

## RIDA– CONSENT IN ALLAH

**QUR'AN** - (THE QUR'AN with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Ünal)

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدْيُهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَا تُنْفِكُمْ وَمَا  
تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُؤْفَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ

(OMessenger! Your mission is to communicate all such commandments, so) it is not your duty to secure their guidance (in every matter); but God guides whomever He wills. (Opeople,) whatever good you spend (in charity and other good causes) is to your own benefit, and (as believers) you do not spend but in search of God's "Face" (seeking to be worthy of His approval). Whatever good you spend will be repaid to you in full, and you will not be wronged. (Surah Al – Baqarah, 272)<sup>1</sup>

أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَى مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٍ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى شَفَا  
جُرْفٍ هَارٍ فَأَنْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

Is he better, who founded his building (religion and personal world) on piety and reverence for God, and the aim to please God, or he who founded his building on the edge of a water-worn, crumbling river-bank so that it tumbles with him into the Hell-fire? God does not guide wrongdoing people. (Surah At-Taubah, 109)<sup>2</sup>

أُولَئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ أَجْرَهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيَدْرُؤْنَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ  
يُنْفِقُونَ

These will be granted their reward twice over because they have remained steadfast (in following their religion free of falsehood and so keeping themselves above all prejudices to believe in and follow the Qur'an and Muhammad); and they repel evil with good and out of what We have provided for them (of wealth, knowledge, power, etc.) they spend (in God's cause and for the needy, and purely for the good pleasure of God). (Surah Al – Qasas, 54)<sup>3</sup>

ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ بِرُسُلِنَا وَقَفَّيْنَا بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي  
قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَافَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ

<sup>1</sup> [http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com\\_quran&action=viewayat&surano=2&min=270&show=10](http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=2&min=270&show=10)

<sup>2</sup> [http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com\\_quran&action=viewayat&surano=9&min=100&show=10](http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=9&min=100&show=10)

<sup>3</sup> [http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com\\_quran&action=viewayat&surano=28&min=50&show=10](http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=28&min=50&show=10)

رَضُونَ اللَّهَ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَائِهَا فَآتَيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

Al-Hadid (The Iron) / 27: Thereafter, We sent, following in their footsteps, others of Our Messengers, and We sent Jesus son of Mary, and granted him the Gospel, and placed in the hearts of those who followed him tenderness and mercy. And monasticism, they innovated it – We did not prescribe it to them – only to seek God’s good pleasure; but they have not observed it as its observance requires.<sup>16</sup> So We have granted those among them who have truly believed their reward, but many among them have been transgressors. (Surah Al – Hadid, 27)<sup>4</sup>

## HADITH

### **Narrated: Abu Huraira**

Malik related to me from Suhayl ibn Abi Salih from his father from Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Allah is pleased with three things from you, and He is angry with three things from you. He is pleased that you worship Him and do not associate anything with Him, and that you take hold of the rope of Allah altogether, and that you give good counsel to the one to whom Allah gives command over you. He is angry with you for gossip, squandering property, and asking too many questions."<sup>5</sup>

## COMMENTARIES

### From the Risale-I Nur Collection by Beduizzam Said Nursi – a thematic tafseer

#### The Flashes, Seventeenth Flash, Thirteenth Note, The Second Matter

Worship and servitude of God look to the divine command and divine pleasure. The reason for worship is the divine command and its result is divine pleasure. Its fruits and benefits look to the hereafter. But so long as they are not the ultimate reason and not intentionally sought, benefits looking to this world and fruits which come about themselves and are given are not contrary to worship. They are rather to encourage the weak and make them incline to worship. If those fruits and benefits are made the reason for the invocation or recitation, or a part of the reason, it in part invalidates the worship. Indeed, it renders the meritorious invocation fruitless, and produces no results.

