

SEWA – WHAT CAN I DO?

Sewa – a Sanskrit word, that denotes selfless service. It is a crucial concept in various Indian religions, as serving others is indirectly worshipping god, who aims the welfare of all. In the following I will be taking a closer look at the different possibilities to perform sewa.

There are three types of sewa: tan (=physical service), man (=mental service) and dhan (=material service).

- Tan refers to physical work. For instance, one can cook, serve, clean or help at the place of worship.
- Furthermore, man involves using the mind, which is capable of talking, motivating, counseling, teaching, guiding, expressing or even just listening.
- Lastly dhan, a service provided by your wealth, which includes money, resources and materials. A donation to a local charity or sponsoring the education of a poor student exemplifies the material aspect of sewa.

It is vital to keep in mind, that all three facets of sewa are equally meaningful. The best sewa is achieved by helping a person in the right time and place. Otherwise often one's act is meaningless. Similarly, one must avoid greed and expectations such as fame, glory or prosperity. In addition to that, one shouldn't give the person in need the feeling of being subordinate or degraded. True sewa doesn't demean the confidence, cause negative sentiments or harm to the one being served.

Taking everything into consideration, one can do sewa, as much as one is mentally, physically or materially capable, to anyone living on mother earth. It can be as simple as donating your clothes to the poor and as complex as being a mother, who devotes time, money and effort to provide her child the best life possible. As long as one is sincere, selfless and shows gratitude, one is performing true sewa.