



Ibn Arabi

The Secrets of the Fast (V)

Futuhât, chap. 71, vol. 9, p.378-389

Chapter 3

The fast pertains (to the servant) solely by virtue of its legal status, and not by virtue of its essence. Stripping His servant of the fast, Allah attributes it to Himself, even though it was He who initially encharged him with fasting.

Therefore, throughout the whole duration of his fast, the servant should concentrate upon his Lord such that, freeing himself from distraction, he may thereby fully realize the qualification of fasting.

God attributes the fast to Himself only if it be in its proper form, namely, that which He has enjoined upon his servants. If the latter fail to fast in the manner prescribed by the Law, they cannot properly be described as fasting, in which case there will be no fast to "accord" to them.

It may even happen that someone believes himself to be fasting whilst, during the course of his abstinence, he commits disqualifying acts, such as, for instance, calumny. In such a case, the abstainer's fast is broken regardless of whether he continues to refrain from eating, and in order to regain the quality of fasting, he must atone for his transgression.

The faster should be mindful of this, for it is a question of considering God before oneself, such that the favour thereby gained is allotted according to the measure of the One considered - to wit: Allâh, the Most-High.

He who steadfastly looks to his Lord earns the attention of Allâh, the Most-High, and his Reward is none other than His very Self: **He in whose bag It was found: He is the Reward thereof!** (Qur.12,75). What is found in the bag is the golden Vase of the King.

On the one hand, God is present within the "heart" of His humble and believing servant, and on the other, the fast is found with Allâh, since, provided it is genuine, it is to Him that it belongs. The faster then searches for his bag and is told: "Allâh has taken it!" Thus does Allâh Himself become the Ransom (of this second abduction), in accordance with His Words: "The fast is Mine, and it is I who pay the Price thereof."¹

¹ We will publish in the future Michel Vâlsan's commentary regarding this part of Ibn Arabî's treatise (see Muhyu-d-dîn Ibn Arabî, **Une Instruction sur les Rites fondamentaux de l'Islam**, traduite de l'arabe et annotée par M. Vâlsan, *Études Traditionnelles*, no. 369, 1962).