

A Detailed Guide for the Path to Allah

In the Name of Allah the Merciful, the Mercy-giving

Draft Version

Sharḥ al-Ḥikam al-`Atā'iyya

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Translated under the supervision of Abu Qanit al-Sharif al-Hasani

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In the Name of Allah the Merciful, the Mercy-giving

Author's Introduction

The poor servant in need of Allah Most High who depends on Allah for the forgiveness of his sins, Maḥammad [*sic*] ibn Ibrāhīm ibn `Abdullāh ibn Ibrāhīm ibn `Abbād al-Nafazi al-Rundi (May Allah be gentle with him) says: All praise is for Allah Who alone has majesty and glory, the One Who deserves the qualities of perfection, Who is free from partners, equals, and comparables, purified from the attributes of temporal things such as change, translocation, connectivity, and dislocation, Knower of the unseen and visible, the Great, the Most High. And may peace and blessings be upon our leader Muhammad, the guide out of error, on his family, on his companions for whom actions became sincere and states became pure, and on all those that follow them in their praiseworthy attributes...

Afterwards: When we saw the book of wisdom (ascribed to the fully realized sheikh, imam, the knower and friend of Allah ... who acted by what he knew, Abū al-Faḍl Tāj al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn `Abd al-Karīm ibn `Ata'illāh from Alexandria (May Allah be well pleased with him and make us benefit from him)) among the best of what has been written about the knowledge of the Oneness of Allah, being the most splendid of what every traveler and disciple has tried to understand and memorize (as it is small in size but tremendous in knowledge containing clear expressions and beautiful superb meanings clarifying the path of those who know Allah and declare His Oneness and the ways of the travelers to Him and those exclusively devoted to worship), we began to write some notes to act as a commentary for some of its apparent meanings revealing a small glimmer from its dazzling brilliant lights. However since the words of Allah's friends and scholars are folded over guarded secrets and hidden gems of wisdom which can not be uncovered except by them, we are unable to do justice to all of what is contained in the book in its internal core. The reality of these affairs do not become plain except by receiving instruction from them (i.e. the speakers of the words).

We do not claim with these words we are relating... to be explaining the statements of the author; nor do we say that what we are mentioning actually shows their views... For if we had claimed such, it would have been bad manners on our part making us deserve blame (We ask Allah refuge from this.). We have exposed

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ourselves to danger and harm by approaching something that is not fit for us (i.e. commenting on the words of the leaders from the people of Allah Most High without fear and precaution). Rather, we are simply relating in this book what we ourselves have understood from their words and what has come to us of their knowledge and views. If we accurately represent the true picture and stumble upon the hidden secret, it is among the blessings that we are unable to encompass in thankfulness.... On the other hand, if we miss the picture and aren't guided to those [correct] ways, we ascribe it to our own faults and ignorance... The responsibility lies only on us while they are free [of blame] from what we said and intended.

If this is our goal, for the presence of safety [from error] which we depend on, it is fitting that we first relate the statement of the author (May Allah Most High have mercy on him) in its full text. Then, we follow it up by our statements in narration form...

In our narration, we will use methods that detail his statements. We will also use allusions that are more obvious than his allusions so that our explanation of what he mentions may be understood, not that it is its confirmed true explanation. Along with this, we will mention many statements [of others] which we know about so that the benefit may be complete for the purpose we have set out for. As we view it like an obligation, we will also inform the reader of the repeated meanings and the inter-relatedness and separateness of the author's statements.

We have placed the core text and the explanation on the same pages. So, the copyist of this book should follow the methods we have laid down: He should write the words of the author in a different color than the color of our explanation¹. Alternatively, he can write them with two different pens with varying thickness. Both methods will fulfill what is required and be closer to what is desired keeping the benefit of the placement order of the text. Allah is the giver of success. There is no lord besides Him and no good except His good.

In addition to the tremendous demand for and significance of this book mentioned in the beginning of this introduction, the reason I began writing this commentary and took the responsibility of composing and collecting it (knowing full well of Allah Most High's overpowering will and destiny which the servant doesn't have a place of escape or refuge from) was that some companions constantly pestered me and repeatedly asked me to do this. Since they have sound views in this path and hold pure love for the people of realization, I answered their request and fulfilled their hopes, as Allah Most High willed, ruled, decreed, and made obligatory. May Allah benefit us and them with what He causes to flow from our two hands and may he not make it an argument against them and us [in the next life]. We seek forgiveness from Allah Most High for approaching this daunting task which holds much danger.

We seek refuge in Him from falling into the snare of the accursed enemy [i.e. the devil]. We ask Him for success and that He make us stand on the road of constant rectitude and turns us away from doing what will incur blame and repentance. Since He has blessed us to be members of their path, let us ascribe our lineal connection to their noble ascription, let us cling to their tailcoats, and let us try to travel their way, We hope that He give us a bit of reverence and love for them by honoring them and being righteous with them. We also hope that he does not deprive us of their intercession, take us out from the shelter of their closeness to Him, force us

¹ In the electronic version, we have written the base text in the color red. This should show up as a slightly different shade in monochrome printers.

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away from their noble door, and turn us away from their strong path. They are the people whose companions (who sit with them) do not become wretched:

*I own a title by holding them dear.
Their feet are above the foreheads.*

*If I am not among them, then at least I have
a standing and an honor for loving them.*

O Allah, we try to come closer to You by loving them, since they love You. They did not love You until You loved them. So by Your love for them, they reached their love for You. We haven't reached what they reached in loving You except in the portion of love that You have given us. Therefore, complete for us this love until we meet You, O Most Merciful. May Allah bless and give much peace to our leader and master Muhammad, the last of the prophets, and to his pure goodly family and those who follow them till the last day.

This is where I start. With Allah alone is success and from Him is guidance to the even path. The author (May Allah sanctify his secret) says:

1

Among the signs of depending on actions is losing hope in presence of a slip.

I say: Relying on Allah Most High is a characteristic of those who know Allah and declare His Oneness. Relying on other than Him is a characteristic of the ignorant and heedless no matter what this other thing may be including knowledge, actions, and spiritual states.

As for the knowers of Allah who declare Allah's Oneness, they function in accordance with closeness to and direct vision of Allah, gazing towards their Lord while annihilating themselves. When they slip and fall or become heedless, they witness the Truth Most High's full disposal of them and the overrunning of His decrees on them. Similarly when an act of obedience emanates from them or they experience spiritual wakefulness, they do not witness themselves and do not see their power or strength. This is so because the remembrance of their Lord preceded [the external obedience] in their hearts. They are well content with the overrunning of His decrees on them and their hearts are at peace due to His lights which have glimmered over them. [Consequently], they do not differentiate between the two states [i.e. slips and obedience] because they are drowned in the ocean of His Oneness. Their fear and hope has become equal. So, their fear does not diminish due to their avoiding disobedience, neither does their hope increase due to their performing good.

The commentator on *al-Majalis* said: The knowers of Allah exist through Allah. He has taken custody over their affair. So when obedience emerges from them, they do not hope for reward since they do not see themselves as doing the action. Likewise when downfall manifests itself from them, the blood-money is owed by the killer. They do not witness other than Him in hard times or easy times. Rather, their existence is through Allah, their gaze is fixed on Him, their fear is reverence of Him, and their hope is being in good relations with Him.

As for other than them, they remain with themselves attributing actions to themselves. They seek to assign for themselves a portion and against themselves likewise. They rely on their actions and are content with their spiritual states. So when they experience a slip, their hope decreases. Likewise, when they act in obedience they hold their act as their greatest preparation and strongest reliance. Doing so, they hang by the ropes of causes and are veiled from the Lord of lords due to their separation [from Him]. Whoever finds this sign in himself, let him recognize his [low] station and rank, and not transgress his limit and claim a special station among those brought near [to their Lord]. He is only of the regular people of the right hand. There shall come indications of this notion in other places of the words of the author may Allah sanctify his secret.

Shaykh Abu `Abd al-Rahman al-Salami and Hafiz Abu Na`im al-Asfahani have mentioned that Yusuf ibn Husayn al-Razi (May Allah be pleased with them) said, "A person opposed me in speech and said, 'You will not be able to obtain the goal from your works until you repent.'

I replied, 'Even if repentance was knocking on my door, I would not grant it permission to enter in an attempt to save myself with it from my Lord. Even if truthfulness and sincerity were two slaves of mine, I would have sold them both regarding them as insignificant. This is so because if I were in Allah's unseen knowledge blissful and accepted, I would not be left behind because of committing sins and misdeeds. And if I were in His Knowledge wretched and abandoned, my repentance, sincerity, or truthfulness would not make me

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blissful. Indeed, Allah has created me as a human being without having had actions or intercessors for me towards Him. Then, He guided me to His religion which He Himself is pleased with as He has said: 'Whoever tries to seek other than Islam as a religion, it will not be accepted from him and He will be among the losers in the hereafter.' [al-Qur'an 3:85] If I am a free-man and mentally capable, it is more proper for me to rely on His favors and generosity and not on my defective actions and sick attributes. Trying to match our actions with His bounty and generosity is [a sign] of our meager recognition of the Most Generous and Bountiful."

I say: This narration and others similar to it might strike the ears of those with no realization in the path of the folk [as odd]. Thus, he will deny its concept, not believe it or refuse to accept it. Additionally, he will use this to claim a spiritual station for himself. In such a case, both of the two conditions [i.e. slips and obedience] will cause him harm and danger. So, let a servant who does not have an insight in this path fear Allah lest he should deny what we have mentioned and fall into opposition to the high scholars and friends of Allah. This will also distance him from Allah Most High and might cause him to claim a spiritual station without attaining it, being firm in it, or weighing it with the scale that we have just pointed out. This type of behavior is found in someone who has not proved true to the spiritual station of annihilating himself. In this case, he will perpetrate those things that anger Allah Most High, overstep His limits, and will make this an argument against himself in blunder and ignorance. This is also an entrance to hypocrisy from which we seek the protection of Allah glorified be He, the Most High.

2

Your wanting to leave worldly means while Allah is keeping you in them is due to a non-obvious lust. And your wanting to engage in worldly means while Allah is keeping you from them is a fall from high spiritual ambition.

Worldly means are the acts by which one tries to obtain ones material needs/desires. Leaving worldly means entails not busying oneself with such acts.

If the Truth Most High has established someone in earning a living and this person desires to leave this [means of income], his desire is a non-obvious lust. It is among the lusts because it is not in concurrence with what Allah has willed for this person. It is not obvious because this person did not intend a worldly gain; rather, he only intended to come closer to Allah Most High by being in a situation that is more elevated in his opinion. However, he has not kept to proper etiquette by opposing Allah Most High's Will in keeping him in his current state and also by trying to seek a high position which he is not fit for at the present time. The tell-tale sign of Allah's keeping a person in worldly means is that his means of income is steady-flowing and the fruit and profit of his work is at hand. While earning a living, he also finds security for his religion and does not crave what others have. He also has good intentions for joining blood ties, helping poor people, or has another useful [Shari`a] purpose connected with wealth.

As for the person whom the Truth Most High has established in abstinence from worldly means: if he desires to leave his life of not earning a living, it shows a decline in his spiritual ambition and his bad etiquette. This desire [to engage in worldly means] is also in accordance with his obvious lusts. Abstinence from worldly means, is a high station in which the Truth Most High has established special servants of His among those who

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declare the Oneness of Allah and know Him. So why does he want to descend from this high station that Allah has established him in to the ranks of the lower class?... The tell-tale sign of Allah's keeping him in abstinence from worldly means is his persistence in it and his yielding its fruits. Among isolation's fruits are: good free time, purity of heart, and being free from mixing with people

Spiritual ambition is a state of the heart. It is strength of will power and is what presses one to obtain desired goals. It is high when attached to high things and low when it is attached to low things...

The author of *al-Tanwir* has said: Know (May Allah have mercy upon you) that it is the way of the enemy [Shaytan] that he comes to you and ridicules what Allah has established you in and asks you to seek other than it to confuse your heart and spoil your time.

