

Service (Sewa) and Expectation

January 2008

Points for consideration during the session:

- Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting
- 'We are born to serve others and others are born to receive service from us' (Satguru Baba Hardev Singh Ji)
- Should we expect reward, be it better health from doing service with your body or greater wealth from doing service with your money
- The reward for doing sewa is more sewa (Satguru Baba Hardev Singh Ji)

The following are some of the thoughts generated during the discussion:

Members of the congregation started off by defining their individual thoughts on what 'service' meant to them. It was said that service can be of many forms. For example, it can be physical such as bringing an elderly member of the congregation a chair to sit down on, or sweeping the floor at the Bhawan (place of worship). It could also be emotional, for example many felt that sharing your love is a form of service, and comforting someone in times of need is service. Service can also be monetary, giving donations or putting money towards charitable events. Members also felt that service could be carried out anywhere in the world, towards any individual, and not just devotees, God realised souls' or those in spiritual movements. Serving parents or siblings at home or serving friends, colleagues at work or school is also service. A devotee commented that if God resides everywhere and inside every individual, then service should be done towards anyone, anywhere.

The discussion moved on to another aspect of service which was 'reward and expectation.' There were various opinions on this concept. One devotee's opinion was that whilst doing service, reward should be the last thing on your mind as it makes the service no longer selfless. This devotee went on to say that service should be carried out with passion, and we should view it as our 'duty' towards mankind. By having expectations, the passion of service no longer exists. However, others felt that perhaps the expectation of reward may not be such a bad thing. One devotee went on to explain that if an individual does service with their body with the sincere wish to benefit from good health, then they will be blessed with good health. Furthermore, if an individual does service with their wealth with the sincere wish to be blessed with more wealth, it is not necessarily incorrect, as they are turning to God for blessings. An important point raised was that we do not have the right to judge whether a persons' service is selfless or not. Whether service is selfless is a matter between a devotee and God.

Another question generated during the discussion was 'How should service be carried out?' Again there were various views. One view was that service should be carried out 'automatically', in other words, one should not think that they are doing service. Service should be carried out when you recognise that something needs to be done and you undertake this without any thoughts or questions. It was felt that if service is undertaken this way, we can ensure that all duties that need to be completed, are completed. Often there are issues of 'who will take credit for a job well done?' However, by realising that something needs to be done and doing it without any expectations, thoughts or questions, we are sure to take forward the work of His Holiness. A contrasting view however, was that service is 'something special' and should be enjoyed, as it brings a warm comforting feeling from within, a feeling that you are doing a good deed, fulfilling a

duty and treating 'service' as 'service', not as a daily chore. However, are our daily chores not service too, if they are done for someone else? The discussion group could not define one correct way of carrying out service. In fact, it was highlighted that service is a very personal thing, and different people will generate and experience very personal and unique feelings towards service.

The group concluded that we should grasp any opportunity we get for doing service as we are very fortunate to have both the emotional strength and physique to serve others. A member of the group shared their personal experience when they witnessed the response of a fellow devotee who was in a wheelchair, during an announcement for service. It was explained that when an announcement was made for some work to be undertaken at the place of worship, the devotee in the wheelchair was restless to take part and was signaling to be included in the service. However, the devotee was unable to contribute to that particular activity because of his disability. It was explained that we must seize any opportunities we have to do service, as nobody knows what the future holds for us. A wise saint once asked a congregation, "What does God give when He is happy with you." The congregation was in thought and various answers were given such as cars, houses, money. The wise saint paused and answered "When God is happy with you, He gives you service." Finally, Satguru Baba Hardev Singh Ji has often stated that "the reward for doing sewa is more sewa." May we all grasp any opportunities for the service of mankind with the blessings of His Holiness.