

Some Teachings of Shams of Tabriz (From *Rumi and His Friends*, Translated by Camille Helminski)

Surrender, Satisfaction, and Remembrance [526, I]

One day, Shamsuddin was discussing mysticism at Mevlana's medrese. He said, "God (may He be exalted) asks three things from all of His creatures; first, submission; second, fulfillment of proper behavior; third, remembrance. Submission is worship; proper behavior is being God's servant, and remembrance is knowledge of God (*ma'rifat*). Remove your burden from someone else and carry his; give up desiring something from others and give them what they desire. They are looking for riches, you must seek poverty; they desire honor and glory, and you desire humility.

Someone asked, "What is knowledge of God?"

Shams responded, "The life of the heart through God (may He be exalted). That which is living annihilate, and I refer to your body; and that which is dead enliven, and this means your heart. That which is present allow to be absent—and that means this world. That which is absent cause to be present, and that is the world of the Hereafter. That which exists make non-existent, and that means the passions; and that which does not exist bring into being, and that is intention.

Never Tiring of the Friend [526, II]

A special sign of the knower of God is that he never tires of remembering his Friend and can never have enough of that friendship. There is no food more delightful than the food of remembrance eaten in certainty at the table of contentment.

The distinguishing signs of a knower of God are three: a heart occupied by the thought of God, a body that serves God, and an eye intent on closeness with God. Another sign of a knower of God is that he is not interested in this world or in the next, and that his master is foremost in his heart and cannot be replaced by anyone.

Knowledge consists of three things; a tongue which mentions God, a heart which remembers Him with gratitude, and a body capable of patience. A body in which there is no knowledge is like a village without a well. A body that does not abstain is like a tree which doesn't bear fruit, and a body without modesty is like a stew without salt. A body incapable of making an effort is like a slave not needed by his master.

Contentment [526, IIIb]

If a mystic gives his heart, he will receive love like those described in the Qur'an: *People whom He loves and who love Him* [5:54]. I have seen nothing more beautiful than humility. Be satisfied with what you have in your hands and have no expectation of what is in the hands of others. The glory of prophets is their prophethood; that of the wise, their humility; that of saints, their compassion; that of the poor, their contentment with little; that of the rich, their generosity; that of the worshippers of God, their solitude (*khalvat*). Keep your religion through generosity and good character. You cannot escape death nor can your portion flee from you.

O child of Adam, wealth is in contentment with little. There is security in solitude, freedom in the absence of desire, friendship in lack of envy, joy in patience. There is no glory for the greedy person, nor is there humiliation for the person who is content. The free man becomes a slave because of his immoderate desires, and the slave is freed through contentment.