He does this by approaching those engaged in earning a living and tells them, "If only you left earning a living and went off in isolation, the spiritual lights would shine for you and your hearts and innermost beings would become pure." He would also say, "So and so and so and so did like this." However, this servant was not meant for nor had the strength for abstinence from worldly means; his well-being was in earning a living. When he leaves gaining a livelihood, his faith is rocked out of him and his certainty departs from him. He then turns to asking people [for money] and becomes heavily concerned about his provision. Consequently, he is also forced to break family ties. This was the real aim of the enemy. He only comes to you in the form of an advisor as he came to your parents as Allah Most High has informed: And he said, "Your Lord has not prohibited you from this tree except that you may become two angels or become immortal." And he swore to them, "I am indeed an advisor to you." [al-Qur'an 7:20-21]

Similarly, he approaches those who abstain from worldly means and says to them, "Until when will you leave earning a living? Don't you know that leaving a means of income causes one's heart to look at what is in the hands of people and opens the door to craving [what others have]? You are not able to deliver relief, show altruism, or discharge your duties. Instead of waiting for other people to give you something, others would start waiting for you to give them something, if only you started earning a living..." This servant had good free time, spiritual lights were spread for him, and was free from mixing with people. He remains in such a state until he returns to earning a living at which point its griminess strikes him and its darkness engulfs him. Additionally, the regular worker does [far] better than him. This is because this person walked a path and then left it; he intended a goal and then turned away from it. So, understand this and cling to Allah: And whoever clings to Allah, is guided to the straight path. [al-Qur'an 3:101]

The devil (Shaytan) only wants to prevent people from being content with their present condition. He wants to push them out of what Allah has willed for them into that which they have willed for themselves. [Know that] whatever Allah enters you in, He takes charge of helping you with it. Conversely, whatever you enter into by yourselves, He leaves you to fend for yourself in: And say, "O my Lord, make me enter with a true entering and make me exit with a true exiting. And appoint for me from You a power and a helper" [al-Qur'an 17:80] Understand that the true entering is that which you do not enter into by yourself and the true exiting is likewise. What Allah requires of you is that you stay in that which He has establishes you in until the Truth Glorified be He takes charge of drawing you out, just as He took charge of putting you in.

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It is not fitting that you leave earning a living, but that the means of income leave you, as one of them said, "I tried to leave worldly means such and such number of times. However, each time I came back to it. Then, worldly means left me and I have haven't ever since returned back to it."

The author (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "I entered upon my sheikh [i.e. Abul `Abbas al-Mursi] with a firm determination to leave worldly means saying to myself, 'Reaching Allah in this state of being involved in external knowledge [e.g., jurisprudence] and mixing with people is a far shot.'

He said to me, without me having asked him, 'There was a person who accompanied me while engaged in external knowledge and having leadership in it and he still tasted something of this path. He came to me once and said, 'Sidi, I want to leave the state I'm in right now and abstain from worldly means to accompany you.' I then said, 'That is not how things work. Rather, stay where you are and whatever Allah has apportioned for you at our hands will still reach you.'

The author continued, 'The sheikh then looked at me and said, 'This is how the voraciously truthful are. They do not come out of anything until the Truth (Glorified be He) takes charge of drawing them out.' I then left him and found that Allah had cleansed my heart of those thoughts I was having. I then found rest in surrendering to Allah Most High, as they are as the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, 'People with whom their companions do not become wretched.' "

This is the author's statements in *al-Tanwir*. They are beautiful words. We placed it here in its full text and length, since the author himself clearly explains the meaning of his words in this hikma through his own experiences. We wish that all of the things he talks about were explained by him likewise

3

Even the swiftest of spiritual wills cannot pierce the walls of destiny.

Swift spiritual wills are powers of the self by which things are brought about with the permission of Allah Most High. The sufis call this type of will *himma*. So they say, "So and so transferred his *himma* on such and such affair. Consequently, this affair was accomplished for him."

Things do not happen due to these swift spiritual wills without being decreed and predestined [from Allah]. This is what we mean when we say, "By the permission of Allah Most High." These spiritual wills do not infringe upon the walls of predestined decrees nor do they pierce them.

The friends of Allah often possess these types of spiritual wills as gifts from Him. Others possess such wills as a means of Allah misleading them step by step into His plot, as is the case for the one who inflicts with the evil eye or who practices sorcery. It is verified that the evil eye is a reality and so is sorcery, and the meaning [of these two terms] is what we have just mentioned. The main point is that the servant should realize that these spiritual wills are only external causes that have no intrinsic effects. These wills do not carry out actions. Rather, the real performer of actions is only Allah Most High. He performs actions with the external causes present and not by using these causes. It seems that the author (May Allah have mercy upon him) narrated these words before his next statement about egocentric-planning so that he may inform you that egocentric-planning is useless. If the above-mentioned type of spiritual wills do not benefit in piercing the walls of predestined

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decrees, how shall egocentric-planning benefit? Whatever has no benefit is superfluous and is not fit to be busied with. Additionally, those of intellect find such things tedious and tiring. For this reason, the author says:

4

Relieve yourself of planning: Don't try to do what Someone Else has undertaken for you.

Egocentric-planning on the part of people for their worldly affairs is blameworthy. This is so because Allah has taken responsibility for them in this matter. He asks of them that they disentangle their hearts from it and engage in carrying out His worship and the things He has made them responsible for.

Egocentric-planning means that the servant decree for himself states that he will be in (concerning his worldly matters) according to his desires and fancies. He also plans for what he considers is fit for these states including spiritual conditions and actions. He even prepares for this and pays great attention to it. This planning is a great drudgery that he has expedited for himself. It may be that most of what he decrees for himself] doesn't happen. As a result, his opinion [about the Divine] becomes ruined and his effort is gone to waste. Then, [he may fall] into leaving worship, opposing divine laws, arguing about destiny, and wasting [years of] his life. All this presses the intelligent person to leave and avoid egocentric-planning and cut off its means and causes of existence.

Sahl ibn `Abdullah (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "Leave egocentric-planning and preferring (one state over another) because these two things make people's lives troublesome."

Sidi Abu Hasan al-Shadhili said, "If you have to plan, plan that you will not engage in planning."

This matter is the foundation of the path, the main summary, and the totality of it. The speech [of the scholars] on this matter is lengthy. We have limited ourselves to what we mentioned here because the author (May Allah have mercy on him) wrote an entire book about this subject. He called it, *al-Tanwir Fi Isqat al-Tadbir (The enlightenment about leaving planning)*, and did an excellent job writing it. He came so close to the crux of the matter that one does not need the other books [about this subject] in the path. Every distinguished disciple should obtain a copy.

5

Your striving for what has already been guaranteed to you and your negligence of what is demanded of you are signs of the loss of your insight.

The thing guaranteed for the servant is his provision by which his existence is maintained in this world. It is guaranteed because Allah has taken charge of it and freed the servants from it. He does not demand that they exert effort in striving for it or that they pay undue attention to it.

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The thing demanded from the servant are actions by which he tries to reach happiness in hereafter and closeness to Allah such as worship and obedience. It is demanded because the servant is entrusted with earning it, striving for it, paying attention to its conditions, its causes, and its proper time periods.

This is how the pattern of Allah has prevailed upon his servants. Allah Most High says: And how many a creature there is that does not carry its own provision. Allah provides for it and for you also. [al-Qur'an 29:60] And He Most High has also said: And man shall have only what he strives for. [al-Qur'an 53:39]

It has been narrated in some traditions that Allah Most High says, "My servant, obey Me in what I have commanded you and do not try to inform Me of what is best for you."

It has also been narrated from the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace), "What is the condition of peoples who honor the affluent and consider the worshippers insignificant? They act by the Qur'an in that which is in accordance to their desires. As for that which is in conflict with their desires, they leave it. They believe in part of the book and disbelieve in part of it. They strive for that which is obtained without effort (among things destined, written life span, and pre-apportioned provision) and do not work for that which is only gained by striving (e.g. plentiful reward, appreciated effort, and trade that won't prove unfruitful)."

Ibrahim al-Khawwas has said, "All knowledge is in two statements: (1) Don't work for what you've been sufficed and (2) Don't neglect what is demanded of you."

So whoever undertakes what is required of him concerning what we mentioned (i.e. striving for what is demanded and freeing up the heart from what is guaranteed), his insight will be opened for him and the light of the Truth [Most High] will shine in his heart. He will also obtain the utmost goal.

As for the person who does the opposite [of what we just mentioned], his insight will be wiped out and his heart will become blind. The proof for this is his action.

Insight is the sight of the heart, just as physical vision is the sight of the eyes. As for the sight of the heart, it only gazes towards the ultimate consequences of affairs. The consequence of affairs is for those who ware Allah. So, watchfulness of Allah is what the servant should strive for and not hesitate or stop short because of what bars from it.

The author (May Allah have mercy on him) using the word "striving" indicates that seeking provision without striving for it is not to be included in his statement. This is because seeking provision is permissible and allowed. So, seeking provision by itself does not point to the effacement of a person's insight; but, if along with it the servant falls short in discharging what he is commanded to do, then it does.

The author says in *al-Tanwir* concerning His Most High's statement: And command your family to pray, and persist in it. We will not ask you about worldly provision. Rather, we are the ones who provide for you. [al-Qur'an 20:132], "It means that you should undertake Our service, and We will undertake for you the allotment of your worldly provision. So, these are two things. The first is what Allah has guaranteed for you, so do not become overly worried about. The second is what He has demanded from you, so do not neglect it. Whoever busies himself with what is guaranteed for him instead of what is requested of him, his ignorance has become great and his heedlessness has widened. He is also less likely to be woken up by someone who tries to arise him. Rather, it is a right on the servant that he busy himself with what is demanded from him instead of what is guaranteed for him. When Allah Glorified be He provides for the people of rejection, how will He not

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provide for the people that see Him? When Glorified be He has given sustenance to the people of disbelief, how will he not give sustenance to the people of faith.

You should know that the world is guaranteed for you (i.e. your share is guaranteed for you by which your existence is upheld). [In contrast], the hereafter is demanded of you (i.e. actions for it as per Allah's Statement: And acquire provision, for the best of provision is fear of Allah [al-Qur'an 2:197]). How will your intellect or insight become firm if you pay undue attention to what has been guaranteed to you letting this divert you from what is demanded of you among the affairs of the hereafter. Until some of them have said, 'Indeed Allah Most High has guaranteed for you the world and asks of you the hereafter. So woe be to the one who guarantees for us the hereafter and demands from us the world.' "

6

Don't let the keeping back of something you are fervently asking for make you despair. He has guaranteed an answer to your prayers in those things He chooses for you, not in those things that you choose for yourself, and at the time He wants, not at the time you want.

The ruling of the servant is that he should not choose anything against the will of his Master. Likewise, he should not assert the suitability of one a condition over another. This is because he is ignorant in all ways. The servant sometimes dislikes a thing which is good for him and sometimes loves a thing which is bad for him [allusion to al-Qur'an 2:216].

Sidi Abul Hasan al-Shadhili (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "Do not choose from your affair anything; rather, decide not to choose. Additionally, flee from this decision, from your fleeing, and from all things to Allah Mighty and Exalted be He." [Allah Most High has said], "Your Lord creates what He wills and chooses." [al-Qur'an 28:68]

A man entered upon Sidi Abu `Abbas al-Mursi (May Allah be well-pleased with him) while he was experiencing some pain. The man said, "May Allah relieve you, Sidi." The Shaykh kept quiet and did not respond to him. Subsequently, the man kept quiet for a period of time, and then again said, "May Allah relieve you, Sidi."

Shaykh Abu al-`Abbas said, "As for me, I haven't asked Allah for relief from my affliction while you have. Verily, what I am in right now is relief. The Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) asked Allah for relief and thereafter said, 'The repast of Khaybar keeps revisiting me, and now it has cut my aorta.' Our leader Abu Bakr (May Allah be well-pleased with him) asked Allah for relief and thereafter died poisoned. Our leader `Umar (May Allah be well-pleased with him) asked Allah for relief and thereafter died stabbed. Our leader `Uthman (May Allah be well-pleased with him) asked Allah for relief and thereafter died slaughtered. Our leader `Ali (May Allah be well-pleased with him) asked Allah for relief and thereafter was assassinated. So when you ask Allah Most High for relief ask Him in view of Him already knowing whether [or not] it is for you."

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Rather, the servant should surrender himself to his Master and know that the choice is for Him in all of his conditions, even if this opposes his own aims and desires. So when he prays and requests something from His Lord in which there is some benefit, he should become convinced of being answered. Allah Most High has said: "And your Lord says, call upon Me and I shall answer you." [al-Qur'an 40:60] He Most High has also said: "When My servant asks you of Me, verily I am nearby. I answer the prayer of the supplicator when he calls upon Me." [al-Qur'an 2:186]

Jabir (May Allah be well-pleased with him) has related that he heard the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) saying, "No one supplicates with a prayer except that Allah gives him what he asked for or holds back a similar amount of evil from him as long as he doesn't pray for a sin or cutting off family ties."

Anas (May Allah be well-pleased with him) has narrated that the Prophet of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "No supplicator makes a prayer except that Allah answers his prayer, turns away a similar amount of evil from him, or takes away from him some of his sins in accordance with the prayer, as long as he doesn't pray for a sin or cutting off family ties."

If this is the case, being answered is absolutely attainable for every supplicator according to the true promise which has [just] been mentioned. However, Allah is in charge of answering prayers. He answers them when He wills, and sometimes being denied or experiencing a delay counts as an answer or a giving, as those who have understanding of Allah Most High know. So, let not the servant despair of the bounty of Allah Most High when he is denied or [forced] to wait even if he earnestly persisted in his prayer and request. Sometimes, the delaying [of what he asked for] until the hereafter is better for him. It has been related in some accounts that the servant will be raised up and Allah will say to him, "Did I not command you to put your needs in front of me?" The servant will answer, "Yes, and I did put my needs in front of You." Then, Allah Most High will say, "You haven't asked for anything except that I have answered you concerning it. However, I granted you some of it in the world and what I didn't give you in the world is stored up for you. So, take it now." The servant will then say [upon seeing what is stored up for him] , "Would it be that He didn't fulfill any of my needs in the world."