Thus, those who do not understand this mystery, recite for example the *Awrad Qudsiya Shah Naqshband*, which yields a hundred benefits and merits, or *Jawshan al-Kabir*, which yields a thousand, making some of those benefits their prime intention. Then they do not receive the benefits, and shall not receive them, and do not deserve to receive them. For the benefits may not be the reason for the invocation and may not themselves be intended and sought. For they are obtained when unsought, in

<sup>4</sup> [http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com\\_guran&action=viewayat&surano=57&min=20&show=10](http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_guran&action=viewayat&surano=57&min=20&show=10)

<sup>5</sup> <http://ahadith.co.uk/chapter.php?cid=106&page=2&rows=10>

consequence of the sincere invocation, as a favour. If they are intended, it damages the sincerity to an extent. Indeed, it ceases being worship and loses all value. But there is one matter, which is that weak people need something to encourage them to recite meritorious invocations. If they think of the benefits and eagerly recite them purely for God's sake and for the hereafter, it causes no harm and is acceptable even. But because this instance of wisdom has not been understood, many of them come to doubt or even to deny the benefits narrated from the spiritual poles and righteous ones of former generations when they do not receive them.<sup>6</sup>

### The Flashes, The Third Flash, The Third Point

In this world, the effects of time on things, and on their passing, differ greatly. Beings are one within the other like concentric circles, yet they differ in regard to the speed of their passage.

Just as the hands of a clock counting the seconds, and those counting the minutes, hours, and days superficially resemble each other but differ in respect of their speed, so too the spheres of the body, soul, heart, and spirit in man differ from one another. For example, the body possesses an immortality, a life, and an existence in the present day, and even in the present hour while its past and future are dead and non-existent, but the heart's sphere of existence and life extends from many days previous to the present day and to many days in the future. Then the sphere of the spirit is vast; its life and existence extends from years previous to the present day to years subsequent to it.

By virtue of this capacity – in respect of knowledge, love, and worship of God the Lord and Sustainer and the pleasure of that Most Merciful One, from which spring the life of the heart and spirit – transient life in this world contains within it a perpetual life, results in an eternal life, and resembles everlasting life.

Yes, one second on the way of love, knowledge, and pleasure of the Truly Enduring One is like a year, otherwise a year is a second. A single second, even, on His way is immortal and many years. A hundred years of the people of neglect looking to this world are like a single second. There is the famous saying: "A moment's separation lasts a year, and a year's union passes in an instant." I say the complete opposite to this: a moment's union for God's sake within the bounds of the Eternal One of Glory's pleasure is a window opening onto not a year's union, but permanent union. While not one year but perhaps a thousand spent in heedlessness and misguidance pass in an instant. There is a saying more famous that confirms this: "With enemies the broad earth is like a small cup, while with friends a needle's eye becomes a broad arena."

While on the subject, we say this: O man! Do you want to make your brief and useless life immortal, long, beneficial, and fruitful? Since such a wish is demanded by humanity, spend your life on the way of the Truly Enduring One. For everything turned to that Eternal One receives the manifestation of immortality.

Since everyone fervently desires long life and yearns for immortality; and since there is a means of transforming this fleeting life into perpetual life and it is possible to make it lengthy; for sure anyone who has not lost his humanity will seek out the means and try to convert the possibility into reality and will act accordingly. Yes, the means is this: work for God's sake, meet with others for God's sake, labour for God's sake; act within the bounds of "For God, for God's sake, on account of God."<sup>7</sup> Then all the moments of your life will be turned into years.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.erisale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.203.180>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.erisale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.203.32>

## The Flashes, the Twentieth Flash, the Third Cause

The cure for this error, this wound, this awesome sickness of the spirit, is the principle that “God’s pleasure is won by sincerity alone,” and not by a large following or great success. For these latter are a function of God’s will; they cannot be demanded, although they are sometimes given. Sometimes a single word will result in someone’s salvation and hence the pleasure of God. Quantity should not receive too much attention, for sometimes to guide one man to the truth may be as pleasing to God as guiding a thousand. Moreover sincerity and adherence to the truth require that one should desire the Muslims to benefit from anyone and at any place they can. To think “Let them take lessons from me so that I gain the reward” is a trick of the soul and the ego.

