

Know that the [divine] gifts and favors manifest in the realm of determined being, whether through His servants or not, are divided into two kinds, gifts of the Essence and gifts of the Names, just as there are those gifts [bestowed in answer] to a specific request and those [given in answer] to a general request. There are those gifts also that are bestowed without any request, whether they derive from the Essence or the Names.

An example of a request for something specific is one who says, "O Lord, grant to me such and such," specifying something to the exclusion of anything else. An example of a general request is one who says, "Grant to me what You know to be in my interest, whether for my subtle or physical being."

Those who ask are of two kinds: The first kind is urged to make a request by a natural eagerness, for, *Man was created hasty*, while the second kind is moved to make the request because he knows that there are certain things with God that cannot, in accordance with the divine Prescience, be obtained except by asking for them. He says [to himself], "Perhaps what we are about to ask for from God is of this kind." Thus his request is by way of taking full account of the possibilities inherent in the divine Command [the thing asked for]. He can not know what is in the knowledge of God, nor can he know his own eternally determined predisposition to receive, for to be, at each instant, aware of one's [eternal] predisposition is one of the most difficult kinds of knowledge. Indeed, were it not for that with which the predisposition imbues the request, he would not make the request at all.

For those practicing the Presence of God who do not usually know this, the most they attain to is to know it [their predisposition] at the time [of receiving or asking]. This is because, by reason of their presence with God, they know what the Reality bestows on them at that time and they know that they receive it only because of their predisposition to receive it. They are of two kinds: those who know their predisposition by knowing what they receive, the others knowing what they [will] receive by knowing their predisposition. Of these, the latter is the more complete knowledge of the predisposition.

There are also those who ask, not because of any natural impulse, nor yet through knowledge of the possibilities, but simply to conform with God's command, *Call upon Me and I will answer you*. Such a one is eminently a servant, for in such a supplication there is no trace of self-interest, the concern being directed solely to conformity with the behest of his Master. If his state necessitates a request on his part, he asks for more servanthood, whereas if it necessitates silence and resignation, he is silent.

From *The Wisdom of Expiration in the Word of Seth, The Bezels of Wisdom*, Ibn' Al Arabi, P. 62-63, Translation by R.W.J Austin, 1980, Paulist press