The forbiddance hastening answers to prayers has been related from the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) in his statement, "Each one of you is answered as long as he does not try to hasten, so he says, 'I prayed and [my prayer] was not answered.'"

Moses and Aaron (May peace be upon both of them) supplicated against Pharaoh about which Allah has informed, "Our Lord, efface their wealth and bind their hearts so they will not believe until they see the painful punishment." [al-Qur'an 10:88] Then Allah informs [us] that He answered their prayers with His Statement (Glorified be He and Exalted), "Both of your prayers' have been answered, so stand firm and do not follow the way of those who do not know." [al-Qur'an 10:89] [The scholars] have said that between the statement, "Both of your prayers' have been answered", and the destruction of Pharaoh was a period of forty years.

Sidi Abul Hasan al-Shadhili (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said concerning Allah's Statement: "...so stand firm," [above] that it means not to try to hasten what both of you have asked for. And the statement, "...and do not follow the way of those that do not know," [is referring to] those who try to hasten answers [to

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their prayers]. The rank and portion (i.e. the love of Allah and being in accordance with His pleasure) that the servant receives because of merely persisting in supplication is sufficient.

It has been related from the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) that he said, "Allah loves those who earnestly persist in supplication."

Anas ibn Malik has related from the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Jibril (Upon whom be peace) says, 'O Lord, your servant, so and so, [is asking you]. So, Fulfill his need.' Allah then says, 'Leave my servant alone, for I love to hear his voice.'" The point of this is that Allah hastens giving some people their needs because he dislikes their voice. So, let the servant be afraid of this when he is trying to speed up the answer to his prayer.

Sidi Abu Muhammad `Abd al-`Aziz al-Mahdawi (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "Every one who does not leave his preference while supplicating and become content with the Truth [Most High's] preference is being gradually lured into destruction. [Allah says] about such a person, 'Fulfill his need because I do not like to hear his voice.' " So when the servant is with the preference of the Truth [Most High] and not with his own preference, he is answered even if not given. And, actions are according to their final outcome.

Sometimes being answered has preconditions about which the supplicator has no knowledge. Therefore, the answer is delayed because of not meeting these or some other prerequisites. Among these prerequisites is evincing a hard pressed need. Some of those who know Allah have said that when Allah wants to answer a person's prayer he makes them feel a hard pressed need while supplicating. As for feeling a hard pressed need, the servant can not realize it by himself in all conditions.

One of the scholars defined the one who feels a hard pressed as the person who raises his hands in front of Allah while not regarding any [previous good] action from himself. This is a noble state and a lofty station which is hard to obtain for most people. So, how should what is built upon it be realized. The next hikma has a reference to this meaning [about preconditions for being answered].

7

Don't let the nonoccurrence of something promised cause you doubts about the promise, even if the time for its occurrence was specified, as doing so may strike a blow to your insight and put out the light of your inner self.

The Truth Glorified be He does not break promises. So, whoever was promised something by his Master, and then this thing did not occur (even though its particular time had been specified) should not let this cause doubts about the truthfulness of his Lord's promise. This is so because the occurrence of the promise might have be tied to [certain] causes or preconditions which the Truth Most High exclusively knows about.

Thus, it is obligatory for the servant to recognize his [limited] rank and deal properly with his Lord. The servant should also be at peace and rest with Him concerning His promise. He should not have doubts about the promise and should not let his beliefs be shaken concerning it. Whoever is characterized by the above is

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someone who knows Allah having a sound insight and an illuminated innermost heart. Whoever isn't characterized by this has the opposite of qualities just mentioned.

8

When He opens for you a way of getting to know Him, do not mind if the quantity of your actions lessen in its presence. He only opened this way for you so that He may make Himself known to you. Do you not see that His making Himself known to you is something that issues from Him to you, while actions come from you to Him? And where is what you are sending to Him in relation to what He is sending to you?

Knowledge of Allah Most High is the epitome of desires and the ultimate end of all hopes and aims. So when Allah Most High directs His servant towards it [by placing him in some disliked condition] ..., it is among the abundant blessings given the servant. Therefore, the servant should not care too much about what passes him by (of righteous actions and the plenteous rewards connected with them) because of this [disliked condition]. Rather, the servant should know that Allah is making him travel the path of the special people brought near which leads to the realization of the Oneness of Allah and to certainty. [All this is being done] without the servant trying to gain it or working for it. Additionally, actions which the servant tries to gain and work for don't guarantee the servant anything as they may not be safe from internal calamities. Similarly if he is required to be sincere in them, the reward he expects probably won't be realized when he is interrogated [on the Day of Judgement]. So, how can what Allah sends be compared with what the servant send forth?

Examples of what Allah sends are the tribulations and hard times a person is afflicted with that block the delights of the world from him and prevent him from doing lots of righteous actions. The [typical] servant desires that he remain in the world with a good life in smooth conditions. He also desires that he should seek the happiness of the hereafter while being affluent in the world (of course along with godfearingness). His lower self wants to just engage in external acts of obedience which are not very burdensome nor cause hardship. He also doesn't want his material delights to be cut off nor his lusts to go unfulfilled. However, Allah desires that He purify the servant from his lowly traits and put a barrier between him and his blameworthy characteristics. [Allah also desires] to extract the servant from the trace of his existence to the vastness of witnessing Allah. There is no way that the servant can reach this station in absolute perfection except by what contradicts his desires and muddles up what he's accustomed to. In such a condition, he will be performing internal actions [such as patience and contentment with divine decree] which stand far apart [in merit] from external actions. When he understands this, he will acknowledge that the choice and desire of Allah for him is better than his choice and desire for himself.

It has been narrated that Allah Most High inspired to some of His prophets, "I afflicted my servant with a tribulation, so he prayed to Me. I then delayed the answer [to his prayer], so he complained to Me. So I said, 'O My servant, how can I show mercy to you [by taking away] the thing by which I'm showing My mercy.' "

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In the hadith of Abu Hurayra (May Allah be well pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Allah Blessed and High says, 'When I try my believing slave and he doesn't complain about Me to his bedside visitors, I free him from My shackle and replace his flesh for better flesh and his blood for better blood. Then, he can start performing actions anew.' "

It has been narrated from Sa`id al-Maqbari that he heard Abu Hurayra (May Allah be well-pleased with him) saying, "Allah Blessed be He Most High says, 'When I try my believing servant and he doesn't complain to his bedside visitors, I untie My knot [from him] and replace his flesh with better flesh and his blood with better blood. Then I say to him, 'Start anew in performing actions.' ' "

Abu `Abdullah Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Tirmidhi (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "I once got sick in my previous days and when Allah Most High healed me, I compared to myself what Allah planned for me (i.e. this illness in this time period) and the plenteous worship which I could have continued to do in this time period: which of the two would I choose? Then, my determination was correct, my certainty lasted, and my insight stopped [over the fact] that Allah Most High's choice is of greater nobility, more tremendous gravity, and of more beneficial consequences. His choice was the illness that He planned for me, and there is no blemish in it since it was His action. What a difference there is between being saved by His action with you and trying to be saved with your action by yourself. When I saw this point, not performing plenteous worship during the time of my illness became insignificant in my eyes compared to what He gave me. So the illness became in my eyes a blessing; the blessing, a favor; the favor, a hope; and the hope, an inclination [for affection to the Divine]. I then said to myself, 'With this the [previous] peoples endured through trials in high spirits in the presence of the Truth [Most High]. And with this realization, they were happy with tribulations.' "

This is the way that Allah opened making Himself known to al-Tirmidhi. So, he was happy with it and preferred it to plenteous worship, and Allah knows best.

When Allah Most High sends down on the servant some trials, let him be conscious of what we have just mentioned, place it in front of his eyes, and renew its remembrance until he obtains the peace and tranquillity which will carry for him the burdens of this trial and remove its bitterness from him. This will cause him to taste the sweetness of it. At this time, his condition during his tribulation will be the condition of the thankful out of joy and happiness. He will then see that the right of thankfulness on him is that he always try to perform the good actions that are in his [present] capability.

Consider all that we have said in relation to the story that Abu al-`Abbas ibn al-`Arif (May Allah have mercy on him) mentions in his book, *Miftah al-Sa`adat wa Minhaj Suluk Tariq al-Irada* (The Key to Happiness and the Way to Travel the Path of Desiring [Allah]). He said in it: There used to be a man in Northwest Africa (May Allah keep it established with Islam) called Abu al-Khiyar (May Allah have mercy on him and benefit us with his remembrance). His roots were from Sicily while his place of stay was Baghdad. His age had exceeded ninety years and he was still a slave whose master did not free him. This was due to his own desire and choice. Leprosy had spread all over his body, but the scent of musk could be noticed from him even from a far distance away. The person who narrated this to me said I saw him praying on water. Then, I later met Muhammad al-Asfanji and I found him also to be a leper. So I said to him, 'Sidi it's almost like Allah didn't find a place to send down His trial among His enemies until He sent it down upon you (plural) while you (plural) are among his special friends.'

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He said to me, 'Keep quiet and don't say that. When Allah put us over the storehouses of giving, we did not find anything with Allah more honorable and closer to Him than tribulation. So don't be surprised if you saw the leader of those abstinent, the pole of the worshippers, and the imam of the friends of Allah... in a cave in the mountainous land of Tarsus with his flesh falling about and his skin excreting puss surrounded by flies and ants. But at night, he can't content himself enough with remembering Allah and thanking Him for what He has given him of mercy... The author (May Allah have mercy on him) shall say a few things [connected] with this meaning and Allah is the benefactor of success.

9

Actions vary in kind because sent spiritual inspirations vary in kind.

Sent spiritual inspirations are what pass over hearts connected with divine knowledges and spiritual secrets. These inspirations produce various praiseworthy states. For example, an inspiration may produce awe, another affection, another contraction, another expansion, and so on... Since these inspirations are varied, the types of actions that these inspirations bring about are also varied. External actions always follow from the internal states of the heart. The author will mention this later when he says, "Good actions result from good states..." [Hikma #46].

10

Actions are but external forms, only given life by having true sincerity in them.

The sincerity of every servant in his actions is in accordance to his rank and station. As for him among the righteous, the utmost level of his sincerity is that his actions are safe from evident and hidden ways of showing off and he doesn't intend conformity to the desires of the self. Instead, he seeks what Allah has promised the sincere people, such as plentiful reward and a beautiful place of return. Additionally, he flees from what He has threatened those who mix [others with Allah's worship], such as painful punishment and a bad reckoning of actions. This is a realization of the meaning of Allah's statement: "You alone we worship." [Qur'an 1:4] That is: "We worship none but You and do not associate others in Your worship." The gist of his affair is that people are removed from his sight in performing righteous actions while he still sees himself in relation to the actions and relies on them.

As for him from those brought near, he surpasses this rank until he does not even see himself in his action. So, his sincerity is that he witnesses only the Truth Most High in creating his movements and tranquility without seeing for himself any force or strength. This station expounded as that of truthfulness by which the station of true sincerity is achieved. The possessor of this station is being lead to tread the path of divine unity and certainty. This is a realization of His Most High's statement: "You alone we ask for help." [Qur'an 1:4] Meaning, we do not seek help from other than You, not from ourselves, our force, nor our strength.

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The act of the first person mentioned is an action *for* Allah Most High (*li Llah*). The act of the second person is an action *through* Allah (*bi Llah*). An act *for* Allah entails reward while an act *through* Allah entails coming closer to Him. An act *for* Allah is a realization of worship while an act *through* Allah is a realization of spiritual will. Doing an act *for* Allah is a characteristic of every worshipper while doing an act *through* Allah is an attribute of everyone who intends [closeness to Allah]. An act *for* Allah is carrying out the external commands while an act *through* Allah is discharging the internal ones. These above mentioned ways of explaining are those of Abul Qasim al-Qushayri (May Allah be well-pleased with him). Thus, the difference between the two stations and their dissimilarity in nobility and exaltedness is made clear.

The sincerity of every servant is the spirit of his actions. By the existence of this spirit do they come alive, become proper to cause him to draw nearer to the Divine, and become fit to be accepted. By the absence of this spirit, his actions die, fall from the rank of being considered, and become mere figures without life and forms without meaning.

Some of the shiekhs have said, "Correct your actions with sincerity and correct your sincerity by giving up any claims to having any force or strength." Then the author (May Allah have mercy on him) mentions the condition in which the servant is sincere in both senses of the word.

11

Bury yourself in the earth of being hidden, for what grows without being buried doesn't come to fruit.

There is nothing more harmful to the disciple than popularity and the spread of his reputation. This is because it is among the greatest selfish shares which he is commanded to leave and fight his lower-self concerning. Love of prestige and preferring popularity is in opposition to the servitude he is asked for.

Ibrahim ibn Adham (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "The person who loves popularity has not been true to Allah."

Another one of them has said, "This path of ours is not fit for anyone except those who sweep rubbish piles with their souls."