O man greedy for reward in the hereafter and the performance of deeds entitling you to that reward! There have been certain prophets who had only a limited following but received the infinite reward of the sacred duty of prophethood. The true achievement lies, then, not in gaining a vast following, but in gaining God’s pleasure. What do you imagine yourself to be, that saying, “Let everyone listen to me,” you forget your function, and interfere in what is strictly God’s concern? To gain acceptance for you and to have people gather round you is God’s concern. So look to your own duty and concern, and do not meddle with God’s concerns.

Moreover, it is not only men who earn reward for those who hear and speak the truth. The sentient and spiritual beings of God and His angels have filled the universe and adorned its every part. If you want plentiful reward, take sincerity as your foundation and think only of God’s pleasure. Then every syllable of the blessed words that issue forth from your mouth will be brought to life by your sincerity and truthful intention, and going to the ears of innumerable sentient beings, they will illumine them and earn you reward. For when, for example, you say, “Praise and thanks be to God,” millions of these words, great and small, are written on the page of the air by God’s leave. Since the All-Wise Inscraper did nothing prodigally or in vain, He created innumerable ears, as many as were needed to hear those multiple blessed words. If those words are brought to life in the air by sincerity and truthful intent, they will enter the ears of the spirit beings like some tasty fruit in the mouth. But if God’s pleasure and sincerity do not bring those words to life, they will not be heard, and reward will be had only for the single utterance made by the mouth. Pay good attention to this, you Qur’an reciters who are sad that your voices are not more beautiful and that more people do not listen to you!<sup>8</sup>

## The Flashes, the Twentieth Flash, Your First Rule

You should seek divine pleasure in your actions. If Almighty God is pleased, it is of no importance if the whole world even is displeased. If He accepts an action and everyone else rejects it, their rejection has no effect. Once His pleasure has been gained and He has accepted an action, even if you do not ask it of Him, should He wish it and His wisdom requires it, He will make others accept it. He will make them consent to it too. For this reason, to seek divine pleasure should be the sole aim in this service.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.erasale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.203.204>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.erasale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.203.214>

## Fethullah Gulen – The Broken Jug - a thematic tafseer

### The Good Pleasure of God: Rida in This World, Ridwan in the Next

Rida means a person's being pleased with God and Islam, showing heartfelt submission to everything He decrees, and meeting the troubles and misfortunes faced in the world with a heart at rest.

The blessed Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, drew attention to such horizons of rida with the words, "We are content with God as our Lord, with Islam as our religion and with Muhammad as our Messenger..."<sup>[1]</sup>

As it relates to believers, this blessed statement of the Prophet shows how a true servant of God is, and it sets a goal to attain for people like us. The fact that different verses of the Qur'an state, "God is well-pleased with them, and they are well-pleased with Him..." (e.g., al-Maedah 5:119) indicate that attaining the horizons of rida is the greatest goal for believers to attain.

In addition, if a person is fixed on rida, always lives with this consideration, always targets it, and exerts himself in this respect, this at the same time is an indication of God Almighty's being pleased with him. God does not affect such feeling of rida in someone unless He is well pleased with that person. It is therefore possible to say that one who is not pleased with God, who does not submit to His decrees with contentment, and who does not meet negative occurrences that befall him with a heart at rest is not a person with whom God Almighty is pleased.

#### **Ridwan: The glad tidings of eternal contentment**

As for ridwan, it is the otherworldly return for the efforts made in this world for the sake of attaining rida, or God's good pleasure. Every act of worship offered here will appear in the Hereafter as a different blessing of Paradise. In the words of Bediüzzaman, "saying 'All praise and gratitude are for God' (Alhamdulillah) after you eat something will be returned to you as a fruit of Paradise."<sup>[2]</sup> A person who remains thirsty and hungry owing to fasting here will be rewarded with Rayyan there, a blessed spring drinking from which will not let that person feel thirsty ever again.<sup>[3]</sup> In short, a person's beliefs and behaviors here will gain different meanings there. They will appear before the person sometimes as a tangible blessing and sometimes as feelings of inner relief and satisfaction.

