

Why Do We Fall into the Trap of Mindless Worship?

How to Break Free

Does Mindless Worship Lead Us to the Purpose of Our Creation?

Have we ever stopped to reflect on why we perform good deeds or engage in acts of worship?

Does God need our prayers, fasting, or any of our righteous actions?

Certainly not. Worship is not meant to be a mere ritual—like a prayer reduced to a series of bowing and prostrations while repeating Arabic phrases without understanding. Moreover, God is entirely self-sufficient; if the entire world were to become disbelievers, it would not diminish His greatness in the slightest. So what is the true purpose of worship and righteous deeds?

To answer this, we must first revisit the concept of self-knowledge and the purpose of human creation. As we learned in previous lessons, our human dimension or our true eternal self is the Spirit breathed by God into us. Our love for the Absolute Perfect Being, that is, Allah, stems from our human dimension. Thus, true happiness, peace, and bliss—both in this world and the hereafter—are only achieved when we unite with our Beloved, God. Union with the Beloved means to become one with Him, such that we have no distance between us. God is infinite, and He is not confined to a particular place; therefore, when we speak of uniting with Him, we do not mean physical union, but rather becoming similar to Him and uniting with His names and attributes.

Becoming similar to God is the highest purpose of human creation; in fact, we were created for this very reason. Every act of worship and every good deed must serve this purpose. Through worship and righteous deeds, we are meant to cultivate divine attributes such as mercy, compassion, generosity, forgiveness, dignity, forbearance, concealing the faults of others, kindness, and other perfections of God. If worship fails to instill these qualities within us and does not lead to spiritual growth, it becomes a fruitless and mindless practice that merely exhausts the body. Every action we take—including acts of worship and good deeds—must be aligned with becoming similar to God and acquiring assets and spiritual strength. For example, imagine someone enrolls in a martial arts gym. Their ultimate focus is to develop skill and become like their instructor, ensuring that every movement and exercise they perform contributes to this goal.

This leads us to an important question: Does every good deed or act of worship truly help us acquire these assets?

H2 Wasted and Mindless Worship

We often expect those who appear righteous and devoted to worship to also display good character and virtuous behavior. Yet, surprisingly, this is not always the case. The reason is that their worship lacks ma'rifa and sincere desire for drawing closer to God. Instead, they focus on the outward form of worship, becoming preoccupied with religious rituals rather than its essence. As a result, their worship becomes mindless and wasted, often leading to the opposite of what it is meant to achieve. For instance, if someone diligently performs prayers yet exhibits negative traits such as irritability, aggression, anger, jealousy, or arrogance, it is a clear sign that their

prayers have not helped them acquire any assets or abilities. Fundamentally, the purpose of worship is to acquire *ma'rifa*, and assets, and attain *ubudiyyah* (true servitude to God). The quality of our birth into the hereafter depends on our assets and the divine attributes we acquire in this world through our deeds.

Just as a fetus that fails to develop the necessary organs and limbs for life in this world and having a healthy birth renders all their efforts in the mother's womb futile, if we fail to acquire the assets required for life in the hereafter, all our actions and worship will be in vain. In essence, all our deeds in this world—whether prayer, fasting, remembrance of God (*Dhikr*), reading the Quran, performing Hajj, taking part in mourning rituals, marriage, or raising children—should serve as a means to acquire assets and *ma'rifa*. They should actualize within us the divine names such as *Ar-Rahmaan* (The Beneficent), *Al-Ghafur* (The Forgiving), *Al-'Afuww* (The Pardoner), *Al-Haleem* (The Forbearing), *Al-Saboor* (The Patient), *Al-Shakur* (The Grateful), *Ar-Ra'uf* (The Compassionate), *Al-Jawad* (The Generous), and *Al-Kareem* (The Honorable). However, for some, mindless worship and good deeds only deepen their negligence. As a result, instead of achieving true spiritual growth, they fall into the illusion of growth—like a person who considers himself superior to others simply because of his charitable acts.

But why do some of us engage in mindless worship and futile deeds? The primary causes for this issue are lack of self-knowledge, failing to prioritize our beloveds, and Satan's attack from the right side. We will briefly explore these points.

Lack of Self-knowledge: A Cause for Mindless Worship

Undoubtedly, as long as we do not truly know ourselves, we cannot move toward the purpose of our creation. How can someone who does not know their true self—who does not know where they came from or where they will go—progress toward acquiring *ma'rifa* and becoming similar to Allah? Such a person faces Allah with their animal dimension, rather than their human dimension. This is why the phrase "There is no deity but Allah" holds no meaning for them. Since this phrase is meant for our human dimension, not our animal one. Our animal dimension has no comprehension of this phrase and seeks deities and beloveds that align with its own desires.

The Lack of Prioritization of Beloveds

The lack of prioritization of beloveds is another factor that prevents our worship from transforming into assets. If we have not properly organized our hierarchy of love, and our human dimension does not dominate our other existential dimensions, then no matter how much we engage in good deeds, righteous actions, or worship, our worship will not lead to the acquisition of assets and *ma'rifa*. This is because we often love our inanimate, vegetative, animal, and intellectual beloveds more than the beloveds of our human dimension—namely, Allah, the *Ahl al-Bayt* (Peace be upon them), and *jihad* (striving in the cause of God) [1]. As a result, we are not truly concerned with acquiring assets for our human dimension. For example, when a memorizer of the Quran is pessimistic, stingy, and depressed, it indicates that his human dimension has not benefited from the Quran. Consequently, he gains no benefit from reading this joy-inducing book.

Deception by Satan

As we know, Satan is our sworn enemy [2]. He seeks to deceive and mislead us through his fourfold attacks [3]. One of these attacks leads us into mindless worship. It may be hard to believe, but through this attack, Satan creates hell for us by offering positive suggestions and presenting sacred matters in a misleading manner! He distracts us by encouraging us to engage in good deeds, religious gatherings, the Quran, *dhikr*, or perform any voluntary acts of worship excessively, and in doing so, he diverts us from our main goal: acquiring assets and divine attributes. He also inflates the importance of our good deeds, worship, and virtues to the point where we become arrogant and prideful. In this case, our actions not only fail to bring us closer to God but actually drive us further away from Him! Essentially, at this point, our acts of worship and sacred matters fall under Satan's influence. Like the manager of a charity organization or the head of a religious gathering who, instead of growing humbler and kinder, becomes more arrogant and ill-tempered as time passes. Meanwhile, they should increase their human assets day by day, becoming more humble and compassionate each day.

In this lesson, we discussed mindless worship and actions that do not help us acquire *ma'rifa* and assets. We pointed out that not every sacred practice is necessarily beneficial or constructive; rather, it may even be harmful and cause corruption. Instead of helping us acquire human assets and become similar to Allah, such actions can drive us farther from Him. Like some of us who, despite a lifetime of worship, performing good deeds, and serving others, still struggle with irritability, anger, spite, and jealousy. Lack of self-knowledge, not prioritizing our beloveds, and

Satan's attack from the right side are among the causes that lead us to fall into mindless worship and engage in futile deeds.

What other factors do you think lead us to perform mindless worship and futile good deeds?

References

[1]. Quran, 9:24

[2]. Quran, 43:62

[3]. Quran, 7:17