Ayyub al-Sikhtiyani (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "By Allah, the servant has not proven true to Allah until he is happy that his rank is not noticed [by others]." ...

One of them said, "I don't know of a man who loved that he be recognized, except that his religion left him and he was exposed." He also said, "The one who loves that people know him does not taste the sweetness of the hereafter."

Fudayl (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "It has reached me that Allah exalted be He says concerning some of the favors He shows to his slave, 'Did I not bestow upon you favors, cover you, and make your remembrance obscure.'"

All of these things which return to the love of popularity and of rising above others infringe upon the sincerity of the servant in its varying degrees. Sincerity is either attained by disregarding people or by disregarding the self. This is not attained for the disciple except by obscurity and losing his rank with himself

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and with other people. If he is not in this mode, he will not be able to free himself of the unworthy ends which drive him to try to win over the hearts of creation. This is because he sees a right for his self over them, so his self calls him to these unworthy ends with an imperceptible calling causing his actions to be tainted with showing off. The servant is not always aware of this tainting as the author will mention: "Perhaps showing off has entered upon you from where people do not see you." [hikma #160]

In accordance with your degree of realizing obscurity, your station of sincerity is realized until you are able to rid yourself from even seeing your own sincerity. In this regard, the bankruptcy of the entire race becomes clear except those whom Allah Most High has had mercy upon. It is clear that sincerity is extremely difficult on the self and is the rarest thing in existence.

Sahl ibn `Abdullah (May Allah be well-pleased with him) was asked, "Which thing is most severe on the self?" He replied, "Sincerity. Since, the self doesn't have any part in it."

Yusuf ibn al-Husayn said, "The rarest thing in the world is sincerity. How much do I strive to get rid of showing off from my heart and it's as if it sprouts up in it with another color."

Sheikh Abu Talib al-Makki (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "Sincerity with the sincere is to disregard creation when dealing with the Creator (and the first of creation is one's own self). Sincerity with those who love is that one not perform any action for the self for that would entail wanting compensation or expecting some selfish gain. Finally, sincerity with the people who declare Allah's Oneness is not looking at people while performing actions and giving up being at peace and finding comfort with them in all conditions.

When the servant makes himself obscure and sticks to humility and lowliness, he acquires a manner and disposition in which he does not feel pain in being low nor relish being humble. At this point, his soul will be purified and his heart illuminated by the light of sincerity. He will reach the highest ranks of specialness and obtain a most abundant share of true love.

Sheikh Abu Talib said, "When the servant becomes humble internally and considers himself low such that he doesn't find for his humbleness any taste nor for his lowliness any sensation, humility and lowliness become his being. Such a person does not dislike blame from people for some shortcoming in himself, nor does he love praise from them since he has no rank or station with himself. Humility and lowliness have become attributes for him that do not leave him. They stick just as the garbage man does to the garbage pile and the sweeper does to his sweepings. These two occupations are for him like any other occupation; and perhaps, people can boast about these occupations by not looking at their defects. Being characterized by such is sign of tremendous friendship of his Lord for him... This is a praiseworthy and loved station after which follows the station of discovering the secrets of the unseen."

Then he said, "Whoever's state with Allah Most High is humility, he searches for humbleness and finds it sweet just as the haughty person searches for pride and finds it sweet. If humility leaves the former person even for an hour, his heart is burdened because his state has left him, just as the prideful person finds life grimy when he is separated from pride, since it is what gives his self life."

If such is the case, the disciple has to lose his fame, obscure his remembrance, run away from situations that spread his popularity, and indulge in some allowed acts which cause people to disregard him as in the story of the dervish who the king of his time heard about. When the dervish found out that the king was in sight distance, he asked for some herbs and started eating them in an uncouth manner. When the king saw him in

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such a state, he looked down upon him, took him as insignificant, and turned away from him holding him in blame.

The text of this story shall be mentioned after this in explanation of the author's statement: "Perhaps showing off has entered upon you from where people do not see you." [Hikma 160]

The leaders of the Path (May Allah be pleased with them) have gone to extremes to cure the disease of attachment of fame to the hearts until they have used things that are not recognized in external Sacred Law. They saw this as permissible for them to do themselves and enjoin others with. An example is the story of the man who would enter the public bathhouse wearing fancy clothes under his regular robe so that they would show [from underneath]; then, he would walk around in a bewildered state as if he were a thief. When people saw him, they would grab him, slap him on the back of the neck, and snatch away the fancy clothes from him. He became famous among them as the "public-bathhouse thief". It was then that he found his heart...

Some authors have said, "It is permissible for someone choking on a piece of lawful food to help it down with a gulp of wine in the absence of other liquids, knowing full well that wine is unlawful, just to save this temporal life. Why shouldn't something similar be permissible when one may lose the everlasting life and closeness to Allah Most High." When the servant sticks to these exercises, his lower self dies, his heart comes to life, and he comes closer to the presence of his Lord and perfection. These fruits are the traits of faith that his self takes on. They become like his essential characteristics and are the result of wisdom that Allah caused to grow in the hearts of His servants: "And whoever is given wisdom, he has been given a plenteous good." [Al-Qur'an 2:229]

Jesus (on whom be peace and blessings) asked his companions, "Where do you plant the grain seed?"

They replied, "In the earth."

Jesus (On whom be peace and blessings) then said, "Thus is wisdom, it does not grow except in a heart that is similar to earth."

I say: Many ahadith have been narrated from the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) praising obscurity and blaming popularity. Among these is what has been related from Abu Amama (May Allah be well-pleased with him) that the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Allah Most High says, 'Indeed the merriest of My friends is the one who has little wealth, but a fair share of worship (praying). He worships his Lord in an excellent manner and obeys Him in secret. He is hidden among people and not pointed to by fingers. His provision just suffices and he is patient...'

In a hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be well-pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Perhaps a person with disheveled hair and shabby clothes who is repugnant in the eyes of people if he swore by Allah, He would fulfill (his desire)."

Mu`adh ibn Jabal (May Allah be well-pleased with him) has narrated that the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Verily even a little bit of showing off is associating partners with Allah. Indeed, whoever is hostile to a friend of mine has confronted Allah with warfare. Allah loves the godfearing hidden people whom when absent are not missed and when present are not called upon. They are not known by people but their hearts are like lights of guidance. They come out of every affair covered in dust, in obscurity." [{Ibn Majah, Fitan, How one can be safe from trials}]

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Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be well-pleased with him) has narrated a hadith in which the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) praised, commended, and informed of the greatness of Uways al-Qarni's affair. In this hadith he (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "While we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) in a circle of his companions, he (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, 'A man from the people of Paradise will pray with you tomorrow.'" Abu Hurayrah commented, "I hoped that I would be that man. In the morning, I prayed behind the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace). Afterwards, I stayed in the mosque until everyone left except him (May Allah bless him and give him peace) and me. While we were in this state, a dark man in patched lower garment approached until he put his hand in the hand of the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) and said, 'O Prophet of Allah, pray for me for martyrdom.' Then the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) prayed for him. And we indeed noticed an acute scent of musk from him. I then said, 'O Messenger of Allah, is he the person [you mentioned earlier]?' He (May Allah bless him and give him peace) replied, 'Yes. He's a slave of such and such tribe.' I said, 'Aren't you going to buy him and free him, O Prophet of Allah.' He replied, 'How can I do that when Allah Most High wants to make him among the kings of Paradise? O Abu Hurayrah, there are kings and leaders for the people in Paradise, and this dark man has become among the kings of Paradise. O Abu Hurayrah, indeed Allah Mighty and Exalted loves from His creation... the hidden and the righteous with disheveled hair, dust covered faces, and hungry stomachs from [restraining themselves to] a lawful living. When they try to enter upon leaders, they are not allowed to do so. If they propose marriage to affluent women, they are denied. When they are absent, they are not missed. If they are present, they are not called upon. If they become visible [to people], they are not happy about their visibility. When they get sick, they are not visited. And if they die, their funeral is not attended.' The companions asked, 'How can we find such a person?' He (May Allah bless him and give him peace) replied, 'It's Uways al-Qarni.' They said, 'What is Uways al-Qarni?' He replied, 'He has bluish black eyes, reddish hair, wide shoulders, is of medium height, and has harsh skin. He puts his chin next to his chest, looks to the place of prostration, puts his right hand over his left, and reads the Qur'an while crying over himself. He wears thread-worn clothes and is considered insignificant by people. He wraps a woolen garment around him and wears a wool cloak. He is unknown among the dwellers of the earth and known among the dwellers of the sky. If he swore by Allah, He would fulfill his oath. He has a gleaming white spot below his left shoulder. On the Day of Resurrection when it will be said to the servants, 'Enter Paradise.:' it will be said to Uways al-Qarni, 'Stop and intercede. He will then plead to Allah on the behalf of a great multitude. O Umar and `Ali when you meet him, ask him to pray for your forgiveness; Allah will forgive you.'" He then narrated the rest of the hadith.

In another hadith, the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "There will be a man in my community called Uways al-Qarni. A great multitude of people will enter in his intercession. If he swore by Allah, He would fulfill his oath. Whoever meets him after me should send my salutations to him." He (May Allah bless him and give him peace) was asked about his characteristics. He responded, "He has reddish hair, bluish black eyes, and a worn pair of white clothes. He lived with his mother. He used to have leukoderma (a disease that causes loss of skin pigment), but he prayed to Allah Mighty and Exalted and He made it go away except for the size of a dinar or dirham. He is considered insignificant, is unknown in the Earth, but recognized in the sky."

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He was so obscure and weak that people used to make fun of and ridicule him. They used to cause him injury and thought he was fit for treachery and thievery... Concerning this, it has been related that Uways al-Qarni used to sit with a scholar from Kufa, but then stopped doing so because he did not have enough clothes to cover him. The scholar gave him two pieces of cloth which he accepted at first, but gave back later saying, "People say, 'Where did he get those two pieces of cloth' accusing of treachery." At that time he used to sit with the scholars of Jurisprudence and be in plain view of people. This was before his elevated rank and tremendous significance was known. This was also before `Umar (May Allah be well-pleased with him) praised him on the pulpit.

When Uways al-Qarni saw that people knew of his state, he fled and hid himself from them. He covered up his affair from them by shepherding camels and the like. When asked about him, `Umar said, "There isn't anyone among us more obscure than him in remembrance."

When `Umar and `Ali (May Allah be pleased with both of them) met him, they asked him who he was. He replied, "A shepherd of grazing animals and hired worker of people," and he covered up the mention of Uways. When they asked him about his name, he responded, "Servant of Allah (`Abdullah)." When they specifically asked about the name his mother gave him, he did not answer them. When they informed him that the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) had described him and that they recognized him, he said, "Perhaps that person is other than me." When they said that the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) told them about the gleaming white spot under his left shoulder and they asked him to show it to them, he did not find a way out but to do as they commanded. He did this, and Allah knows best, in order to show them with their own eyes the correctness of the Prophet's (May Allah bless him and give him peace) statement and his truthfulness about telling of unseen things. This showing was obligatory on him; if it were not, he might of tried to pretend for them like he did before about what he was asked.

After this when `Umar (May Allah be well-pleased with him) asked him to meet with him and make that spot a meeting place between them, he replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, there will be no fixed meeting between you and me. I don't know you and you don't know me after this day." He then returned the camels to their owners and left shepherding.

He dealt similarly with Harim ibn Hayyan (May Allah be well-pleased with him) when he met him on the shore of the Euphrates and they became acquainted with each other. He said to Uways, "Narrate to me a hadith from the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace), so that I may memorize it from you."

He replied, "I don't like to open this door upon myself. I don't want to be a hadith narrator, a mufti, nor a judge." When they finished their conversation, Harim ibn Hayyan asked him to meet regularly with him. Uways al-Qarni refused.

Uways al-Qarni said, "After today, I don't want to see you looking for me and asking about me. You go your way and I'll go mine," Later Harim struggled to find him and search for him, but was not able to.

Among the wonderousness of his affair is that Allah made him attain this state of being hidden and covered up and perfected it for him after his death (while also making him a point for reflection for later peoples). `Abdullah ibn Salama said, "We went on a military expedition to Azerbaijan in the time of `Umar ibn al-Khattab (May Allah be well-pleased with him) and with us was Uways al-Qarni (May Allah be well-pleased

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with him). When we were returning, he got sick and subsequently passed away. We stopped and found a dug grave, water flowing, and fragrance. We washed his body, shrouded him, prayed for him, and buried him. Later, we said to each other, 'We should return, so we can remember where his grave is.' When we returned, we couldn't find any grave nor any trace of him."

I say, "The narrations and utterances concerning the praise of obscurity and the blame of popularity are more than can be accounted for. The authors of this knowledge have related much, so let the disciple look at that asking Allah for the best of success. The expressions that the author (May Allah be well-pleased with him) uses here (i.e. burying in the soil, growing of plants, and, coming to fruit) are witty metaphorical expressions.

12

Nothing benefits the heart like solitude through which it enters the plain of thought.

Treating the diseases of the heart is obligatory on the disciple. His diseases only come about by the forces of his environment overtaking him, such as keeping the company of opposites, being occupied with the routine, following the desires of the self, and being at home with the physical world.

