what gets revealed to us is that the flip side of selfless service is the capacity to selflessly receive. Even if service exhausts us, we recognize that we are receiving something much

We must embrace this ultimate field of awareness if we want our realization, and it is from this depth of consciousness that true selfless service is possible. ●

*Excerpted from the book *Depth Over Time: Kundalini MahaYoga, A Path of Transformation and Liberation*.*



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