

Service is the only concern of the serf

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Respected brothers and sisters, Pranams. I feel honoured to present this small paper on the subject of the seminar viz. “Service is the only concern of the serf” in your august presence. This is the first paper I have presented in the series of seminars conducted by Imperience and as such it is a humble attempt on my part to express my understanding of the subject.

The subject of present seminar is “Service is the only concern of the serf”. This statement is a part of a paragraph and the full paragraph reads as follows. “Prayer is a sign of devotion. It shows that we have established our relationship with the Holy Divine. When the idea of Divine Mastership is established our position turns into

that of serf. Now service is the only concern of the serf.

The above mentioned paragraph taken as a whole presents Prayer as a sign of devotion which subsequently leads to Divine Mastership which results in our turning into a serf and then service becomes the only concern of the serf.

There are two parts addressed to in the statement namely Service and Serf. Service expressed by Pujya Babuji Maharaj is service which is absolutely selfless. As he says any kind of service, if done selflessly, is helpful. Service to fellow beings is service to God in the real sense, if it is not done out of any selfish motive.....(Sruti vol 2 page 254).

Pujya Babuji has equated anything other than selfless service as work which has been given to us in trust. We are duty bound to look after our children, our parents and we have a social responsibility, all of which has been given to us to perform. We should try and get rid of the undue attachments which we have and thus live in the constant thought that everything one does is as a duty to God. Service has always been understood by man as a stepping stone towards devotion and sacrifice. But what has been conveniently forgotten is the fact that service which is done selflessly is the one which helps and not service done with any ulterior motive.

One can serve selflessly only when he understands that all manifestation is an expression of the divine and by serving fellow

human beings he is serving the divine. When a person understands this he becomes a serf.

Here I would like to make a mention of the meaning of the word Serf, which states, "Serf is a member of a low social class in medieval times who worked on the land and was the property of the person who owned that land." The etymology of the word Serf is from the latin expression serus, servant, slave; akin to servire, to protect, preserve, observe, and perhaps originally, client, man under one's protection. A serf is a laborer who is bound to the land. Serfs differ from slaves in that serfs cannot be sold apart from the land which they work.

Now reflect back on the statement of Pujya Babuji which says, "When the idea of Divine Mastership is established our position turns into

that of serf” and compare it with the definition of serf which is referred to above. Serf in common parlance is referred to as a labourer belonging to a low social class and as such is bound to the soil and cannot be delinked from it.

I do not feel that this is the logic to which Babuji was referring to when he used the word serf. I think the linkage Babuji gave using the example of Bharata who did not allow his heart to be contaminated with anything but the esteem, regard, love and devoted worship of the Master is more apt and this Babuji says is the connecting link between the Master and the serf.

Let us now reflect for a while on why the example of Bharata was used while explaining the concept of serf. There were two other great bhaktas mentioned in the Ramayana viz.

Hanuman and Lakshmana. Hanuman was a bhakta who always believed in keeping the Master in his heart and being in his thought always. Hanuman did not believe in expressing his greatness or helping others, even the Lord, unless asked for. Lakshmana was always attentive to the needs of the Master and he was so attentive to his masters needs that he did not eat, drink or sleep for the whole of 14 years that he was with the lord. But in both the above cases their service was limited to service of the lord, there was not much done to serve the manifestation of the lord.

In contrast Bharatas contribution to the service of the Lord was to rule in lieu of him for the time the lord was away attending to the divine duty. Then why did Master use the example of Bharata to explain the concept of a serf? Let us

reflect further. Bharata ruled the land on behalf of the Master using his Padukas as a symbol of the Masters superiority serving the people as if the Master was serving without having any regard to his individual glory. His act was entirely selfless and he was instrumental in spreading the glory of the Lord and lived in the consciousness of the Lord. In fact when one reads the Ramayana and looks for references for the rule of Bharata nothing can be gathered. His act was so entirely selfless that the entire rule of 14 years is almost completely blacked out. This was the extent to which Bharata had negated himself and while Ramarajya is a word which is commonly used Bharata rajya is almost unheard off. Possibly this is the logic which Babuji was referring to when he used the word serf.