These diseases can be treated in many ways, but the most extreme and useful way is detaching oneself from people while busying oneself with contemplation. Detaching oneself allows one to avoid mixing with whom mixing is not proper and with whom keeping the company of exposes one to dangers. So, the one who detaches himself is saved from disobedience that accompanies mixing with people, such as backbiting, manifesting the opposite of what is hidden, showing off, and pretentiousness. He is also saved from being overtaken from vile traits and low characteristics. Additionally, his religion and self are saved from argumentation and other types evil and temptations. Normally, the self loves and hastens to immerse in these types of actions. Thus, it is obligatory for the one who withdraws himself to keep his tongue from asking about the news about people, what they are occupied with, absorbed in, and devoted to. Also, he should protect his ears from rumors abounding in the land... Let him make sure that looking out for or searching for such things does not engulf him. Also, he should avoid the company of the person who does not guard his speech nor hold his tongue from backbiting in a minute way (insinuating slander and defamation against people). Such company will make the clearness of his heart grimy and cause one to commit acts that anger the Lord. Therefore, let the one who withdraws himself leave him, run away from him as if he were running away from a lion, and not gather with him in a single place. Let him not become acquainted with anyone who does the aforementioned among those who are connected with the religion. Needless to say, one should also avoid other those not connected with the religion .

One of the scholars said, "Refuse to recognize those you know and don't become acquainted with those you don't know."

It has been narrated in a hadith, "The example of a bad companion is like the example of smoke bellows. If it doesn't burn you with its sparks, its foul smell will be attached to you."

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It has been narrated in the past narratives that Allah Most High inspired unto Moses (on whom be peace), "O son of `Imran, be attentive, withdraw yourself with some brothers, and [know that] every brother or companion who doesn't help you in My righteousness is for you an enemy."

Allah inspired unto David asking, "Why is it that you keep to yourself?"

He replied, "O my God, I've forsaken people for your sake."

He Most High then said, "O David, be attentive, and withdraw yourself with some friends. However, don't accompany any friend that does not concur with you in My righteousness; rather, he is an enemy for you. [Such a friend] will cause your heart to harden and make you draw further away from Me."...

By withdrawing, the servant's seriousness will come together and his determination will become stronger concerning Allah. In contrast, mixing with people disperses seriousness and weakens determination. It is said that verily the servant ties the knots of the traits of goodness in his solitude and acts by them. Then when he goes out to the people, they undo these, knot by knot. By the time he returns to his house, all of the knots are undone.

It is narrated from Jesus (upon whom be peace), "Don't sit with the dead, lest your hearts die."

He was asked, "Who are the dead?"

He replied, "Those who love the world and desire it."

It has been narrated that the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "The most fearful thing that I fear for my community is weakness of certainty." Weakness of certainty only comes about by viewing those who are in forgetfulness of Allah and by mixing with the heads of idleness and hard-heartedness.

Abu Talib al-Makki (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "The most harmful, most likely to cause destruction, severest veil, and cause for drawing further away that the servant is tried with is weakness of certainty concerning what has been promised of the unseen... Conversely, strong certainty is the foundation of every good action.

A person among this party said, "I asked one of the saints (*abdal*) who are severed from all but Allah, 'How does one travel the path to realization and attainment to the Truth?'

He replied, 'Don't look at created things (i.e. people). Indeed looking at them is a darkness.'

I interjected, 'There's no way for me around them.'

He responded, 'Then, don't listen to their talk. Indeed their talk hardens the heart.'

I again said, 'There's no way for me around them.'

He then said, 'Then, don't conduct dealings with them. Indeed, dealing with them is a loss and desolation.'

I replied, 'I am in their midst. I have to deal with them.'

He said, 'Then, don't feel at home with them. Indeed, feeling at home with them is destruction.'

I said, 'This malady is with me.'

He retorted, 'O you, you look at the playful, listen to the talk of the ignorant, deal with the idle, and feel at home with the perishing. Despite this, you want to find the sweetness of obedience while your heart is with other than Allah Mighty and Exalted be He. Be gone, this will never be.'

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By withdrawing, the servant's sight will be restrained from looking towards the beauty and splendor of the world. Also, his mind will be turned away from finding pleasant what Allah Most High has dispraised among the world's decorations. The self will be prevented by this from looking attentively at the world, raising one's glance towards it, and competing with its inhabitants for it. Allah Most High has said: "Don't stretch your eyes towards what we have let pairs of them enjoy..." [Al-Qur'an 20:31] No one should consider this insignificant because it can lead to tremendous ailments of the heart. Whoever draws apart from people is saved from these ailments by the permission of Allah Most High.

Imam Abu Qasim al-Qushayri (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "When the leaders of struggle want to safeguard their hearts from evil thoughts, they stop looking at beautified things. This is a big principle among them in struggling during exercises."

Muhammad ibn Sirin (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "Be aware of excess glancing because it leads to excess desires."

A man from those who know the rules of conduct said, "Whoever has many glances is continuously in sorrow. Indeed, the eye is a cause for tribulation. Whoever sends forth his sight asks for his own death..."

In this way, the servants craving things from people will end and he will despair of them. The intelligent and astute view this among the biggest advantages of drawing apart from people.

However, the benefits of drawing apart are not completed except with engaging the heart with contemplation which is desired at this point. Drawing apart is a precondition and helper of contemplation. Of course, this contemplation should occur after the disciple has acquired what he needs of the external Sacred Law and gives due concern to internal manners of conduct. Imam al-Ghazali has mentioned a satisfactory section about this in *The Book of Drawing Apart* (Kitab al-`Uzla) in his book *The Reviving of the Religious Sciences* (Ihya' `Ulum al-Din), so let the disciple look there.

It has been narrated in a report, "Contemplation of one hour is better than seventy years of worship." And thus it is and Allah knows best.

Jesus son of Mary (upon both of them and our Prophet be blessings and peace) used to say, "Jubilance be for the one whose speech is remembrance of the Divine, his silence is contemplation, and his sight is [a cause for] learning lessons. Indeed, the most intelligent of men is he who makes his lower self subservient and works for what is after death."

Ka`b said, "Let the one who wants the nobility of the hereafter contemplate much." It was said to Umm Darda', "What was the best action of Abu Darda'?"

She replied, "Contemplation." This is because contemplation leads to the knowledge of the reality of things, makes the truth clear from the falsehood, and the beneficial from the harmful. With it, one can notice the hidden pitfalls of the self, the schemes of the enemy (Shaytan), and the deception of the world. Also with it, one can become acquainted with the ways of freeing and purifying oneself from these things.

Hasan al-Basri (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "Contemplation is a mirror which lets you distinguish your good qualities from your bad ones. Also, one can realize the tremendousness of Allah most High and His loftiness by contemplating about His signs and creation. In addition, one can see with it His manifest and hidden blessings. Thus one can attain high states of being and the removal of the diseases of the heart. Finally with it, one can remain steadfast in the obedience of one's Lord."

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I say, "Drawing apart as the author (May Allah have mercy on him) has mentioned also includes strict solitude and is one of the four essentials which are a foundation for disciples. One of the other three are: (2) silence (which for most people doesn't come about except in solitude and drawing apart), (3) hunger, and (4) night vigils. [If the disciple acquires these four], he has attained the entire medicine and caught up with the company of the friends of Allah and the saints.

Sahl ibn `Abdullah (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "All goodness is in these four qualities. By these, the saints became saints: (1) hunger of the stomach, (2) silence, (3) strict solitude, and (4) night vigilance."

The poet gathered them in his poem:

*O You, the ranks of the saints you desire,
Without having for actions any desire.
Don't crave it because you are not fit for it.
If with them in their states you do not compete.
The house of closeness has its pillars divided.
Our leaders from the saints abide in it.
Always between silence and drawing apart.
Hunger and Night vigilance above and apart.*

13

How shall divine light shine upon a heart whose mirror is stamped with the impressions of created things? Or how shall it travel to Allah while chained in its lusts? Or how shall it wish to enter the presence of Allah while uncleansed from the impurity of forgetfulness of Him? Or how shall it hope to understand subtle secrets while having not repented from its mistakes?

It is impossible to bring two mutually exclusive opposites together. Such as trying to unify movement and stillness or light and darkness. These things that the author (May Allah have mercy on him) has mentioned are opposites that do not come together. Thus, the light of faith and certainty illuminating the heart is an opposite of the darkness that overtakes it by relying on material forms and created things. Likewise, for the traveler to Allah Most High to cut off his lower self is opposite to letting his lusts and desires have free reign. Similarly, entering into the presence of Allah requires that the servant's internal self be pure and removed from bad traits which is the opposite of his condition of impurity by not remembering Him; this impurity causes him to be removed and distanced from the Divine. Finally, understanding subtle spiritual secrets comes about from godfearingness which is the opposite of persisting in disobedience and mistakes.

There is an allusion to this point in His Most High's statement: "Fear Allah and Allah will teach you." [2:282] Also it has been reported in some ahadith, "Whoever acts by what he knows, Allah makes him inherit knowledge of what he did not know."

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Yahya ibn Ma`in (May Allah have mercy on him) said, “Ahmad ibn Hanbal met Ahmad ibn Abu Hawari and said to him, ‘O Ahmad, narrate to me an account that you heard from your teacher Abu Sulayman.’

Abu Hawari replied, ‘O Ahmad, say *subhanallah* (glory be to Allah) without conceit.’ Ibn Hanbal then uttered *subhanallah* in a prolonged fashion without conceit. Ibn Abu Hawari then said, ‘I heard Abu Sulayman saying, ‘When a person’s soul resolves upon leaving sins, it moves about in the metaphysical world and returns to the servant with rare pieces of wisdom without any scholar teaching it any knowledge.’

Then, Ahmad ibn Hanbal stood up and sat down three times and said, ‘I haven’t heard in Islam any narration more wondrous to me than this.’ Then, he mentioned the hadith we mentioned above: ‘Whoever acts by what he knows, Allah makes him inherit knowledge of what he did not know.’ He then said to Ibn Abu Hawari, ‘You’ve spoken the truth and so did your sheikh.’”

Because these things are opposites, the author (May Allah have mercy on him) marvels at the one who believes that they can come together and at the one who craves to attain the ranks of the realized spiritualists while having the ugliest faults.

14

Created things in essence are darkness, only illuminated by the manifestation of Allah in them. So, whoever sees created things and sees Him not in them, or with them, or before them, or after them, is need of light and the suns of divine knowledge are screened from him by the clouds of physical reality.

Nonexistence is darkness and existence is light. So, the created universe by and in itself is dark nonexistence. It only becomes illuminated existence by the light of the Truth becoming apparent in it.

The states of people differ in this respect. Among them are those that do not witness anything but created things and are veiled from the Creator. These type of people are wanderers in darkness veiled by the clouds of the effects of created things. Others are not veiled from the Creator by created things. Then, they in their witnessing Him are several groups: Some see the Creator before created things; these are the ones who are guided to the effects by the existence of the Effector. Others see Him after created things; these are the ones who are guided to the Effector by the existence of the effects. Some of them witness Him simultaneously with created things, The simultaneity is either of attachment which is witnessing Him in created things or of detachment which is witnessing Him in the presence of created things. These prepositions that have been used (i.e. before, after, simultaneously with, in, and in the presence of) are not to be understood as pertaining to time or place. Time and place are only for describing created things. Also, the words attachment and detachment are not to be understood by their common meanings, since they only mean this for created things.

The detailed descriptions of these affairs and the differentiation between these realities (as they) are left to the scholars who are in charge of such subjects. So, let us restrict ourselves to what we have just mentioned. Here is the place where many feet of people have slipped. They have talked with groundless words and tried to explain away with explanations unrecognized by Sacred Law. Thus, they fell into disbelief and blameworthy innovations. So, believe in the perfection of Him being far above everything and recognize the falsity of

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anything being like Him. Hold firm to His (Mighty and Exalted) statement: "There is nothing like Him and He is the Hearing, the Seeing." [Al-Qur'an 42:11] May He be above all; there is no god except Him.

15

Among what shows you His subjugation (glory be to Him) of you is that He veils you from Him with that which has no existence alongside Him.

The sayings and allusions of those who know Allah and those who have reached realization agree about what we have just mentioned a little before this: Everything besides Allah Most High is purely nonexistent. The essence of these things cannot exist alongside Allah (glorified and exalted be He). If they existed this would be ascribing partners with Him and calling to dualism. This belief [in the existence of other than Him] is contradictory to the pure Oneness of Allah. Allah Most High has said: "All is perishing except His countenance." [Al-Qur'an 27:88]

The prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "The most truthful statement of the poet [Labid] was:

*Isn't everything besides Allah false?
And must not every pleasure end?*

One of the knowers of Allah said, "The realized refuse to witness anything other than Allah because of what He has made them witness of His eternal nature and encompassing permanency."

