



Servant Leadership with a Smiling Heart

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Servant Leadership is based on the principle teaching that Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan has laid before us and found in the Sangatha papers, Sangithas, the Collected Works and Murshid's Biography. He has given us the unified instructions of how to work together as "one body" representing the Message. Following are some passages from Murshid's writing. I have included step-wise ideas on the art of thinking together culled from the writings of many authors found in the Reference List at the end of this paper for the purpose of building a unified and collaborative structure for unfolding group visions and decisions.

Let us first consider Murshid's unified call to all active members regarding "servant leadership."

"For you all, including Murshid, are the servants of the this Message, and we all have our part to perform in this Message." (p. 86, Sangatha I)

"If you all help, if His Name is known and glorified in the world, that is enough." (p. 86)

"But still this must be understood, that as many workers in the cause we possess that much facility and strength come to the spread of the cause." (p. 86)

The Art of Thinking Together

- We need a container for our shared conversations. Our POMC/EC/International Leaders gathering are all beneficial toward a more **expanded sharing of conversation**. Here in these meetings time is scheduled for exchange of issues reflecting on each leader's concerns and questions.

- It is in these council meetings that an ideal can be invoked and that is to **listen to the potential of the group** after all leaders have contributed. We do not only listen to the individual leaders but to the commonly shared ideas that reveal ease or difficulty and which can be informative to all.
- If we support dreaming out loud by our conversation and **articulate what is our ideal** and what is different and the same in each center's approach around the globe, we arrive at a more unified manner of perceiving possible approaches to teaching students and groups.

Murshid then address how we can work in an honest unified fashion:

"If we are really united-in the real sense of the word unity-however small our group, the great purpose which is the purpose of God, by His might and help and wisdom, will become real. Think of the history of France-one person had started what ended in new France. What was the power? That power was of sincerity and of the high ideal. There is no doubt about the sincerity of my mureeds, it is only for them to consider what ideal this is. The more we shall consider, the more able we shall be to accomplish that ideal." (p. 83, Sangatha I)

- Part of what supports the "unified ideal" is **the art of Deep Listening**. Deep Listening is the willingness to sit in a working meeting in silence until inspiration comes through either an individual or a group.

Murshid says:

"The way by which man can find his own place of peace is to tune his instrument to the keynote of the chord to which he belongs." (p. 175 Sangatha I)

In the Summer School address on July 19th 1923 Murshid clearly articulates what a mureed must know to be a clear channel of the Message:

"The true teacher is the true pupil and the true pupil the true teacher. The path of teachership is from beginning to end pupilship, and the path of a true pupil is all along a teachership, whose heart becomes reflected by a teacher, so that all he says and does is what the teacher himself would say and do. And therefore everyone of my mureeds, sincere and in earnest, must know he is a channel of the Message, and must await patiently the call and answer it without doubt or hesitation with courage and with hope." (p. 146)

- In group discussion one factor of consideration is to **make it safe for those who oppose**, so that other members do not feel obliged to simply agree. How we create safety would be to regard each leader as a trustee of the Message.

Murshid says to this idea:

“My earnest mureeds are the trustees of what is given and will be given, to call it, to guard it, to protect it, and preserve it for future generations. Some may be published and given to humanity, and some of it must be preserved for a time, or perhaps forever, that must be kept with great care. They must be discreet, considerate and careful about it, and the best way of serving the Message is to make one’s whole life the Message; that one may become an example of the Message. (p. 147)

- It is at this point in our gathering to **ask members of the group to suspend judgement**. When regarding how to work with different leaders from various areas of the globe, who are trying to build the sacred temple of the Cause, we can create a leadership environment by helping people manage the experience of emptiness. Dialogue cannot be forced, it rather emerges from vision and inspiration.

Murshid says to this point,

“I feel stronger and more hopeful to find by my side souls who are earnestly desirous of helping the Cause to whatever extent they can, for which I feel thankful to God, and if I have anything more to say, it is only this: we must all try to prepare ourselves to become such workers that we may be able to fulfill the Divine trust, which has been given to us in our lives.” (p.92)

- When we begin to sense how to **map the structure and find out why people work in the way they do**, we begin to understand the forces driving leaders to function in the way they function and help the collective group to understand how the building or as Murshid says, “the embodiment of the Illuminated Souls” serves God and Humanity.

