

Sorrow

Sorrow is one of the marks of the gnostics, through the magnitude of what comes to them of the Unseen when they are in seclusion, and the intensity of their glorification of Allah. The outer being of the sorrowful is contraction and his inner being is expansion.

He lives with men contentedly, in a life of nearness to Allah. The sorrowful person is not a man of reflection, because he who reflects is forced to do so, while a sorrowful person is so by nature. Sorrow comes from within, and reflection begins by seeing phenomena—there is a difference between them.

Allah said in the story of Jacob,

إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

I only complain of my grief and sorrow to Allah, and I know [from Allah] what you do not know.

(12:86)

This is because the knowledge gained in the state of sorrow is particular to him, and Allah has singled him out for it and left the rest of the world deprived. When Rabi' ibn Khuthaym was asked why he was sorrowful, he replied, 'Because I have demands made on me. At the right of sorrow stands contrition, and at the left of it stands silence. Sorrow is a mark of the gnostics of Allah.'

Reflection is shared by both the elite and the common folk. If sorrow were to be veiled from the hearts of the gnostics for an hour, they would have to seek help; but if it were to be placed in the hearts of others, they would dislike it. Sorrow is first, while second comes security and good news. Reflection comes second, following the establishment of one's belief in and utter need of Allah by one's seeking rescue

with Him. The sorrowful person reflects, and he who reflects takes note. Each of them has a state, a science, a path, forbearance and honour.

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