Therefore, ridwan differs from rida in this respect. If rida is a Divine grace and favor a person attains in this world by giving willpower its due, ridwan is an eternal grace and favor God Almighty embodies in the next world and offers His believing servants. In other words, ridwan is a blessing beyond imagination that God will bestow upon His servants in the realm of eternal bliss, impacting their souls and causing a spiritual delight in them. It is such a blessing that the believers who attain it will be filled with such spiritual pleasure that they will forget the blessings of Paradise.

#### **Which is the greatest reward, ridwan or seeing the divine countenance?**

At this point, one may wonder whether seeing God or ridwan is a greater blessing. From the statements of the scholars of Islamic Theology who knows the Qur'an and Sunnah so well, one may conclude that beholding the Divine Countenance is the greatest blessing of Paradise. For example, in

his poem about Ahl al-Sunna belief, Ali ibn Uthman al-Ushi voiced this truth with the following words:

Believers see Him in a state free of quality and quantity;  
 this is not possible to exemplify.  
 When they see Him,  
 they forget all blessings of Paradise.  
 Woe to those people,  
 who say God cannot be seen![\[4\]](#)

Bediüzzaman states: “A happy life of 1,000 years in this world cannot be compared to an hour of life in Paradise, and 1,000 years of life in Paradise cannot be compared to an hour’s vision of His Countenance of utmost beauty.”[\[5\]](#)

From these expressions, it is understood that seeing God is a much greater Divine favor than the blessings of Paradise. Indeed, God Almighty’s addresses His servants who enter Paradise as, “I am eternally well-pleased with you. I will not ever be wrathful to you,”[\[6\]](#) which is a favor of the greatest kind and even makes one forget the other, filling a person with ultimate relief. This is such a grace and favor that it is not possible to imagine what a pleasure and delight this makes a person experience. It is explicitly stated that ridwan is the greatest of the blessings in Paradise with the verse meaning: “and greater (than those) is God’s being pleased with them. That indeed is the supreme triumph” (at-Tawbah 9:72).

### **Those who demand rida, will attain ridwan**

Although rida and ridwan are different truths with respect to their aspects related to the world and Afterlife, they are interconnected. This connection can be compared to a cause and effect relationship. You strive in this world by giving your willpower its due and making your demand at this issue apparent, and then God Almighty honors you with ridwan as a reward for your efforts.

There is one point, however, that should not be misunderstood or missed here: the relationship between rida and ridwan does not comply with the worldly principles of causality, because what you sow here is merely a drop. Then it suddenly evaporates, later appearing as an ocean before you. But in terms of causality, a drop cannot result in an ocean. But with His infinite graces and immense mercy, God Almighty lets your contentment about him, which resembles a drop here, appear before you as an ocean in the Afterlife.

### **The two wings to let one attain ridwan: Glorifying the name of God and sincerity**

One of the means of obtaining rida and ridwan is glorifying the Name of God. Letting God’s Name be heard in all dark spots of the earth, running like a tireless noble steed in order to let the spirit of the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, bloom in the four corners of the world allows one to attain God Almighty’s good pleasure in the fastest way. In this respect, although glorifying the Name of God is described as a means for attaining Divine Mercy, it is possible to say that it is a means, which is similar to an end in itself.

One must then always live with the feeling of making others live, striving for humanity to learn a new way, and trying to guide them to God at every opportunity. It is necessary to attach one’s heart to working for this ideal to the degree of seeing one’s life meaningless otherwise.

