

Why do We Need to Worship God?

Contributed by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi
Tuesday, 17 January 2006

If you want to understand what great profit and happiness lie in worship, and what great loss and ruin lie in vice and dissipation listen to and take heed of the following story which is in the form of a comparison:

One time, two soldiers received orders to proceed to a distant city. They set off and traveled together until the road forked. At the fork was a man who said to them, "The road on the right causes no loss at all, and nine out of ten of those who take it receive a high profit and experience great ease. While the road on the left provides no advantages, and nine out of ten of its travelers make a loss. But they are the same as regards distance. Only there is one difference: those who take the left-hand road, which has no rules and no one in authority, travel without baggage and arms. They feel an apparent lightness and deceptive ease. Whereas those travelling on the right-hand road, which is under military order, are compelled to carry a kit-bag full of nutritious rations four kilos or so in weight and a superb army rifle of about two kilos which will overpower and rout every enemy..."

After the two soldiers had listened to what this instructive man had to say, the fortunate one took the road to the right. He loaded the weight of ten kilos onto his back, but his heart and spirit were saved from thousands of kilos of fear and feeling obliged to others. As for the other, luckless, soldier, he left the army. He did not want to conform to the order, and he went off to the left. He was released from bearing a load of ten kilos, but his heart was constricted by thousands of kilos of indebtedness, and his spirit crushed by innumerable fears. He proceeded on his way both begging from everyone and trembling before every object and every event until he reached his destination. And there he was punished as a mutineer and a deserter.

As for the soldier who loved the order of the army, had guarded his kit bag and rifle, and taken the right-hand road. He had gone on his way being obliged to no one, fearing no one, and with an easy heart and conscience until he reached the city he was seeking. There he received a reward worthy of an honorable soldier who had carried out his duty well. And so, O rebellious soul, know that one of those two travelers represents those who submit to the Divine Law, while the other represents the rebellious and those who follow their own desires. The road is the road of life, which comes from the Spirit World, passes through the grave, and carries on to the Hereafter. As for the kit bag and rifle, they are worship and fear of God. There is an apparent burden in worship, but there is an ease and lightness in its meaning that defies description. For in the prescribed prayers the worshipper declares, "I bear witness that there is no god but God." That is to say, since he is believing and saying, "There is no Creator and Provider other than Him. Harm and benefit are in His hand. He is both the All Wise; He does nothing in vain, and He is the All Compassionate; His bounty and mercy are abundant", he finds the door of a treasury of mercy in everything. And he knocks on it with his supplication. Moreover, he sees that everything is subjugated to the command of his own Sustainer, so he takes refuge in Him. He places his trust in Him and relies on Him, and is fortified against every disaster; his belief gives him complete confidence.

Indeed, like with every true virtue, the source of courage is belief in God, and worship. And like with every iniquity, the source of cowardice is misguidance.

In fact, for a worshipper with a truly illuminated heart, it is possible that even if the globe of the earth became a bomb and exploded, it would not frighten him. He would watch it with pleasurable wonder as a marvel of the Eternally Besought One's Power. But when a famous degenerate philosopher with a so-called enlightened mind but no heart saw a comet in the sky, he trembled on the ground, and exclaimed anxiously: "Isn't that comet going to hit the earth?"

Yes, although man is in need of numberless things, his capital is as nothing, and although he is subject to endless calamities, his power too is as nothing. Simply, the extent of his capital and power is merely as far as his hand can reach. However, his hopes, desires, pains, and tribulations reach as far as the eye and the imagination can stretch. Anyone who is not totally blind can see and understand then what a great profit, happiness, and bounty for the human spirit, which is thus impotent and weak, and needy and wanting, are worship, affirmation of God's Unity, and reliance on God and submission to Him.

It is obvious that a safe way is preferable to a harmful way, even if the possibility of its safety is only one in ten. But on the way of worship, which our matter here, there is a nine out of ten possibility of it leading to a treasury of eternal happiness, as well as it being safe. While it is established by the testimony - which is at the degree of consensus - of innumerable experts and witnesses that besides being without benefit, and the dissolute even confess to this, the way of vice and dissipation ends in eternal misery. And according to the reports of those who have uncovered the mysteries of creation this is absolutely certain.