Sidi Abul Hasan al-Shadhili (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "Indeed, we gaze towards Allah with the sight of faith and certainty and this has freed us of any need for a proof of His existence. We use Him to prove the existence of creation. Is there anything in existence except the One, the Truth? We don't see people. However if we must see them, we see them like dust particles in the air. If you searched them out, you'd find that they didn't amount to anything." He also said, "The witnessing of Allah became very intense for me once, so I asked Him to veil that from me. It was then said to me, '...Rather ask Him to make you strong enough [to bear it].' So I asked Him and He made me stronger."

Ibn `Ata'illah said in his book, *al-Tanwir*, "The knowers of Allah don't describe things besides Allah Most High with existence nor with absence, since nothing exists along with Him due to His Unity... and only things that exist can be absent. If the illusive veil were torn away, sight would fail to find material forms and the light of certainty would shine to cover up the existence of created things." These words are an explanation of what he mentions in the book.

One of knowers said, "If I were asked to see other than Him, I would not be able to; since, there is nothing other than Him to see."

A poet has said:

Since I got to know the God, I haven't seen other than Him.

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*Likewise, other than Him doesn't exist with us.
Since I came into union, I haven't feared separation.
So, today I am connected and joined.*

Another one has said:

*Say: 'Allah,' and leave created things and what they contain.
If you are betaking yourself to reach perfection,
Then [know that] all besides Allah when you explore it,
is mere nonexistence in detail and totality.
Know that you, the universe, and all,
if it weren't for Him, would be effaced and disappear.
Whoever has no existence in his essence,
Then, his existence is impossible were it not for Him.
The knowers of Allah have become annihilated, so they see not,
Anything besides the Proud and the High.
They see other than Him in truth as perishing,
in the present, the past, and the future.*

The scholars have written many books clarifying this matter... both in metered verse and prose. Everyone explains it according to his own sipping and tasting. We ask Allah to reward them well.

After we have settled this matter, we find that most people have been veiled from Allah Most High by their worldly lusts, [expectations] of ranks in the hereafter, and [desires] for high [spiritual] stations. All of these things besides Allah are counted among the nonexistent. From this, we recognize His overmastering power as one of His names is the Subjugator (al-Qāhir). If the veil were lifted from these people, they would be annihilated from themselves and their whims, subsisting with their Lord as His true servants.

Abu Sa`īd ibn al-'A`rābi (May Allah be well-pleased with him) replied when asked about annihilation, "Annihilation is that the tremendousness and magnificence of Allah become apparent to the slave, so they make him forget the world, the hereafter, spiritual states, ranks, stations, remembrances, his intellect, his self, all things, his being annihilated from these things, and even his being annihilated from annihilation. This is due to his consciousness being drowned in the Divine Immensity."

The scholars have noted that annihilation is of three types: (1) annihilation in actions, as they say, 'There is no performer of actions besides Him.', (2) annihilation in the divine attributes meaning there is no real living, knowing, capable, willing, hearing, seeing, or speaking thing besides Allah, and (3) annihilation in the Being of Allah, meaning that there is nothing in existence besides Allah Most High. They have recited concerning this:

*So, he is annihilated; then, he is annihilated; then again, he is annihilated;
Thus, his annihilation becomes permanence.*

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Sidi Muhyi al-Din said, "Whoever sees people as having no actions of their own has triumphed. Whoever sees them as having no life of their own has achieved. Finally, whoever acknowledges them as nonexistent has reached [the Goal].!..."

16

How can it be imagined that something could veil Him while He manifested everything?¹ How can it be imagined that something could veil Him while He appears through everything?² How can it be imagined that something could veil Him while He is evident in everything?³ How can it be imagined that something could veil Him while He is apparent to everything?⁴ How can it be imagined that something could veil Him while He is the Manifest before the existence of everything?⁵ How can it be imagined that something could veil Him while he is more evident than anything?⁶ How can it be imagined that something could veil Him while He is the One alongside Whom is nothing else?⁷ How can it be imagined that something could veil Him while He is closer to you than everything?⁸ How can it be imagined that something could veil Him while, if not for Him, nothing would exist?⁹ Is it possible for existence to appear in nothingness?¹⁰ Or is it possible for things that have a beginning to hold their ground with Him Who has the quality of beginninglessness?¹¹.

[The following sentences should be read in conjunction with the superscripts in the above text.]

1. He has endowed everything with the light of existence while it was before in the darkness of nothingness as was mentioned before.
2. Thus, the deducers prove His existence with created things: We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in themselves... [al-Qur'an 41:53].
3. He endows everything with His beautiful attributes and names.
4. He is apparent in the aura of that thing. For this reason, it is prostrating to Him and glorifying His praise, but we do not understand it.
5. The Manifest (al-Dhāhir) is a permanent name for Him, before time and forever.
6. True existence is undoubtedly more evident than nothingness in every situation.
7. Everything besides Him is nothingness and has no true existence.
8. He encompasses you and holds up your being.
9. The beholders of Allah use Him to prove the existence of created things as Allah Most High says: “Isn’t your Lord sufficient that He is a witness over all things?” [al-Qur'an 41:53]
10. Nothingness is darkness and existence is light. They are mutually exclusive opposites.
11. Falsehood cannot hold its ground when the truth becomes apparent as Allah Most High has said: “Say: Truth has come and falsehood has disappeared. Indeed, falsehood is ever perishing.” [al-Qur'an 17:81] Mighty be He has also said, “We hurl truth at falsehood, so it triumphs over it. Thus, falsehood disappears.” [al-Qur'an 17:81]

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I say: In this section of the book from the statement, "Created things in essence are darkness..." [hikma #14] to here, the author has done an outstanding job. He has brought what eyes find comfort in and ears relish.. He (May Allah be well-pleased with him) mentioned all of things connected with the manifestation of Allah and falsified the veiling qualities of every darkness and light. He has shown you in it the Truth with the sight of an eyewitness. He has raised you from the station of faith to the highest ranks of spiritual excellence. All of this has been done using the briefest of words, the most eloquent of expressions, the most perfect clarification, and the most subtle motions. If there were nothing but this section in the book, it would have been a sufficient healing. May Allah reward him well on our part. Then, He (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said:

17

Whoever wishes that something other than what Allah has brought about happen in the present time, has not left ignorance a bit.

When Allah Most High establishes the servant in a situation among the situations which the Sacred Law does not blame, he should stick to good manners by choosing to remain in it and be pleased with it. He should also be attentive of Allah by guarding over the situation's proper manners. Let him be in accordance with Allah's desire for him until *He* is the one who takes him out of it.

Abu `Uthman (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "Since forty years, Allah has neither kept me in a situation which I disliked, nor put me in another one which I detested."

The story of the author (May Allah have mercy on him) with his sheikh, Abul `Abbas al-Mursi, has been mentioned earlier [hikma #2]. The story narrated the author's determination to withdraw from the world and leave his occupation with external knowledge. The sheikh's reply has also been already narrated and [his reply] is among the fruits of the knowledge of Allah Most High and acquaintance with His Lordship.

If the servant detests the condition he is in, longs to get out if it by himself, and desires that something other than what Allah has brought about should happen, he has reached the extremity of ignorance of his Lord and shown bad manners in the presence of his Master Mighty and Exalted be He. The Sufis consider this desire to oppose the ruling of the present time among the greatest sins of the elect.

Thus, it is obligatory on the servant to surrender to the ruling of Allah Most High in the present time. This surrender is among the manners of slavehood and what the knowledge of Allah necessitates. The above discussion demonstrates one of the ways the Sufis use the word "time".

Imam Abul Qasim al-Qushayri (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "Some times they mean by the word "time" what bumps into them from the free disposal of the Truth without their own choice. They say, 'So and so is [one] with the ruling of the "time".' They mean that he has surrendered his preference to what appears from the unseen. This is for those things that Allah Most High did not order them to do in connection with rights of the Sacred Law. Leaving what one's ordered to do, making the order a mere issue of destiny, and not caring about one's shortcomings is a departure from Islam... If one is helped by the time, then it is actually *time* for him. However if one is burdened by time, then it is for him [a source of] loathing"

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This statement of Abul Qasim is in agreement with what the author of the book has mentioned. Allah is the grantor of success.

18

Postponing actions until the presence of free time is from the foolishness of the self.

When the servant is busied by some condition (among the various conditions of his worldly life) from doing a good action and puts it off waiting for freedom from his activities, whereby he says, "When I become free, I'll perform the action.", he demonstrates a folly of the self.

...The servant's foolishness is due to the following reasons:

The first is his preferring this world over the hereafter. This preference is not among the states of the sensible believers and is in conflict with what is demanded of him. Allah Most High says, "But you prefer the life of the world while the hereafter is better and more lasting." [al-Qur'an 87: 16-17]

The second is his putting off the action until his [expected] free time. Often, he will not find respite until death snatches him away. Also, his activities might increase since the activities of the world lead to one another, as it is said:

Not one has fulfilled from the world his aim.

And neither do aims end except with other aims.

The third reason is that if he does get some free time, his determination for the action might change and his intention might weaken.

Also, there is in the postponement an element of claiming independence from Allah and seeing for oneself some power or strength... Rather, it is obligatory on the servant that he rush to perform actions in whatever condition he is in and seize the first available opportunity before death overtake him suddenly or he loses his chance. He should also rely on Allah Most High in making actions easy for him and in removing the barriers between the actions and him...

19

Do not ask Him to take you out of a condition so that He uses you in another. If He wanted you, He would have used you without taking you out.

When a person is in a state that doesn't conform to his desire, regardless of whether the state is connected with religion or the world, he should not want to come out of it by himself. This coming out would lead him to oppose the command of the present time wanting to make something other than what Allah has brought about happen, as we have mentioned before [in hikma #17]. This is true as long as the requisite noted

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earlier holds. (i.e. This state should not conflict with a command from Sacred Law or cause one to commit a prohibited act.)

Also, he should not oppose the command of the present time by requesting his Master to take him out of his current state and use him in another, since this is choosing against Allah Most High. The servant has no choice in this matter. Rather, he should keep good manners with Allah and prefer His desire for him over his preference for himself. At this time, he will realize the station in which he will become acquainted with the love of Allah Most High and His desire for him. Thus, He will use him in a loved way while the servant stays in his present condition. At this point, Allah's utilization of him will be in accordance to His desire not the servant's desire for himself and this is better.

The author says in *al-Tanwir* narrating from one of the disciples that the disciple used to say, "I wish I could leave all means of earning and just be given two loaves of bread each day." He meant by this to be free of the fatigue of earning a living. The disciple then said, "I was subsequently imprisoned. Then when I was in prison, I was given two loaves of bread each day. My stay became prolonged until I became unhappy. So one day, I thought about my affair and it was inspired to me, 'You asked Us to give you two loaves of bread each day, but you didn't ask Us for relief. So, We gave you what you asked for.' I then asked for forgiveness for this and returned to Allah Most High. Shortly afterwards, I heard a knock on the door of the jail cell and was delivered from the prison."

The author comments on this narration, "So learn a lesson from this O believer and don't request that He take you out from an affair and make you enter another as long as your current state is in accordance with Sacred Law. For asking Him to take you out would be keeping bad manners with Allah Most High. Rather, be patient lest you demand exit [from your condition] by yourself and be given what you asked for while being denied rest in it. Perhaps a leaver of something and an enterer into another seeking to find fortune and rest may become fatigued and be faced with hardship as a punishment for preferring [things for himself]."

This is what the author has said in *al-Tanwir* and it is like an explanation of what he mentions here. For this reason, I have related it.

20

The spiritual drive of the traveler does not will to stop with what is revealed to it except that the voices of higher reality call out to him, "What you seek is still ahead of you." Neither do created things show their beauty except that their realities call out to you, "We are but a temptation, so disbelieve not."

The traveler to Allah Most High is exposed to spiritual lights and shown secrets during his journey. If his spiritual will seeks to stop with these things revealed to it thinking that they will make him reach the utmost goal and the end of divine knowledge, the voices of higher spiritual reality cry out to him, "What you seek is still in front of you, so proceed earnestly in the journey and don't stop."

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Likewise if outward created things display their beauty to the traveler and he inclines towards them..., their inner realities cry out to him, "We are but a trial, so disbelieve not. [allusion to al-Qur'an 2:102] Rather, turn your eyes away from this not paying attention to it and continue on your journey and travel."

Know that as long as you still have a spiritual aspiration and will, you are still on the path and have not yet reached the destination. If you are annihilated from these two things, then indeed you have arrived. How beautiful is the statement of Abul Hasan al-Tustari about this:

Don't turn in your journey to anything besides Allah.

And take His remembrance as a fortress.

Don't linger in any spiritual station.

It's a veil, but strive in the journey and ask for help.

Every time you see a rank revealed to you,

Be apart from it, since we have left its like.

And say I do not want anything besides You. ...