Naturally, one must be sincere while fulfilling the duty of glorifying the Name of God so that he does not experience loss. A mukhlis person means one who internalizes sincerity (ikhlas). But individuals

must be fixed on a consciousness of sincerity in such a way that they should not just suffice with being mukhlis (sincere) ones, but seek to become mukhlas ones. "Mukhlas" refers to God's letting a person attain pure sincerity, and thus becoming completely pure and virtually becoming a pure embodiment of sincerity. This is a quality with which the purified ones, such as Prophets Abraham, Moses, Enoch, and the final Prophet, peace be upon them all, were blessed with.<sup>[7]</sup> Even though not in the primary sense like the Prophets, other believers should cast their eyes on these lofty horizons in a secondary sense, constantly seek to act in compliance with the Divine Will, fulfill all acts of worship solely because they are divinely commanded, and not attach their devotions to any worldly returns, even abstract themselves from otherworldly expectations other than ridwan, and leave the results to God Almighty.

A person who has attained such consciousness will spontaneously react against anything other than sincerity (ikhlas). For example, if such a person makes a dazzling accomplishment, he never cherishes expectations of appreciation and compliments from others when he moves hearts with the words he speaks or the touching lines he writes. When a consideration occurs not only to his imagination or mind, but even to his dreams, he withdraws to one corner and says, "Your forgiveness, O Lord, I have associated partners with You." He should writhe with concern and purify himself through repentance (tawbah), contrition (inaba), and penitence (awbah).

One of the most important ways of attaining ridwan in the Hereafter is a consideration of sincerity to such a degree. In this respect, it is possible to say that to the extent a person deepens in sincerity (khulus), he will attain ridwan comparably fast. Maybe such a person will never experience the horror of the grave, nor the troubles in the intermediate realm. From the moment he is placed in his grave, he will experience a rocketing ascension with his Divinely bestowed body and begin to soar gracefully in that horizon. Thus, every believer should both volunteer for the duty of glorifying the Name of God, and while doing that, they should be as scrupulous as possible in order to have sincerity and maintain it.<sup>10</sup>

[1] Sunan Abu Dawud, Adab, 100–101.

[2] Nursi, Bediüzzaman Said, The Words, New Jersey: The Light, 2005, p. 661.

[3] Sahih al-Bukhari, Sawm, 4; Sahih Muslim, Zakah, 85.

[4] Al-Ushi, Badu'l-Amali, pp. 50–54.

[5] Nursi, Bediüzzaman Said, The Letters, New Jersey: The Light, 2007, p. 245.

[6] Sahih al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 51; Sahih Muslim, Iman, 302.

[7] As-Sad 38: 47.

## WITS

### What is Rida? / It is the Perfect Contentment out of Love of the Beloved

It is narrated about Rabia of Basra, the famous sufi saint that she lost both her parents at an early age. A great famine occurred in Basra during which she was separated from her sisters. Rabia fell into the hands of a wicked man who sold her as a cheap slave. Her master made her work days and night inhumanely and subjected her to much humiliation.

<sup>10</sup> - <http://fgulen.com/en/fethullah-gulens-works/thought/the-broken-jug/48889-the-good-pleasure-of-god-rida-in-this-world-ridwan-in-the-next>

One day she fled from all the indignity. On the street suddenly she fell and broke her hand. In that utter helplessness she put her face on the ground and said, 'O my Intimate One, I am a stranger without mother and father. I am enslaved and now my hand is broken. None of this saddens me. All I need is for You to be pleased with me, to know whether You are pleased with me or not.'

She heard a voice say, 'Do not be sad. Tomorrow a grandeur will be yours such that the closes of the heavenly company will take pride in you.'

That incident of the mystic Rabia reminds me of the life story of the Master of Mystics, the Messenger of God Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be with him, in his early day of his mission when people outrightly not only rejected his message but also tortured and humiliated him and the very vulnerable small community consisting of mostly slaves, socially marginalised poor and destitutes who followed him. In those trying days [he went to a city called Taif](#) to invite people to Truth, yet they not only rejected him but also chased him out of the city and threw rocks at him to drive him away. The Prophet bled so profusely from the stoning that his feet became clotted to his shoes and he almost collapsed outside the city walls. There at the height of his deep sadness and suffering the supplication prayer that was uttered by the Prophet remains etched in human history forever. These were his words in translation:

Allahumma ilayka

Ashkoo dhu'fa quwwati,

Wa qillata hilatya,

Wa hawany alla nas,

To You, my Lord,

I complain of my weakness,

and my lack of support

and the humiliation I suffer from my fellowmen.

