

The Way of Service

by

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1919 definitely

TO ALCYONE

IN WHOM THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE SHINES OUT UNDIMMED

FOREWORD

In this little book will be found a few hints on the art of service which I have gathered from my elders and from my own experience. I am still trying to follow these hints, sometimes successfully, more often unsuccessfully; but I feel that they are all true, and I am thankful to be permitted to share them with others who - like myself - are learning how to serve.

Geo. S. Arundale

IF you desire to be of service to others with advantage to them and without danger to yourself, see that these three principles guide you in your service:

- (i) That your greatest joy is to tread the path of service;
- (ii) That you know yourself to be but the agent of some force greater than your own which sends the power of service through you;
- (iii) That you see in others the same divine nature you yourself possess.

Remember that everything you can say or think about another has probably already been said or thought by others about you.

When you yourself are injured in any way, remember that he who injures another suffers more than the person injured.

Do not allow the force of your affection for another to disturb either your balance or his. Your service must strengthen and not weaken.

Do not be jealous of another's greater power of service, rather be glad that a greater power exists to help those whom your own weaker force may be unable to reach.

When you give, do not expect the recipient to keep the gift for himself alone. Rejoice when the gift which has given him happiness makes glad another also.

When you are in the act of helping another, try to be for the time the ideal from which you have gained your power to serve. So shall you attain your ideal and at the same time help more surely.

Do not look for the fruits of your service, nor feel unhappy when no words of gratitude come from him you help. It is the soul you serve and not the body, and you may always see the gratitude of the soul, though the lips remain silent.

Never look for affection from those you love. If your love for them is true, sooner or later it will enter their hearts and call forth response; if it is but fleeting, better that they should escape the sorrow of some day knowing that your love is gone.

Remember that no one can truly serve who has not begun to gain control over himself.

The best service is that which makes the burden light, not that which takes it away.

You will serve people best when you accept them as expressions of their own ideals.

Through that which is best in him lies each man's best way of service. There are as many ways of service as there are people in the world to be helped.

The time for service is every moment of the day for though there may not always be occasion for a kindly action, there is always occasion for a kindly attitude.

The less a person thinks about himself, the more he is really paying attention to his growth. Each little act of service returns to the doer in the shape of an added power to serve.

If a person rejects the way in which you wish to serve him, try to find out another form of service. Your desire is to serve him, not to dictate to him the way in which he must be helped.

Do not be too shy to offer your help to anyone in need, whether you know him or not. His need makes him your brother, but your shyness is a form of pride which deprives him of a helper in the time of his trouble.

Do not say to yourself: "I have given much help to others to-day." Rather look to see whether you could not have given more, and think how little you have really done to lessen all the misery and trouble in the world.

Those who are the best followers of great leaders are the best leaders for those who know less, for no one can command wisely who has not learned to obey.

The best way of inducing a person to take good advice is to follow it yourself.

Give to others as much credit for good intentions as you would wish bestowed upon yourself.

No one is insulted unless he brings himself down within reach of the insult, for an insult is a product of the lower nature and cannot affect the higher.

When you think yourself better than others because you are learning to serve and they apparently are not, in that moment you cease to serve.

True service consists in sharing your life with another, and not in pointing yourself out to him - directly or indirectly - as an estimable example.

It is better to act first and to speak afterwards than to speak first and to act afterwards, but it is generally best of all to act and then to be silent.

A person's capacity to serve well can only be judged by the way in which he leads his ordinary home life, not by the books he has written, nor by the reputation he enjoys, nor by his public speeches or public actions. It is not great public actions which make the great man, but the small daily acts of self-denial which perhaps nobody notices.

He who would serve to the uttermost must be prepared to give up all he has for the sake of the privilege of service.

A person may ask service of you in many ways, but you will serve him best by giving him that which he needs and not that which he may want, even though he may feel annoyance at the form your service takes. But try to put your service in a way which makes it acceptable.

It is no true service to give to another the help which in reality belongs to some one else. Many people wish to serve in any way except the right way, and neglect those they ought to serve for others whom they want to serve.

The better the deed, the better the day.

There is no one in the world who does not need something, and there is no one in the world who cannot give something.

When you are trying to serve someone, do not become impatient of his weaknesses. His weaknesses give you the privilege of serving him, for if he had no weaknesses he would need no service.

Just as there is no grief which does not contain the promise of a future joy, so there is no weakness which will not some day merge into a noble quality.

Try to remember, when you are helping some one, that the force in his weakness will become, through your help, the force of a future quality. You cannot change the force, but you ought to try to change its form and its direction.

A little help actually given out of your own existing resources is worth more than the thought of how much better you would be able to serve were your resources greater.

You can best help another by displaying in your own character the qualities he lacks.

The way to test the value of your daily service to others is to notice whether you are day by day growing more peaceful, more contented, happier, and more tolerant.

The world asks from you your own utmost service, not the utmost of some one else. When you are doing all that you can, you are doing all that you ought.

Never allow a person's rejection of your offer of service to be an excuse for refusing any further help. He who refuses acts of service ends by needing them all the more.

Be careful how you reject loving service offered freely to you, for there is as much service in receiving service as in performing it.

When once you have served as wisely and as whole-heartedly as you can, do not be anxious about the result; for the purity of your service returns in blessing to the server, and surrounds with blessing the person served.

