

Spirits Devoted to God

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The most remarkable feature of those who have devoted themselves to the bestowal of God's consent and to the ideal of loving and being loved by Him is that they never expect anything—material or spiritual—in return. Things like profit, wealth, cost, comfort, etc., things to which people of this world pay great attention, do not mean much; they hold no value, nor are they considered as criteria.

To devotees, the value of their ideals transcends that of the earthly ones to such an extent that it is almost impossible to divert them from what they seek—God's gratuitous consent—and lead them to any other ideal. In fact, stripped entirely of finite and transient things, devotees undergo such a transformation in their hearts to turn to God that they are changed because they recognize no goal other than their ideal. Since they devote themselves completely to making people love God and to being loved by God, dedicating their lives to enlightening others, and, once again, because they have managed to orient their goal in this unified direction, which in a sense contributes to the value of this ideal, they avoid divisive and antagonist thoughts, such as "they" and "we," "others" and "ours." Neither do such people have any problems—explicit or concealed—with other people. In contrast, all they think of is how they can be useful to society and how they can avoid disputes with the society of which they are members. When they detect a problem in society, they take action like a spiritual leader rather than a warrior, leading people to virtue and lofty spirituality, abstaining from any sort of political dominance or thought of rule.

What composes the depths of these devoted spirits is knowledge, the use of this knowledge, a strong and sound understanding of morality and its application in every aspect of life, faithful virtue and the awareness of its indispensability, among other factors. They seek refuge in God from fame and interest-based cold propaganda and ostentatious acts and deeds, things which indeed do not promise anything in the name of their future, that is, for their afterlife. Furthermore, living in accordance with their principles, they ceaselessly endeavor to lead those who watch and imitate to be in awe of sublime human values. Doing all this, such people do not ever expect any interest or kindness from anyone, and they try hard to evade any kind of personal interest or profit; they avoid this as they would a snake or a scorpion. After all, their inner richness has a centripetal power that does not allow any acts of advertisement, boasting, or ostentation. Their amiable behavior, also reflections of their spirits, is of such a quality that it fascinates and makes discerning people follow them.

For this very reason, these devotees never desire to boast about themselves or to advertise or spread propaganda about themselves, nor are they ambitious to be well-known or appreciated. Instead, they endeavor, with all their might and strength, to reach the spiritual life and they depend all their acts in this regard on sincerity, intending merely to please God. In other words, they aim to attain God's consent with each and every act and they ceaselessly strive to achieve this sublime goal, not contaminating their prophet-like determination with worldly expectations, ambition, or the appreciation or fondness of others. Because faith, Islam and the Qur'an are criticized and questioned in today's world, these people must spend all their energy countering these attacks. It is essential that individuals be supported in their Islamic thoughts and feelings, and that the people be rescued from aimlessness in order to be linked to some sublime ideals. Meeting such a need to the extent that people will never feel obliged to seek anything else is only possible with the revitalization of faith in the hearts of its own patterns and its own style. One may also call this a redirection of people to a spiritual life. Such an approach is extremely important, particularly at a time when some people are relying everything on a change and transformation of social life, trying to reshape it into new patterns. When one tries to redirect toward a spiritual life there will always be consensus, agreement, and solidarity, whereas, if one is to rely merely on change, then one is likely to witness disputes, divisions, and even fights.

Devotees do not experience emptiness in their mental lives and reasoning thanks to this understanding of a unified direction. On the contrary, they remain open to reason, science and logic, regarding this as a prerequisite of their beliefs. Having been melted in the depths of closeness to God, a closeness which depends on one's merit, and in the ocean that is like divine unity, their earthly desires and corporeal passion, take on a new shape (spiritual enjoyment as a result of God's consent) with a new pattern, a new style. Thus, devotees can breathe the same air as the angels at the peaks of spiritual life while conversing with terrestrial ones, fulfilling the licit requirements of life on Earth. For this reason, these devotees are considered as being related with both the present and the future worlds. Their relation with the present world is due to the fact that they apply and comply with physical forces. What ties them to the next world is the fact that they evaluate every matter in the light of their spiritual life and that of the heart. Any inhibitions in the worldly life that are imposed by the spiritual life do not necessarily entail a complete abandonment of the worldly life; it is for this reason that these people cannot entirely despise the world. In contrast, they always stand in the center rather than on the periphery of the world and rule it. This stance, however, is not one for or in the name of the world, but rather one in the name of complying with the physical forces and an attempt to connect everything to the Hereafter.

