

Retreat

Anyone who embarks on a retreat ('uzlah) from the world is fortified by Allah and protected by His guardianship. What joy there is for the person who has withdrawn with Him, secretly and openly! To do this, he must differentiate between truth and falsehood, love, poverty, chose hardship and abstinence, and seize every opportunity for retreat. He must contemplate the outcome of his actions, seeing his incapacity for worship while worshipping as much as possible, abandoning pride, and constantly engaging in remembrance without showing heedlessness, which is the hunting ground of Satan and the beginning of every affliction and the reason for all that is obscure. He should also rid his house of everything he has no immediate need for.

'Isa ('a) said, 'Guard your tongue in order to develop your heart, and make your abode be enough for you. Beware of showing off and of having excess provision. Be modest before your Lord and weep for your errors. Flee from people as you flee from the lion and the viper. They were a medicine and now they have become a disease. Then meet Allah wherever you will.' And Rabi' ibn Khuthaym said, 'If you can manage today to be in a place where you do not know anyone and where none knows you, then do so.'

Retreat brings protection for the limbs, a free heart, a sound livelihood, the destruction of Satan's weapons, the avoidance of every evil and rest for the heart. There is no prophet nor regent (wasi) who has not chosen retreat in his lifetime, either at his beginning or at his end.