

## **A Pure Heart**

St. Isaac the Syrian (7th century), monk near Mosul  
Speeches ascetic, 1st series, no. 81 (trans. AELF; trad. Touraille, DDB, 1981, p. 395)

### **"Be merciful as your Father is merciful"**

Do not try to distinguish that which is worthy of one who is not. That all men are equal in your eyes to love and serve. So you can bring them all well. The Lord has he not shared the table of the publicans and harlots, without removing it from the unworthy? So you bestow the same benefits, the same honors to the infidel, the murderer, especially since he too is a brother to you, as it participates in one human nature. Here, my son, a commandment I give you: that mercy always triumphs in your balance, until you feel in you the mercy that God feels about the world.

**When man recognizes that he has reached his heart pure?** When considering all the good men like him to appear without any impure and unclean. So it is indeed pure heart.

**What is this purity?** In short, it is the mercy of heart towards the whole universe. And what the mercy of the heart? It is the flame that ignites the whole creation, for men, for birds, for animals, for demons, to every creature. When he thinks of them or just to look at the man felt his eyes fill with tears of deep, intense compassion that he embraces the heart and makes him unable to tolerate, to hear, see any harm or distress suffered by a lesser creature. This is why prayer accompanied by tears extends to all hours on both beings without speech that over the enemies of truth, or those that harm it, so they are held and purified.

**An immense and immeasurable compassion is born in the heart of man, the image of God.**