Murshid defines this more carefully by saying,

“And what is this building? It is the building which may be called in other words an embodiment of the Illuminated souls. Its parts and particles are those who are born to serve God and humanity, who are meant to give their life to the service of the Cause. And it is this building which is a sacred temple, and it is this building to which our life and our work is dedicated. “ (p. 108)

“I wish that my mureeds, those who feel in their hearts this trust, shall not only receive the sacred message for their own unfoldment, but shall feel the privilege of being a nucleus for the reconstruction in the coming spiritual world. The more they will be conscious of this the more they will feel the responsibility of their lives and the duty they must perform. Mureeds can show their devotion to Murshid and the Cause by doing their very best, and by devoting their thoughts and efforts in action for the rebuilding of the spiritual world.” (p. 124)

- As we work on **facilitating cross-model conversation** and develop the ability to see two or more very different realities, we bring about the very central core of Murshid’s hope for the Message and he says,

“This is the meaning behind the whole spiritual hierarchy. The stars and planets all reflect the light of the sun, but the Central Light functions in one center though its light is everywhere.” (p.162)

- Therefore, our Leadership might consider working on **four different working levels of collaboration in our meetings**, they are the following:
 - a) creating new capacities for action involving all members who are willing to take on new levels of responsibility.
 - b) for group conversation, taking more time to reflect on ones sense and feeling intuition
 - c) discussing the ideas of the invisible architecture that guides behavior of a contributing member.
 - d) embodying more reflective inquiry on reactions and what took place when ideas are shared.

- To enhance group vision one very important method is **how our attention regards emerging themes. This is one of the most important pathway toward finding what the group is questioning and what the group’s collective vision is producing.**

The new model of Servant Leadership with a Smiling Heart is leadership that is participatory; one does what is required but not as an expert but as an increasingly equal member of the larger process of inquiry.

Servant leadership is intended to provide for the needs of others in the group, or as a group seeking to discover what it can best provide for others.

It is encouraging to all members to think broadly and deeply at this phase as it greatly increases the chance that all will learn to sustain what has been learned collectively.

We must never forget that Leadership is in constant motion. Whoever is able to articulate what is happening, for that moment, has a position of leadership. No pre-established individual can be made the one and only leader. In this phase of understanding Servant Leadership is a function of a special kind of “wholeacracy” –the ability to listen for and articulate what is already moving in everyone. This is not a model of control by a single leader.

If we begin to see the “whole group” as primary, Servant Leadership requires us to ask, what are the questions emerging out of the whole group? What is wanting to be said or done that goes beyond what one person might have said?

The model of Servant Leadership is formed and strengthened through networking groups in the global community. This networking also creates a support center encouraging free decisions, free advice, and free exchange

within the leadership community and yet keeps information intact and which flows unobstructed among all leaders.

Murshid says:

“That we sorely need ten thousand good workers to begin our Movement; as long as we have not got this, I do not consider that we have made a beginning.” (p. 89, Sangatha I)

In summation, “wholeacracy” depends upon individual leaders taking responsibility toward a productive attitude of change. This requires an internal commitment to face all issues and difficulties without running away or leaving the group but rather a sincere dedication toward reflecting on what level of coherence would best support the group’s effort. As we listen more carefully to each other the network of support builds confidence and strength by bringing out members voices showing them they have the power and the strength to make a difference and then, individual leaders can move into action that benefits their community. As Murshid indicated, “we need ten thousand workers.”

Murshid encourages us with these words:

*“My thoughts I have sown on the soil of your mind;
My love has penetrated your heart;
My word I have put into your mouth;
My light has illuminated your whole being;
My work I have given unto your hand.”* (Gayan, Vadan, Nirtan: The Alapas p. 118)

I hope this small contribution offers some stimulating ideas to the future working principles of our precious Sufi Movement and **builds the confidence in collaborative leadership among us all.**

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