I saw some good words from Sidi Abul Hasan al-Shadhili (May Allah be well-pleased with him) related to what the author (May Allah Have Mercy on Him) mentions... and I thought I would narrate them here in their text, as there are sublime benefits and noble meanings in them. He (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "Know that when you want a portion of what the friends of Allah Most High have, you have to give up people altogether except those that guide to Allah Most High with sincere direction and well-based actions which don't contradict the Qur'an nor the Sunnah. In addition, you have to turn away from the world entirely while not being among those that turn away from it in order that they may be given something. Rather, in turning away be a servant of Allah commanded by Him to leave His enemy. If you practice these two qualities (i.e. (1) turnings away from people and (2) considering the world insignificant), stand steadfast with Allah being aware of Him, repenting towards Him, keeping your duty, asking for forgiveness, turning to Him, and surrendering to His laws.

The explanation of these... points is that you become a servant of Allah in what you partake and leave. Also, you should watch your heart so it doesn't see anything in the kingdom that isn't His. If your heart sees such, the voices from the Truth [Most High]... will call out, 'You have been blinded from the right path.' How can you claim to be [discharging your duty to be] watchful of Allah when you have heard His statement: 'And Allah is ever watchful over everything.' [Al-Qur'an 33:52] When you realize this, shame will overtake you causing you to repent towards Him... So, stick to repentance while guarding your heart that it not see the like of this from you in any situation lest you return to what you left. If you conform to all of these guidelines, voices from the Truth Most High will call out, "Repentance appeared from Him and frequent turning to the Divine followed it from Him." [Also know that] occupying yourself with your own qualities is a veil from your goal. At this point, your attributes will become apparent and you will seek protection with Allah from them asking Him for forgiveness, turning towards Him.

Seeking forgiveness is requesting a cover from your own attributes while returning to His attributes. If you seek forgiveness and turn towards Him, He will call upon you shortly, 'Submit to My commands, leave arguing with Me, and be steadfast with My desire abandoning your own. Lordship takes charge of slavehood, so

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be like a bonded slave not able to do anything. For when you see for yourself some power, I will leave you to fend for yourself. I am aware of all things.' If you act in accordance to this and stick to it, you will look upon secrets which almost cannot be heard from anyone in the universe.

21

Your asking Him is a charge against Him. Your asking *for* Him is [due to] your absence from Him. Your asking *for other* than Him is due to your lack of modesty in front of Him. Your asking *from* other than Him is due to being far from Him.

There are four ways the servant asks and all of these are faulty: (1) asking from Allah, (2) asking for Allah Himself, (3) asking for other than Him, and (4) asking from other than Him.

[As for the first], asking for something from Him is an accusation (charge) against Him. If the servant put his trust in Allah to send him his needs without asking, he would not demand anything from Him.

[As for the second], asking for Allah Himself is [a sign] of being absent from Him, since the person already in His presence does not ask [for Allah].

[As for the third], asking for other than Him shows a lack of modesty on the part of the servant. If he were modest in front of Him, he would withdraw from what He dislikes such as asking for other than Him. Not mentioning other than Allah nor preferring anything over Him are among the types of modesty that He has a right to.

Finally, asking from other than Allah is due to the servant's remoteness from Him. If he were close to Him, others would be far from the servant and he would not ask anything from them.

Therefore, all asking is faulty according to those who declare Allah's oneness and know Him, regardless of whether this asking is concerned with the Truth or creation. However, the exceptions are asking in order to keep good manners with Allah, to do so as an act of worship, to follow Allah's command [al-Qur'an 40:60], and to express ones need and poverty. In these cases, asking Allah has no fault in it.

22

Not a breath you take, except He has a decree to pass over you.

Breaths are minute intervals of time that successively come over the servant as long as he is alive. So, every breath that he takes is a vessel for a decree from the decrees of the Truth Most High that He carries out, whatever it may be. Allah Most High's commands and decrees have immersed the servant's minutes. All these moments require from him obligatory rights from the rights of Allah Most High that he has to undertake. The servant is responsible for these rights and his series of breaths are an entrusted property belonging to the Truth. When the servant [realizes this], there remains no domain for him to plan out his worldly affairs, nor any place left for following his lusts and desires.

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23

Do not wait for freedom from your current condition, since that will prevent you from being mindful of Him where He has placed you.

When Allah places a servant in a condition among the conditions, it is obligatory for him to fulfill its rights and stick to good manners. He should not wait for another time in which he will be free from his current state, since hoping for another time will prevent him from fulfilling the rights and obligations of the present time he is placed in. This hoping for another time is opposite to what is demanded of him. So, let the disciple avoid this.

Abu Hafs (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "The true disciple is the one who is in accord with the command of the present time. When something comes to preoccupy him away from the command of the present time, he has an aversion to it and is wary of it."

Sahl ibn `Abdullah (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "When night draws upon you, don't hope for the day until your night has become sound, you've discharged the right of Allah in it, and you've been sincere in it to yourself. Similarly when you enter the morning, do likewise." Sahl (May Allah be well pleased with him) was asked about when the disciple finds rest. He replied, "When he doesn't see any time other than the time he is presently in."

al-Baghawi says in his exegesis about His Most High's statement, "And We test you with misfortune and [with] good." [al-Qur'an 21:35], it means: hard times and easy times, health and sickness, and wealth and poverty. It is also said it means, "We test you with what you like and dislike so that We may see your thankfulness in what you like and your patience in what you dislike."

24

Don't find the occurrence of troubles strange as long as you are in this world, for the world does not expose except what deserves its attribute and necessarily has its quality.

Allah Most High appointed the world as an abode for trial and tribulation so that everyone would work according to what had been previously ordained for him and be repaid his reward in the abode of the hereafter. Allah Most High has said, "And we test you with evil and good as a trial." [al-Qur'an 21:35] The actions of every person in the world are either in opposition to his desires or in accordance with them. Inevitably by performing actions or leaving them, one incurs liked or disliked things. So, among the necessities of the world is the existence of disliked things, hardships, and turbidity. In short, the world is comprised of delusive matters that people's dispositions tend to follow. However, the world cannot support all of [its inhabitant's] wants because of its restrictions, scarcity, quickness of passing, and tendency to slip away. Therefore, its people compete among themselves to obtain it causing their lives to become grimy while they are unable to fully realize their aims...

Disliked events essential to the world are not to be taken as strange since only that comes forth from the world which deserves its characteristic and necessarily carries its attribute. The wisdom behind this will be

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narrated along with the author's statement, "He has only made it a place for other than Him and a source for turbidity so that you may consider it insignificant." [hikma #229]

In some stories, it has been narrated that Ja`far al-Sadiq (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "Whoever seeks that which was not created makes himself tired and is not given [it]." He was asked about what this thing was. He replied, "Rest (relaxation) in the world." They have recited in this meaning:

You seek rest in the house of fatigue.

Failed is he who seeks what is not.

Some eloquent people have said, "The seeker of safety in the abode of ruin and destruction is like the one rolling in the dust as snakes and scorpions approach."

Ibn Mas`ud (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "The entirety of the world is a cause for distress, so whatever happiness comes out of it is a secondary gain."

Imam al-Junayd (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "I don't find surprising unpleasant what comes to me from the world. I have come upon a fundamental principle: The world is a place of anxiety, sorrow, and tribulation. It is entirely bad and is expected to throw at me everything I dislike. If it were to give me everything I love, this would be an exception; else, its original state is what I mentioned first."

Abu Turāb (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "O people, you love three things while they are not for you. You love the self, but it belongs to its desires. You love the life spirit, but it belongs to Allah. Finally, you love wealth, but it belongs to your inheritors. In addition, you seek two things [in the world] which you do not find: (1) rest and (2) happiness. These two things are only in Paradise."

Thus, it is obligatory for the servant not to prepare himself for rest in the world nor shift towards what calls to happiness and intimacy in the world. Rather, he should act according to the Prophet's (May Allah bless him and give him peace) statement narrated from Abu Hurayra (May Allah be well pleased with him): "The world is the prison of the believer." Expecting trials in life makes easy for the servant what he actually comes across and gives consolation to him when what he desires is not found... Let the disciple meet what comes to him of these [undesirable] matters with patience, contentment, and submission to the divine decree. Allah willing, shortly the affair [i.e. life] will come to an end and he will receive plentiful reward from Allah Most High. Allah Most High is the Giver of success.

Ahmad ibn Abu al-Hawari (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "Abu Sulayman al-Darani said to me, 'A little hunger, a little insufficient clothing, a little humiliation, a little patience, and the days of the world will expire for you.' "

Know that what we mentioned concerning patience is the sum of all merits and the basis of all... noble and exalted benefits. Allah Most High said, "And the beautiful word of your Lord became complete for the Children of Israel as they were patient." [al-Qur'an 7:137] He Most High has also said, "We made among them leaders guided by Our command when they were patient." [al-Qur'an 32:24] Also, mightily be the One who said, "Only the patient are fully paid their reward without restriction." [al-Qur'an 39:10]

In enjoining Ibn `Abbas (May Allah be well pleased with both of them), the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "If you are able to work for Allah with contentment in certainty, do

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so. If you are not able, be patient because there is a lot of good in patience with what you dislike." Know that victory comes after patience, relief after distress, and easy times after hard times.

`Umar ibn al-Khattab (May Allah be well pleased with him) said to a man, "If you are patient, Allah's command will pass and you will be rewarded. If you are irritated, Allah's command will be decreed and you will be weakened."

`Ali (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "Patience is a riding animal that doesn't fall flat on its face and a sword that doesn't bounce off [its target]."

Ibn `Abbas (May Allah be pleased with both of them) said, "The best of preparation is patience during hardship."

In some narrations it has been said, "Waiting for relief [during hardship] with patience is worship."

Whoever employs patience during disasters and counts it among his biggest preparations and means is correct in his mindset and successful in his effort. Contrastingly, whoever is irritated with calamities and agitated when heavy blows descend is working towards what increases him in harm. Such a person will acquire a burden and reward will slip away from him, and how great is the loss, as is said:

*When a misfortune befalls you, bear it with patience,
For how much greater is the misfortune of not being patient with a trial.*

It is also said:

*You are rewarded for losing a loved one.
So, don't let the reward pass away while the loved one doesn't return.*

25

No aim is halted that you seek through your Lord and no aim is made easy that you seek through yourself.

Whoever carries out his needs through Allah Most High, takes shelter with Him, and trusts Him in all affairs, Allah suffices him all provision. Every remote goal comes close to him and every hard matter becomes easy for him. [Contrastingly], whoever rests towards his own knowledge and intelligence and relies on his own strength and power, Allah lets him fend for himself, abandons him, deprives him of His success, and disregards him. Consequently, his goals are not met and his aims are not made easy. This is known for certain from texts of Sacred Law and various [personal] experiences.

I say: The statement of the author (May Allah have mercy on him) in this matter is general including every aim from religious ones and worldly ones that return to religion. The most noble of these pursuits and the one with the most barriers and places for ruin is that of the disciple trying to tread the path to divine unity. Thus, clinging and returning to Allah Most High in all [of the path's] parts is more fitting and obligatory. Therefore, it is certainly relevant and important that the author qualify this general statement with one that singles out the matter with more words. For this reason he says:

26

One of the heralds of success in endings is returning to Allah Most High in beginnings.

The disciple has a beginning and an ending point [in the path]. His beginning is the period of his travel [on the path] while his ending is his reaching [Allah]. Whoever corrects his beginning by returning to Allah Most High, relying on Him, and asking Him for help (as we have mentioned before), prospers and succeeds in his ending reaching Allah Most High. Thus, he is saved from turning back or being cut off. One of the sheikhs has said, "He who turns back, turns back only from the path. If they had reached [Allah], they would not have turned back." Whoever does not correct [his travel] with what we have mentioned concerning clinging to the Truth and fleeing to Him from his own self and other creation is cut off and forced back to where he came from.

One of the scholars said, "Whoever imagines that he will reach Allah Most High through other than Him is cut off. Whoever seeks help from his own self in the worship of Allah Most High is left to fend for himself."

Thus, it is obligatory on the traveling servant to make the reliance of his affair the seeking of help from Allah Most High. The traveler should not see any power or strength for himself in abundant works or small ones. This is the basis of the travel on which its precepts are formed.

27

Whoever's beginning shines, his ending also shines.

This is another way of saying something similar to what has just passed.

The shining of the disciple's beginning is through his returning to Allah Most High in his important affairs and relying on Him in his misfortunes. The shining in his ending is reaching closeness to Him and coming into His presence.

28

What is enclosed in the hidden inner-self appears externally.

This statement describes a sign by which the state of the disciple (traveler) and what his inner-self is made up of can be known... This is because the exterior is a mirror for the interior... Faces hold the marks of what covers the heart. The traces of what Allah encloses in hearts and inner-selves of divine knowledges and lights inevitably show upon the body parts. Thus, the visible part of the servant can be used to assess the unseen part by him who wants to keep his companionship, deal with him, or the like.

Abū Ḥafṣ (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "Elegant external manners are signs of elegant internal manners."

The Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "If the heart of this [person] humbled, his limbs would [also] humble."

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When Abū Ḥafṣ arrived in Iraq, Junayd came to him and saw the companions of Abū Ḥafṣ waiting on him following his direction without fault. Junayd said, "O Abū Ḥafṣ you have taught your companions the manners [displayed in front] of kings.

He replied, "No O Abul Qāsim. Rather, elegant external manners are signs of elegant internal manners."