The ideal reward of service is an increased power to love and therefore to serve.

A person who is not truly happy cannot truly serve.

A service lovingly rendered, though it prove unwise, cannot in the long run harm the person whom you sought to help. The force of the love will protect him from the harm of the unwisdom.

True forgiveness of another consists in a loving and eager effort to help him to avoid in future the weakness for which forgiveness is asked.

Sometimes - but not often - it may be our duty to judge others; it is always our duty to help them.

If you desire to test your spiritual progress, look to see whether you neglect fewer opportunities of service than formerly.

When you are criticising another's form of service you are perhaps forgetting that he is helping those to whom your own form of service cannot appeal.

Do not be afraid to proclaim the origin of your own inspiration to serve, for the knowledge of the source of your own happiness is one of the most beautiful offerings you can make to the world.

Each loving service you render to another is a guardian angel whom you have created to be near him, encouraging him and protecting him. The more love you pour into the service, the more life you give to the guardian angel, the longer, therefore, will he live to encourage and to protect.

Do not imagine that they alone serve whose acts of service are seen with physical eyes. Some of the greatest acts of service are those which no one sees.

If you postpone an act of service until to-morrow, you may have lost an opportunity to serve, for that particular act may not be needed tomorrow and has not been performed to-day.

One of the most neglected acts of service is that of paying deliberate attention to each person who comes to visit you. Half the act of service is over when you have listened with interest to what he has to say.

When you are suffering, try to remember that you are gaining, though perhaps with difficulty, an added power to sympathise with the sufferings of others, for when you have passed through a particular sorrow you can, at least to the extent of the pain you have yourself endured, the better understand the pain of such a sorrow to another.

There are two aspects of the unity which those who would serve must understand: The aspect of pain and the aspect of joy. The one teaches of a common struggle which all must share, while the other proclaims a common goal towards which all are bound.

The judgment of the world upon your acts of service matters infinitely less than the judgment of your heart.

Many people are willing and able to serve somewhere. How many are willing and able to serve anywhere ?

As beautiful flowers are found in barren places, so is the most beautiful service that which is rendered in times and places of greatest need.

As even a little flame shines brightly in surrounding darkness, so does a little act of service shine out clearly amidst surrounding selfishness.

The more your surroundings are ugly, the greater the need to beautify them by acts of service.

If you are unable to discover opportunities for service where you are at present, you will be unable to discover them in the place in which you would like to be.

He is most lonely and miserable in this world who, receiving many acts of service, offers none in return.

Service in the physical world is action, in the emotional world sympathy, in the mental world understanding.

The brightness of your day depends as much upon the shining of an act of service as upon the shining of the sun.

The best key with which, in the early morning, to unlock the storehouse of happiness for the day is some little act of service eagerly and lovingly performed.

Service is, like mercy, twice blessed: it blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

The knowledge of the Self within is gained through the service of the Self without.

The truest acts of service are those which we perform instinctively.

Service is the expression of a quality in harmony with your duty to your surroundings. For example, to those older in wisdom than yourself the truest expression of love is reverence, while to those who know less it is protection.

With some, service is conditional on the admiration and applause of those around them; with others, it depends solely on the need of those around them.

Just as there are fair-weather friends, so there are fair-weather servers. Look into your heart that you may judge how unselfish is your desire to serve.

It is sometimes difficult to realise that the man who has no friends needs our friendship more than one who has many friends. If he cannot make friends, all the more reason that we should make them for him.

People who think they ought to be treated better by others are generally the very people who themselves ought to treat others better.

One of the truest signs of a pure affection is to be able to ask a favour from a friend without being misunderstood.

God records all acts of service, men only those which they can understand and which they approve.

The acts of service of many people have their origin in custom, ours must have their origin in love.

The cry of need is suffering, the cry of service is love.

While correcting another's fault, imagine yourself as having committed it.

Do not speak *of* others as you would not speak *to* them.

The only knowledge worth having is that which draws you nearer to your fellow-men.

You do not know more than others unless you love, and therefore serve, more than others.

Those who really know cannot be proud of their knowledge, for they know how ignorant they are.

If you are placed in authority over others, remember that while your position may gain for you their flattery, only your qualities will win their love.

When you are among strangers think how you are to earn their goodwill rather than how to impress them with your own estimate of your importance.

The worship of God lies in the service of His worlds.

If you are able to acknowledge your mistakes, people will gladly acknowledge your virtues.

If you begin to feel proud of your influence, examine how far it is due to position and how far to character. Every person in a position of power has an influence of a certain kind.

Be very careful not to favour persons at the expense of duty.

True devotion is that which serves, not that which clings.

It is better to begin by adapting yourself to your work, rather than to complain because the work does not adapt itself to you.

True meditation results in an added power to serve, and in a decreasing absorption in our own personal progress.

People who express dissatisfaction with the manner in which their services are recognised have not yet learned what true service really is.

Be careful to see that your acts of service surpass your promises.

It is no true act of service the performance of which prevents you from fulfilling a duty.

In times of difficulty, silent sympathy is generally more valuable than ignorant activity.

People who feel that there are no services for them to perform often forget the existence of animals and plants.

People who have no time in which to give service somehow manage to find plenty of time in which to receive it.

One of the rarest acts of service is to refrain from judging a person unheard.

Our illnesses help us to understand that acts of service exist as much in the attitude of the mind as in the activity of the body.
