

Home > An Introduction to Irfan > The 'arif's Goal:

The 'arif's Goal:

The *'arif* desires the Real (God) not for the sake of something else, and he values nothing above his knowledge of the Real, and his worship of Him is because He is worthy of worship and it is a worthy way of relating himself to Him; it is not out of desire (for rewards) or fear (of chastisement).

The meaning of this is that in terms of his aims the *'arif* is a *muwahhid*. He seeks only God, yet his desire of God is not on account of His gifts in this world or in the Hereafter. Were such to be the case, the real object of his desire would be the gifts, God being only the preliminary means by which the desired gifts are sought. In such a case, in reality, the final object of worship and desire would be one's own self; for the purpose of seeking those gifts is the pleasure of the self.

However, the *'arif* desires whatever he desires for the sake of God. When he desires the gifts of God he does so because they are from Him, and are His favours. They represent His Grace and Magnanimity. So, while the *non-'arif* seeks God for the sake of His gifts, the *'arif* seeks the gifts of God for the sake of God.

Here the question may arise, if the *'arif* does not seek God for the sake of anything, then why does he worship Him? Is it not true that every act of worship must have a purpose? Ibn Sina's passage contains the answer. He states that the goal and motivation of the *'arif's* worship is one of two things. One is the inherent worthiness of the Worshipped to be worshipped, meaning that one worships God simply because He is worthy of worship. It is rather like someone who upon noticing some admirable qualities in a person or a thing praises that person or thing. If asked what motivated him to utter such praise, or of what benefit was it to him, he will reply that he sought no benefit from his praise, but simply saw that person or thing as being genuinely deserving of praise. This is true of the praise accorded to the heroes or the champions of each and every field.

The other motivation of the *'arif's* worship is the worthiness of worship itself. It bears an intrinsic nobility and beauty of its own, for it is a connection, a tie, between oneself and God. Thus it has a worthiness of its own, and there is no reason why worship should necessarily entail desire or fear.

'Ali (A) has some famous words on this subject:

My God, I do not worship You in fear of Your Fire, nor in desire for Your Paradise, but I find You worthy of worship so I worship You.

The *'urafa'* place great importance on this issue, considering it a kind of *shirk* (polytheism) for one's goal in life and particularly in worship to be something other than God Himself. *'Irfan* totally rejects this kind of *shirk*. Many have written elegantly and subtly on the subject, and we will look at an allegory from Sa'di's *Bustan* which takes the outward form of a story of Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznah and his close confidant Iyaz:

One with the Shah of Ghaznah found fault, saying,

What charm has he, the Shah's friend Iyaz.

A flower indeed with neither colour nor smell,

How strange of the nightingale to set its heart upon such a thing.

Someone conveyed this remark to Sultan Mahmud,

Who, on hearing it, was besides himself with anguish.

'I love him for his disposition and character,

Nor for his pleasing gait and stature. '

Heard I once that in a narrow defile,

The king's treasure-chest broke open after a camel fell.

The king, after signalling his bequest,

Spurred on his steed to get ahead hastily.

The riders now fell upon the pearls and corals,

Their thoughts now turning from the king to the treasure.

None of the proud lads remained that day

To follow in the king's train except Iyaz

Looking out, the king saw him, and beholding Iyaz,

His face like a flower bloomed with delight.

'What booty have you brought along, ' the king inquired.

'None, 'said, lyaz. 'I hurried after you,

Preferring your service to treasure and bounties.

Sa'di then turns from this story to the point he wishes to make, which he expresses thus:

If you look to your friend for his favours,

You are tied to yourself not to your friend

A breach of the Way it was if the saints

Desired of God aught other than God.

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