

The necessity of a mystical guide in the thought of John of the Cross with a view on why satanic temptations occur on the path of conduct

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Introduction

John of the Cross left behind four very valuable works, titled The Ascent to Mount Carmel, The Dark Night of the Soul, Spiritual Songs, and The Life-Giving Flame of Love, which have immortalized his name among the greatest mystical leaders in Christianity. John of the Cross left behind four very valuable works, titled The Ascent to Mount Carmel, The Dark Night of the Soul, Spiritual Songs, and The Life-Giving Flame of Love, which have immortalized his name among the greatest mystical leaders in Christianity. The foundation of John's mysticism is based on a passionate experience, and the stages and levels that he described in his writings on mystical conduct are stages that he herself has gone through, and now, in the position of an accomplished mystic and a perfect master, he makes those stages available to his disciples and those who follow the mystical path, like a guidebook.

Research Method

The present study, which is derived from the author's doctoral dissertation, was written with the aim of familiarizing herself with his teaching method and his thoughts and ideas regarding the quality of guidance for seekers. It is worth noting that several articles have been written about the thoughts and opinions of John the Crucified by the author and other researchers, but the topic discussed in the present article in a descriptive-analytical manner has not been examined so far and, in this regard, is considered a new study.

Results

According to what John stated in the introduction to Ascent to Mount Carmel, the reason for taking on the serious responsibility of mystical guidance for seekers through his works is that "although souls have set foot on the path of virtue and God desires to guide them by placing them on this path, they are unable to progress for several reasons," the most important of which are as follows:

1. Some souls do not want to enter the path of guidance, or if they enter it, they stop continuing the path due to misunderstanding or lack of a suitable mentor and guide to show them the path to the summit. According to John, It is sad that God grants a soul the ability to progress, but because the soul does not want to or does not know how to take advantage of this ability and move forward on the path of

perfection, or because there is no mentor or guide to guide it, it remains on the path. 2. The second reason is the ignorance of the guides and mentors of the path. According to him, the soul may seek help from a spiritual mentor while walking in the dark night, but like the builders of the Tower of Babel, instead of helping, he becomes an obstacle and a harm to the path, and it will be very difficult for the soul to understand neither its own feelings and good and bad, nor its guide.

3. The third important point is that some souls, in their opinion, are on the path of guidance on the path of perfection, while in reality, they are moving away and on the path of deviation; in the sense that they are trying hard to advance on the path and approach the peak of perfection with the help of prayer, supplication, etc.; Unaware that their actions are not only of no benefit but have themselves become an obstacle to progress.

For almost all Christian mystics, the stages that the soul will go through from the beginning of its journey on the mystical path to achieving perfection include the following three main stages, and these stages are described in the works of John as follows:

1. Purification: The soul's attainment of complete purity and purity is achieved through the victorious passage of two stages: active and passive purification. In the ascent to Mount Carmel, the active purification of the senses and faculties of the soul is spoken of with the help of common grace And in the Dark Night of the Soul, there is talk of the passive purification of the senses and powers of the soul, relying on the place of love, which is the result of the soul's passivity and the action of God.
2. The stage of enlightenment or illumination is described in the Song of Songs, which is referred to in the words of John as the divine engagement and is discussed in the middle stanzas of the Song of Songs.
3. The stage of union in the life-giving flame of love is examined and discussed under the title of spiritual marriage.

Conclusion

According to what is understood from the content of John's words, passing through the stage of purification - which, according to John, is the most important stage in the mystical path - is accompanied by indescribable pain and suffering, and the amount and intensity of these sufferings will increase in proportion to the degree of elevation of the soul. In fact, the emergence of satanic desires is one of the most severe afflictions of the soul at this stage, bringing upon it the greatest pain and suffering; because God, in order to elevate the soul from the lowest to the highest, acts with order, gentleness, and in accordance with the soul's state and capacity. Accordingly, the order followed in the process of knowledge-giving will begin at the lowest level - that is, knowledge obtained through the senses - which includes forms, images, and rational perceptions, sometimes spiritual and sometimes from Satan. This is not because God does not want to immediately and at the very beginning bestow His knowledge upon the soul, but rather because the possibility of uniting the two ends of the spectrum or ultimate limit - that is, the soul and God - is not possible all at once and without any prerequisites; if it were possible, it would have been done. Because "the infant should be nursed at the breast until it grows and is weaned". John's advice as a mystical guide at this stage is to "remain in that silence with loving attention to God, unconcerned with imagination", and this is the beginning of passivity or acceptance before God so that He may act in the soul and bring it to the perfection of purity.

Keywords: John of the Cross, mystical leader, satanic desires, stages of conduct, afflictions of the soul.