



The Danger of Service Without Spirituality, by Meher Baba

Service, even when it is utterly selfless, ought to be guided by spiritual understanding; for selfless service, when unintelligently handled, often creates chaos and complications. It could even be the opposite of the desired effect. The real danger in service lies more in the possibility of your rendering it from a false motive than in making a mistake about the spiritual demands of the situation. If you render service in order to oblige a person and if you feel proud of doing it, you are not only doing spiritual harm to the recipient of your service but also to yourself. The consciousness that 'I am obliging someone' is the first to occur during the process of serving; but it can be annulled by the contrary thought, 'I am obliged by being given this opportunity of serving'. This latter thought facilitates the attitude of detachment and secures freedom from the bondage of good actions. Service based upon comprehensive understanding is not only selfless and adjusted to the spiritual demands of the recipient but is rendered with complete detachment. Such service takes the aspirant to the goal most rapidly. For most people the idea of service is inextricably bound with securing certain definite results in the objective world. For them service consists of removal of human suffering or illiteracy or other difficulties and handicaps that thwart the flourishing of individual or social life. This is the type of service rendered by aspirants, politicians, social reformers and other good people. Though this type of service is of immense spiritual importance, it is in its very nature unending. Therefore, as long as the idea of service is tied to the idea of results, it is inevitably fraught with a sense of incompleteness. There can be no realisation of Infinity through the pursuit of a never-ending series of consequences. On the other hand, service that comes after truth realisation is spontaneous expression of spiritual understanding of the true nature of the Self. And though it also brings about important results in the objective world, it is in no way complicated by any longing for them.

--Meher Baba