As a matter of fact, this is the way to keep the body in its own frame and the spirit on its own horizon; it is the way to lead life under the leadership of the heart and the spirit. The finite and restricted corporeal life must be to the extent that corporeality deserves, while the spiritual life, always open to eternity, must seek infinitude. If one thinks only supreme and transcendent thoughts, if one leads a life as the Life-Giver demands, if one regards illuminating others as the fundamental of one's life and if one always seeks the zenith, then one naturally becomes a practitioner of a supreme program, and, thus, to a certain extent, one limits personal desires and passions.

Of course, it is challenging to lead such a life. Yet, this arduous mission is quite simple for those who have devoted themselves to God, for those who aim to glorify His Name, for those who zealously commute to and from the gate of God trying to make people aware of Him, with one hand on the doors of the hearts of people and the other on His gate. Actually, there is nothing that counts as hardship for those who feel in their bosoms the heat of close-ness to the Creator, and who try to inculcate belief from their hearts to the community—sometimes with awe and sometimes with friendly love. God confers His favor on the apostle of the heart, who, in the first place, confines his or her glance to Him and thinks only of Him, seeking ways to find Him and taking advantage of every means to reach Him. Presenting this position in His Holy Presence, God, in return, reminds everybody that they should re-spect such people, and rewards this tiny piece of terrestrial loyalty with a great deal more of His celestial loyalty. Here is what is squeezed in a drop from that vast ocean of celestial compliment:

Repulse not those who call upon their Lord in the morning and in the eve-ning, desiring His face; they have no reckoning against you at all, and you have no reckoning against them at all. (Al-Anam 6:52)

The people mentioned here whom God warned His Prophet not to “re-pulse” were the very people frequenting the meetings of the Messenger of God, people who devoted themselves to God’s consent.

Provided this devotion is wholehearted and sincere, it is always likely that God will bestow His blessings onto these kinds of people. The more that people aim to please God and the more wholeheartedly that they are attached to God, the more likely they are to be appreciated, rewarded and the more likely it is that they will become the subject of supreme conversations. The every thought, word and act of such people will become a luminous atmosphere in the next world, an atmosphere which can also be called “the smiling face of fate.” Such fortunate people, who filled their sails with the white winds of their fortune, sail with special blessing toward Him, not attaching themselves elsewhere. What the Qur’an presents as a depiction of these people is worth seeing:

Men whom neither merchandize nor selling divert from the remembrance of God or steadfastness in prayer or giving alms, who fear a day when hearts and eyes shall be upset; that God may recompense them for the best that they have done, and give them more out of His Grace; for God pro-vides whom He pleases without measure.” (An-Nur 24:37-38)

Having been stripped of all dejection and sorrow, and also having sur-rendered to God, and, therefore, being free of all troubles, this kind of free spirit has nothing more to discover. In comparison with such achievements, all the earthly blessings, passions, and pleasures are no different from empty plates left on filthy tables. With regard to the world and its contents, the beau-ties they aspire to in their spiritual worlds are beyond comparison. After all, what blooms or grows green in the spring and then grows pale in the summer cannot be conceived of as being any different. Being aware of this reality, eternity-oriented spirits disregard everything that does not signify any eternal content and walk along the corridors of their heart toward the vineyards and gardens, never ever attaching their hearts to the world or to other terrestrial trivia.