Ya arham-ar rahimin

Anta rabbul mustadaafeen,

Wa anta rabbi,

Ila man takilny,

Ila baeeedin yatajahhamuny,

Am ila aduwwin mallaktahu amry,

O the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful!

You are the Lord of the weak,

and you are my Lord.

To whom do You leave me?

To a distant person who receives me with hostility?

Or to an enemy You have given power over me?

In lam yakun bika ghadabun alayy,

Falaa ubaali

Wa laakinn aafiyatuka

heeya awsa'uw lee

As long as You are not displeased with me,

I do not care what I face.

Your forgiveness is all

that matters to me

A'uzu biNoori wajhik

Allazee ashraqtu lahuz- zulumatu

Wa saluha 'alayhi amrud-dunya

wal-akhirah

Min an yanzila bi ghadabuka

I seek refuge in the light of Your Countenance

By which all darkness is dispelled

and dissolved are all challenges of the world

and the hereafter,

lest Your wrath descends upon me.

I desire Your pleasure and satisfaction

To You is the supplication

Until it reaches Your Rida

Aw yahilla alayya sakhatuka,

Lakal utba

Hatta tardha

Wa la hawla

Wa la quwwata

illa bika

Verily there is no power  
and might  
other than You.

In this beautiful prayer the keywords upon which this article focuses on is "As long as you are not displeased with me, I do not care what I face" and also "To You is this supplication until it reaches Your Rida."

### **What is Rida**

There is a state of being, or you can say a state of the heart when one is in such perfect contentment, in such state of grace that nothing really matters except what God - the Beloved wills and decides. In the Islamic vocabulary this state is called *Radiyah* (Well-Pleased and Well-Pleasing) both from the word [Rida](#).

Rida is an Arabic word which literally means "contentment", "satisfaction" and "being well pleased." But these apparent meanings in translation do little justice when it comes to the Sufi tradition - the inner tradition of Islam, within which this Quranic term *Rida* unveils much deeper meanings and stands as a sign-post of spiritual maturity of an aspirant.

The word *Rida* is mentioned in the Quran in a number of places and within diverse context. The term is used both for God and human being. In the Quranic expression there is a reciprocal relationship between God and His best creation - mankind when it is mentioned, "God has rida with them, and they have rida with God." (radi Allahu anhum wa radu anhu Q 5:119; 9:100; 57:22; 98:8)

The pre-eminent scholar of early Sufism Louis Massignon defined *Rida* as "*Riḍā* is the name given in the Qur'ān to the 'state of grace' sought by the old Christian monks in their rahbaniyya (monastic life)."

The most concise definition of *rida* within early Sufism was formulated by Muḥasibi (d. 857) in his *Book of Resolution and the Return to God* (al-Qaṣd wa al-ruju' ila Allah):

I asked, 'what is the meaning of *rida*?' He replied, 'the joy of the heart with the passing of divine decree.' I then asked, 'what is its opposite?' He replied, 'sakhāṭ.' I asked, 'What is the meaning of *sakhāṭ*?' to which he replied, 'dissatisfaction of the heart, its *sakhāṭ*, and its dislike for the arrival of the divine decree, as well as the heart's many wishes for control.'

Muhasibi also give example of Rida by mentioning two examples from early communities of Muslim and companions of the Prophet:

It was once said to Abu Bakr, may God be pleased with him (during an illness), ‘shall we call a physician for you?’ to which he replied, ‘He has already seen me.’ It was then said to him, ‘What did He say to you?’ He replied, ‘.... Verily, I do as I please.’

And Uthmān, may God be pleased with him, asked ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd in his sickness, ‘What is your complaint?’ He replied, ‘my sins.’ It was then said to him, ‘What do you desire?’ He replied, ‘the mercy of God.’ It was then said to him, ‘Shall we not call a physician for you?’ to which he replied, ‘the Physician is the one who made me sick.’

