

Kashf Al Mahjub

CHAPTER II.

On Poverty

Know that Poverty has a high rank in the Way of Truth, and that the poor are greatly esteemed, as God said: “(Give alms) unto the poor, who are kept fighting in God’s cause and cannot go to and fro on the earth; whom the ignorant deem rich forasmuch as they refrain (from begging).” And again: Their sides are lifted from their beds while they call on their Lord in fear and hope” (Qur. xxxii, 16). Moreover, the Prophet (saw) chose poverty and said: “O God, make me live lowly and die lowly and rise from the dead amongst the lowly!” And he also said: “On the day of Resurrection God will say, ‘Bring ye My loved ones night unto Me;’ then angels will say, ‘Who are Thy loved ones?’ and God will answer them saying, ‘The poor and the destitute.’” There are many verses of the Quran and Traditions to the same effect, which on account of their celebrity need not be mentioned here. Among the Refugees (*Muhajrin*) in the Prophet’s time were poor men (*fuqara*) who sat in this mosque and believed that God would give them their daily bread, and put their trust (*tawakul*) in Him. The Prophet (saw) was enjoined to consort with them and take due care of them; for God said: “Do not repulse those who call on their Lord in the morning and in the evening, desiring His favor” (Qur., vi 52). Hence, whenever the Prophet (saw) saw one of them, he used to say: “May my father and mother be your sacrifice! Since it was for your sake that God reproached me.”

God, therefore, has exalted Poverty and has made it a special distinction of the poor, who have renounced all things external and internal, and have turned entirely to the Causer; whose poverty has become their pride, so that they lamented its going and rejoiced at its coming, and embraced it and deemed all else contemptible.

Now, Poverty has a form (*rasm*) and an essence (*haqiqat*). Its form is destitution and indigence, but its essence is fortune and free choice. He who regards the form rests in the form, and failing to attain his object, flees from the essence; but he who has found the essence averts his gaze from all created thing, and in complete annihilation, seeing only the All-One he hastens towards the fullness of eternal life.

The poor man (*faqir*) has nothing and can suffer no loss. He does not become rich by having anything, nor indigent by having nothing: both these conditions are alike to him in respect of his poverty. It is permitted that he should be more joyful when he has nothing, for the Shakys have said: “the more straitened one is in circumstances, the more expansive (cheerful and happy) is one’s (spiritual) state,” because it is unlucky for a dervish to have property: if he “imprisons” anything for his own use, he himself is “imprisoned” in the same proportion. The friends of God live by means of His secret bounties. Worldly wealth holds them back from the path of quietism (*rida*).

Story. A dervish met a king. The king said: “Ask of a boon of me.” The dervish replied; “I will not ask a boon from one of my slaves.” “How is that?” said the king. The dervish said: “I have two slaves who are thy masters: covetousness and expectation.”

The Prophet said: "Property is glorious to those who are worthy of it." Its glory consists in this, that the poor man's body is divinely preserved from the base and sinful acts, and his heart from evil and contaminating thoughts, because his outward parts are absorbed in (contemplation of the manifest blessings of God, while his inward self is protected by invisible grace, so that his body is spiritual (ruhani) and his heart divine (rabbani). Then no relation subsists between him and mankind: this world and the next weigh less than a gnat's wing in the scales of his poverty: he is not contained in the two worlds for a single moment.

Source: Kashf Al Mahjub; Hazrat Syed Ali bin Usman Al-Hujwiri (Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh rh)