

Freeing the Heart

In spite of our best intentions, there exists within each of us resistance to the Divine activity. In the language of Carmel, the 'caverns of the human heart' are so deep that only God can fill them, yet they are cluttered up with disordered desires and fragmented appetites. What is required is the breaking of bonds of enslavement so as to make space for God.

What 'enslaves' us may be big or small. According to St. John of the Cross a bird that is tied by a single thread is just as held as one restrained by a rope — they both need to be broken if the bird is to fly. In his view even 'good things', can become unhelpful. These 'lesser loves' can choke the heart and prevent the Divine union for which we were created.

But how can such cords be severed? How can lesser loves be left behind? Only through prayer with the help of the Holy Spirit who 'enflames the soul with love for God'.

Only if a greater love is experienced can we break free from whatever holds us fast.

How will a person brought to birth and nurtured in a world of small horizons rise up to you Lord, if you do not raise him by your hand which made him?

St. John of the Cross