Junayd (d. 910), Muḥasibi’s most famous student, sometimes identified as the patriarch of Sufism, would himself define rida as the “relinquishing of choice”

Ruwaym (d. 915) defined riḍā as the “anticipation of the decrees (of God) with joy,”

Ibn ‘Ata’ (d. 922) declared that it is “the heart’s regard for what God chose for the servant at the beginning of time, and it is abandoning displeasure (tasakhkhut).”

If the human being meets God with riḍā for His decree, then God will meet the human being with His own riḍā, since a prophetic tradition has God declare, “He who has riḍā encounters My riḍā when he meets Me, and he who has sakhaṭ encounters by sakhaṭ when he meets Me.” that is to say that God declares, the one who with contentment wishes to meet Me, I am well-pleased to meet that person, whereas one who distaste meeting Me, I am also displeased to meet that him.

Elaborating on the nature of the virtue that is demanded by God, one of the early Sufis would state that there are in fact two kinds of riḍā made incumbent on the human being: riḍā with God (riḍā bihi) in so far as He is the Arranger (mudabbir) of affairs, and riḍā with what comes from God (riḍā ‘anhu) by way of His decree.

### **Being content even at challenging times**

Unless a soul matures and have unshakable faith in God as well as the love is strong enough, the station to be well-pleased with whatever the Beloved sends is hard to attain, specially when the person is facing trial and tribulation.

The litmus test lies in being able to exhibit a genuine state of satisfaction in the face of the bitter situations of life, in response to those circumstances of loss that naturally elicit distress, anxiety, suffering and pain. A famous story of Rābī’a (d. 801), founder of the love tradition in Sufism, succinctly illustrates this point. She once heard the famous jurist and ascetic Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 778) pray, “O Lord, have riḍā with us,” to which she responded, “Are you not ashamed to ask Him for riḍā when you yourself do not have riḍā with Him.”

When pressed to describe the one who has attained the virtue in question, she explained that it is “when his joy in misfortune is like his joy in blessing.” Her contemporary, the highway bandit-turned-ascetic, Fuḍayl b. ‘Iyād (d. 803), would similarly observe that one can only be characterized by riḍā when both “the deprivation and (the receiving of) the gift (from God) are equal in his eyes.”

Abū 'Alī al-Daqqāq (d. 1015 or 1021), the teacher of Qushayrī would clarify, "riḍā is not that you do not feel the trial, it is only that you do not object to the divine ruling and the decree."

In other words, genuine riḍā does not mean that one becomes numb to all pain, or that one finds pleasure in suffering, but that the joy in submitting to the divine will far exceeds the discomfort of any tribulation which may accompany life, so that it is as if the tribulation did not exist, or as if the tribulation were no different from worldly gain. Riḍā, in this light, is the overwhelming peace which ensues from surrendering the heart to God's pre-eternal decree, from abdicating the impulse to control one's destiny.

Muḥāsibī explains the reasons for why one must never respond to God's bitter decrees with either stoic indifference or dejectedness and despair. One must recognize, he argues, that God is just in His decree, that He is not despotic in His will. This should in turn lead one to have a good opinion (husn al-ẓann) of Him. One must also realize that "the choice of God most High is better than your own choice for yourself," since there are consequences for events which the human being does not anticipate in his short-sightedness. One cannot see the full trajectory of his life, much less his fate in the next world. Riḍā therefore requires not only a relinquishing of one's own will before the Divine will, but a humbling of the intellect through a recognition that, in His omniscience, God has in mind the best interests of the soul. For Muḥāsibī one must understand that the divine physician surgically inflicts pain for one's best interests. Even His deprivation is a theodical gift, for in withholding what the soul may desire for its own perceived welfare, He manifests benevolent generosity. As Sufyān al-Thawrī poignantly observed, "God's withholding is actually a giving, because He withholds without miserliness or loss. His withholding is a choice, and (the consequence) of beautiful discernment (husn al-naẓar)."

### **Higher stations of Rida**

While the semantic field of riḍā includes the notion of contentment, it also signifies much more.

