

THE MEANING OF WORSHIP

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Let us concentrate our attention on that point of thought that refers to the self-existing Being. A logician, a philosopher, a scientist can say about him merely that he is. But in the school of religion we get practical lessons for the purposes of knowing him and attaining nearness to him, In this connection the first lesson is **“Divert your attention away from all things and concentrate it on the idea of Allah”** and the concentration should be such that , firstly your mind should be empty of all other thoughts and secondly all your organs should suspend their activity except in so far as it is in conformity with your mental attitude at the time.

To focus attention on Allah with this complete concentration is known in religious terminology as **Worship**. In this state the created thing considers himself the slave of the creator and devotes himself solely to him, at least during certain special moments. This is the first exercise of that discipline which forms the basis of the cultivation of the Spiritual faculty known among Philosophers as Intuition.

We have now arrived at a new term that is the “Spiritual Faculty” and the readers must naturally be impatient to know its function and the benefits that are derived from its cultivation. We will try to understand it through an illustration:

What shall we do if we are confronted with the problem of finding out the taste of an orange and the quality of pleasantness inherent in its taste? Shall we succeed if employ our hands? No, we shall have employed our tongue and that to a certain prescribed condition. The tongue should not be dirty, it should be perfectly clean. It should have no other tastes salty or sweet things that have been eaten before. In short, It should be neutral recipient of taste.

Let us then put the orange into the mouth and allow the juice to be absorbed in the pores of the tongue so completely that our tongue itself may become, so to say, a piece of orange. Then we shall have a complete realization of the taste of the orange and its pleasantness. Similarly, if we wish to know the coolness of ice, the only way open to us is to take a piece of ice in our hand. This will allow us to have the correct idea of the icy coolness, as it will come to us when the temperature of our hand falls approximately to the temperature of the ice.

Now I may say without attempting a complete analogy that, if we empty the mind of all ideas and thoughts, concentrate it with singleness of purpose and attention on Allah, have no external form even

as a formal focus of attention, keep our mind free of "minor gods" or associates of Allah and cleanse our imaginative faculty, or in the terminology of the Sufis the Spiritual Faculty of all external or internal influences, then the perception of the divine attributes will dawn and the veil of ignorance will be removed.

If anyone questions us about the taste of orange try as we may, but we will not be able to translate the exact taste and its inherent pleasant quality into words. We know it ourselves as a direct experience, but words cannot define and express that experience of a spiritual reality like the Divine Attributes. We can only have the experience, but we cannot describe it truly. As for its genuineness and its beauty even those who confine their effort to the very first experience of it which is simply unique.

But, remember the aim is not only the experience of the taste and its pleasantness. If we eat an orange we will not only add to the experiences of our tongue, but we will at the same time provide nourishment to our body which will ultimately help us in performing great many things. In the same way, though not a perfect analogy, when we perform the spiritual exercise mentioned above our spiritual faculty will develop. And, just as the development of physical power gives us the strength to overcome infirmities and attacks of diseases and enables us to enjoy a more complete physical existence, we will gain in spiritual power by focusing your attention on Allah with single-minded concentration. This increase in spiritual power will lead us towards spiritual perfection that will manifest itself into high and sublime morals and will enable us to fight those diseases that arise in our heart hindering spiritual progresses.