Another logic for using the word serf maybe as follows, a serf is one who cannot be delinked from the soil and has to be transferred along with the land. Let us for a moment assume that the land referred to is the karma bhoomi and we are all serfs bound to the master. If this is the case, then the statement of Babuji when he states that “Prayer is a sign of devotion. It shows that we have established our relationship with the Holy Divine. When the idea of Divine Mastership is established our position turns into that of serf,” makes absolute sense.

But the paradox here is that serf is someone who is bound to perform his duty whether he likes it or not without having regard to the benefits that may accrue from the duty so performed, in spiritual life one has to want to and firm up the relationship with the master by

continuous practice and assiduous sadhana and then what does one become, he becomes a serf who is bound to his master in thought, speech and action.

In this regard I would like to digress a bit and make a mention here about certain observations regarding Sahaj Seva Samsthan. The Sahaj Seva Samsthan people say is rendering service and not selfless service. In this regard I would like quote Pujya Babuji Maharaj “.....Service may be taken as the stepping stone towards devotion.....Service refers to the action of the physical body including the indriyas. But there is a mind as well in the background and the same thing must also be there in it. One might say that the actions of the body are all subject to the activity of the mind. So, when the body is engaged in service the mind must also be with it.

.....(Sruti page 255). In the same context Pujya Babuji states that “Our primary motive is to develop devotion and for that service is only means. We serve in the real sense only when our motive is sincere and honest. It carries with it a sense of duty as well as of love, the two being inseparable from each other (Sruti page 256).

The Sahaj seva samsthan was started keeping in view the above philosophy in mind and has been doing a honest and sincere effort. It does charge for the services it provides but only to the extent required for its sustenance and does not have any profit motive. While I agree this is a digression here from the subject, I thought it necessary because most of the organizations which are masquerading as if they are rendering yeoman service are nothing but organizations

which have been started with a profit motive which has not been the criterion in the operation of the samsthan.

Coming back to the subject under discussion all Service is to be done with an intention of helping fellow human beings with love, devotion and sincerity without any selfish interest or personal attachment. Only by doing this can universal love become prevalent.

One of the main methods as given by Pujya Babuji which helps us in doing this is the 9p.m Universal Prayer for Brotherhood. This is one of the surest means of promoting a sense of service in fellow human beings and is one of the primary forces which assists in the development of Universal love which is to live in the consciousness of Sri Ramchandraji. By the

process of meditations on points A and B the mind reaches a condition superior to selfish interest. This is because as Pujya Babuji has expressed “The thought of a spiritual man creates the atmosphere in accordance with the nature of one’s thought.....”(Sruti 257). So if people who are spiritually oriented and are evolved spiritually to some extent their thought power will definitely improve the general quality and standard of thinking of the human consciousness.

As Pujya Babuji expresses in his Message Tasteless Taste of Mergence “We should have good heart for all human beings. Then the power will run to them automatically”. This he says is the first step of spiritual regeneration and the edifice of spirituality is to be built on this foundation. In the same message he says that when you have a mind to do the work for the

good of humanity, you will naturally get it and it is not a desire to do something good to humanity but it is our duty to do so. When one has the broad heart to cover all humanity, the helping hand of Master is always at the back.

Therefore we are duty bound to necessarily adhere to meditations on points A and B which help in our spiritual progress. This is the service that Master expects from all aspirants.

The meditations on points A and B entirely convey the efficacy of the system of Natural Path. By meditation on point B before meditation one firms up the link with the Divine, by doing meditation on point A one starts thinking about others selflessly which is one of the main attributes of the Divine.

In spirituality one has to want to become a serf and live in the consciousness of **Sri Ramchandra by which we mean the life force which is eternal and nature of which consciousness is pure, unalloyed love that does not distinguish between any entities of the creation.**(Introduction to Sri Ramchandra's Rajayoga pg ix).

This is where the greatness of a serf lies wherein he serves because he likes to serve, wants to serve and because service is his nature and because by serving the manifestation of the Master he can express his love and devotion towards the Master. He does not have regard for his benefit he may get nor is he concerned about it. He serves because "Service is the sole concern of the serf".

The entire efficacy of the system of Natural path is expressed in the above statement and is explained quite clearly in the Efficacy of Sri Ramchandra's Rajayoga and as such it would be arrogant on my part to elucidate on points which have been explained at various stages by the masters of the system. I have tried to put forward possibly an academic understanding of the statement "Service is the sole concern of the serf" with respect to the Efficacy and I humbly request you to pardon any mistakes thereof.

Pranams