The higher levels of riḍā are reserved for those who become so immersed in their contemplation of God that the world, with its joys and pains, recedes into the background. The affairs of the world become eclipsed for such folk by the overpowering luminosity of the Arranger of Affairs. Through an experience of self-transcendence, they are able to rise beyond earthly experiences of suffering and joy to behold the One in an experience of divine unity. Riḍā, in such a state, is the consequence not of an act of the intellect, where one acknowledges the justice and wisdom of divine decree, nor of the will, where one surrenders it to God, but an experience of being blinded by light of God.

Hujwiri said, "[H]e who is satisfied with the affliction that God sends is satisfied because in the affliction he sees the Author thereof and can endure its pain by contemplating Him who sent it; nay, he does not account it painful, such is his joy in contemplating his Beloved."

Above such a level there is one, continues Hujwīrī, whose being becomes so thoroughly extinguished in the divine origin that his existence itself becomes "an illusion alike in His anger and His satisfaction; whose hearts dwell in the presence of Purity, and in the garden of Intimacy."

Those who attain such a rank "have no thought of created things and have escaped from the bonds of 'stations' and 'states' and have devoted themselves to the love of God."

This station is achieved when one has attained fana with God, one who has reached the station about which Christ could describe in saying, "I and my Father is One."

### **From being content to being satisfied and well-pleased**

The nature of *riḍā* is such that it is organically interconnected with other virtues – with some more closely than others. Perhaps its closest relationship is with *qanā'a*, which connotes the idea of “contentment” in a more restricted sense. While the semantic field of *riḍā* includes the notion of contentment, it also signifies much more. In Sufi psychology *qanā'a* is typically understood to refer to one of the first stages of *riḍā*. This point was made by Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī (d. 830), when he observed that “the relation of *qanā'a* to *riḍā* is like the relation of abstinence (*wara'*) to renunciation (*zuhd*): *qanā'a* is the first stage of *riḍā*, and abstinence is the first stage of renunciation.”

Makki would also relegate *qanā'a* to the preliminary stages of *riḍā* when he stated that the “first (level) of *riḍā* is *qanā'a*.”

To the extent that *riḍā* requires happily relinquishing one's desire in the face of divine decree, it naturally follows that one cannot attain higher levels of this virtue without first realizing contentment.

### **Love and Rida**

It is love that serves as the foundation of *riḍā* and ultimately makes it possible to ascend through its various levels. “When a man is truthful in his love (of God),” writes Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz (d. 899) in his Book of Truthfulness, “there emerges between him and God, most High, a partnership of surrender ... he has trust in the excellent choice of the one whom He loves. He abides in his excellent direction, and tastes the food of existence through Him.” As a consequence, “his heart is filled with joy, bliss, and happiness.”

Likewise, Hujwīrī states that *riḍā* “is the result of love, inasmuch as the lover is satisfied with what is done by the Beloved.”

Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 860) claimed that “*riḍā* has three signs: abandoning personal choice before the divine decree has been decided, not experiencing any bitterness after the decree has been decided, and feeling the tumult of love in the very midst of trials.”

Ghazālī (d. 1111) said If His servants bear them (difficulties and trials sent by God) with patience, they are favored, but if they do so with *riḍā*, they are singled out as His chosen ones.

Love therefore stands out as one of the most closely allied virtues to *riḍā*. Without an intense experience of love the higher reaches of *riḍā* remain closed.

And this the open secret of Rida of the near ones of God. For them Rida is the perfected contentment out of Love of the Beloved where the focus is not on the self but that of the Beloved (which is the quintessential rule of love where the interest of beloved is all that it matters). May Allah grant us His Rida so that He may be well-pleased with us and we with Him.

Allahumma inna nas aluka ridaka wal jannat. Wa nuzubika min shakhatika wan nar.

O Allah, we ask You for Your Rida and the Garden and we seek Your protection from Your displeasure and the Fire. <sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.techofheart.co/2013/04/what-is-rida-perfect-contentment-love-of-beloved.html?m=1>