I say: It is more stressed that the disciple become aware of his own self, use his insight about it, and not be duped into imagining that his internal self can become proper without his external self also being so. Whoever claims to have knowledge of Allah Most High and His love in his heart while the fruits of this do not appear on his exterior (e.g., being crazed with His remembrance, rushing to follow His command, having exuberance due to His presence, rejoicing with the certainty of His witnessing, running away from obstacles that busy from Him, and forgetting about intermediaries which distance from Him) is false in his claim, taking his desire as his god. If [in addition to this] he is characterized by the opposite of the aforementioned qualities and leaves with his exterior the road of moderation, he is even more untruthful in his claim. His state is closer to hypocrisy and polytheism.

Sheikh Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (May Allah well be pleased with him) said, "Allah has described the disbelievers as those when Allah alone is mentioned, their hearts become constrained and when other than Him is mentioned, they rejoice. He has also described them as those when Allah Most High is mentioned in His unity and singularity, they despise this and dislike it. [Contrastingly], when other than Him is associated with Him, they find it true. Allah Most High has said, 'And when Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those that don't believe in the hereafter feel disgust and when other than Him are mentioned, they rejoice.' [al-Qur'an 39:45] He also has said, 'That is because when Allah alone was called upon, you disbelieved and if He was associated with, you believed.' [al-Qur'an 40:12]

Disbelief (kufr) is actually the act of covering up and associating (shirk) is mixing (i.e. mixing with His remembrance the remembrance of other than Him). Then He [Most High] said, '[But] the command is for Allah, the High, the Great.' [al-Qur'an 40:12] He is the High in His tremendousness, the Great is His reign. There is no partner with Him in His dominion and His bestowal. He has no equal with Him from His servants. Among the implications of this statement and understanding its direction is that the believers rejoice and their breasts become expanded and spacious when Allah is mentioned in His unity and singularity. [Conversely], when means and causes other than Him are mentioned, they dislike it and their hearts feel disgust. This is an accurate sign. So, recognize it in your heart and the hearts of others for it points to the presence of Allah's unity or of subtle polytheism in the heart...."

I say: This matter that the words of Sheikh Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (May Allah be well pleased with him) mention is among the greatest markers and clearest signs about the truthfulness of the truthful and the falsity of the liar.

In this section, we wanted to take the opportunity to mention these strange... and unfamiliar points, due to the strangeness of faith in this vile time when delusion and ignorance has overtaken those associated with religious knowledge and bounty. It was well that we narrated these words in short form so that the traveling disciple may act according to them and follow the clearest of paths in being sincere to his Lord in his faith.

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Treat in like manner all statements [in this book] whose appropriateness does not appear to you so that you may be safe from opposition and your aspiration may rise above what the people with diseased hearts are enamoured with. May Allah save us from that with His favor and bounty.

29

What a difference there is between him who uses Allah to prove [the existence of others] and him who uses [others] to prove Allah's existence. The former knows reality for Whom it is; so, he affirms the matter from its origin. The latter hasn't yet reached (knowledge of) Him. Otherwise, when was He absent that His existence needed to be proved and when was He far that others would be needed to reach Him?

The children of Adam in the first coming forth, the beginning of their creation, and their coming out from the bellies of their mothers are stamped with ignorance and the absence of knowledge. Allah Most High has said, "And Allah takes you out from the bellies of your mothers while you do not know anything." [al-Qur'an 16:78] Then, Allah picks some of them for His special attention and makes them fit for his closeness by the means of acquiring knowledge referred to in His Most High's statement: "And He appointed for you hearing, sight, and hearts." [al-Qur'an 16:78] This is what makes them realize the connection and obligates for them the closeness pointed to in His Most High's statement: "So that you may be thankful." [al-Qur'an 16:78]

[In addition], He made them into two groups: (1) those desired and (2) those who desire; or you may say: (1) those attracted and (2) those traveling. However in reality, both groups are being attracted [to Allah]. Allah Most High said, "Allah draws towards Him whom He wills and guides towards Him the one who turns penitently." [al-Qur'an 42:13]

Those who desire (i.e. the travelers to Allah Most High) are veiled from their Lord during their journey by seeing other than Him [as existent] and the effects of His actions. The created universe is apparent to them and (in their opinion) is existent while the Truth Most High is absent from their vision, so they are unable to perceive Him. Consequently while they are ascending, they use the created universe to try to prove His existence.

As for those who are desired (i.e. those attracted [to Allah]), the Truth Most High faces them with His most noble Countenance and makes Himself known to them. So through Him, they know Him. When they become knowers of Him in this manner, things other than Him are veiled from them. Therefore, they do not see these other things and use Him to prove the existence of them while they are descending.

Thus is the condition of the two factions. What a difference there is between them. (Meaning, the distance between them is great.) This is because the person who uses Allah to prove the existence of other than Him recognizes the truth (i.e. [Allah's] necessary existence) for Whom it belongs (i.e. for the One Who exclusively has the attribute of beginningless eternity) and affirms the matter (i.e. the non-existent effects) from its origin (i.e. the Effector whose existence is real).

The one who uses other things to prove Allah's existence is in a state opposite to what we just mentioned, since he tries to prove the existence of the Known by using the unknown, and the Existent by using the non-existent, and the Apparent by using the concealed. This condition is due to the presence of his veil, his

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stopping with causes, and his not reaching closeness [to Allah]. Otherwise, when was He absent that His existence needed to be proved using things present? Or when was He far that close-by created things would be needed to reach Him? Or when was He missing that effects present would be the ones pointing to Him? [In this context], one of them has said:

*I am amazed at him who wants a witness for You,
When it is You who have made him witness everything.*

The author says in *Lata'if al-Minan*, "Know that proofs are only for him who seeks the Truth, not for him who witnesses Him. This is because the eyewitness is freed [from needing proofs] by the clarity of his vision. Knowledge is [first] gained by the means that are needed to reach it, then in its end it becomes like second nature. As things exist in the material world which do not need to be proved given their clarity, it is more fitting for the Creator of material things to be free from needing proofs [for His existence]..." Then he said, "And among the strangest of [ideas] is that created things are needed to reach Him. It baffles me, for do they have any existence in front of Him that they can make [one] reach Him? Or do they have more clarity than Him that they be the ones that make Him apparent? If created things help [one] to reach Him, it is not because of their own intrinsic quality, but because He Himself has appointed for them the ability of conveyance... However, nothing really makes [one] reach Him except His divinity. He is the Wise One Who laid down the causes [for things] which are for those who stop with them; those whose abilities have not pierced the veil.

30

"Let the one who has much spend from it" [al-Qur'an 65:7] [describes] those who have reached Him while "whoever's sustenance is narrowed should spend from what Allah has given him" [al-Qur'an 65:7] [describes] those traveling to Him.

This is a nice allusion to the state of the two parties. When those who reach Allah Most High come out from the prison of seeing other than Him into the vastness of His oneness and into perfect perception, the limit of their vision expands and they spend from their vastness... (of knowledge as they wish). The travelers, [on the other hand], have a straitened provision of knowledge and understanding and are imprisoned in the narrow ground of fancies and forms. Thus, they spend from what Allah gives them of straitened provision.

31

Those journeying to Him are guided by the lights of turning to Him while those who have reached Him have lights from facing Him. The first group is owned by the lights while the second owns the lights since they are for Allah and nothing else: "Say, 'Allah', then leave them in their uselessness playing." [al-Qur'an 6:91]

Lights of turning to Him are what emanates from the travelers to Allah Most High of acts of worship, dealings, bearing hard times, and struggles. As for lights from facing Him, they are what come from Allah to them of becoming acquainted with , drawing closer to, befriending, and loving Him. The first group are slaves of the lights, since they need them in reaching their desire. The other group own the lights, as they are free from needing them, and are for Allah and nothing else. This meaning will be related when the author says, "You are with created things as long as you do not witness the Creator. For when you witness Him, created things are with you." [Hikma 248]

Allah Most High said, "Say, 'Allah,' and leave them in their uselessness playing." [al-Qur'an 6:91] [True] unifying of Allah is by disregarding other than Him and is the reality of certainty. Seeing other than Allah is uselessness and play which are among the attributes of liars and hypocrites. Allah Mighty and Lofty says about them, "And we used to engage in uselessness with the idle." [al-Qur'an al-74:45] Allah Most High has also said, "But they are in doubt playing." [al-Qur'an 44:9] Then he said (May Allah be well pleased with him):

32

Your eagerness to know the faults hidden within you is better for you than your eagerness to know the unseen world veiled from you.

It is befitting for the disciple to be eager to know the faults of his self hidden from him and to search for them. This is the right of the Truth Most High on him, so he should be avid for this and should spend on it [the bulk] of his concern. [Doing so], his actions will become pure from the calamities of the heart, his states clear from turbidity, ignorance and delusion will be negated from him, and his inside will cease to be a field for evil.

Imam Abul Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (May Allah be well pleased with him) mentioned in his book, *Riyādat al-Nafs*, a section describing how a person can become aware of his faults. So, let the disciple look in this book. The gist of its content is four things:

The disciple can sit in front of a sheikh who has insight about faults and calamities of the heart and appoint him as a judge over his self and follow the sheikh's direction.

The disciple can keep the company of a sincere friend and make him a watcher over his states and actions so that he may inform the disciple of what remains hidden from him of his blameworthy shortcomings.

The disciple can find out about his faults from his enemies, since such things undoubtedly flow on their tongues...

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[Finally], he can learn of such things from mixing with people. In such a state, he will be able to regard their bad characteristics. When he sees these characteristics in them, he will acknowledge that he too has all of these, since the natures of humans resemble each other in this. And sometimes what appears to him in his own self is greater than what he sees in others.

In these cases, the disciple will try to purify himself and distance himself from these attributes. This is a summary of what he mentioned. Then, he notes that all these strategies are for him who has not found an astute sheikh that knows Allah, has concern for others, and is sincere about the Islamic religion. This sheikh should be done training himself and occupied in sincerely training the servants of Allah.

As for the disciple seeking the unseen world veiled from him (e.g. concealed destiny and subtle knowledges), it is a selfish portion which he has no right to from Allah Most High. Let the disciple be pleased without it and let him not occupy his mind or senses with it. Also, he should not find rest in or depend on whatever happens to appear to him from the unseen world, since this is among the faults that infringe on slavehood. For this reason, they have said, “Be a seeker of continual practicing of Islam (istiqāma) and don’t be a seeker of miracles. Your lower self gets excited about and seeks miracles while your Master seeks that you continually practice Islam. It is better to be with the right of your Master than to be with your selfish portion.”

Among the stories about this point that we have mentioned is what has been related in the tales of the people of Israel from Wahb ibn Munabbah (May Allah be pleased with him) that a man from the children of Israel fasted for seventy years except for six days in each year. This man asked Allah blessed and high be He to show him how the devils are empowered over people. When the waiting for a response became prolonged, he said, “If only I would become aware of my faults and sins that are between me and my Lord, it would have been better than this affair that I asked about.” So, Allah sent an angel to him who told him, “Indeed Allah Most High sent me to you and He says to you, ‘These words of yours that you uttered are more beloved to me than [all] your worship that has passed.’ Allah has opened up your sight, so look...” [The man then saw] the armies of the Devil had encircled the earth and there wasn’t any one among people except that the devils were surrounding him like flies. So, the man asked, “O Lord, who will be saved from this?”

He [Most High] replied, “The gentle-hearted religiously-precautious person.”

The elucidation that miracles are not sought, nor rejoiced over by high-minded scholars will come when the author says, “Not everyone whose electhood is established has had his liberation completed. [hikma 111]

33

The Truth (Most High) is not veiled. Rather, it is you who is veiled from looking at Him. If anything veiled Him, it would cover Him up. If anything could act as a cover for Him, His existence would have a restrictor. But, everything that restricts another is in control of it while He is in control of all His servants.

The existence of a veil on the Truth Most High is impossible. The author has proved this point by what he mentions here. This argument is clear and not difficult to understand.

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Conversely, the presence of a veil on the servant is necessarily part of his being, since the servant is non-existent as was mentioned before; and there is no connection between non-existence and existence. However if Allah wills to raise this veil from whom He wills and at the time He wills, the servant sees the One "Whom nothing is like and He is the Hearing, the Seeing [al-Qur'an 42:11]". This is among the things one must believe.

34

Leave every trait of your human nature that contradicts your slavehood so that you may answer the call of the Truth [Most High] and be close to His presence.

The traits of human nature that are connected with religion are of two types: (1) those that are connected to the external self of the servant (i.e. his limbs) which are called actions and (2) those that are connected with his internal self (i.e. his heart) which are called beliefs.

Further, those traits that are related to his external limbs are of two types. The first is what agrees with the divine command and is named obedience. The second is what disagrees with the divine command and is named disobedience.

Further those traits that are related to his interior are also of two types. The first is what agrees with reality and is called [sincere] faith. The second is what disagrees with reality and is called hypocrisy and ignorance.

The branch of study that deals with the external aspect of the slave is called (in technical vocabulary) Jurisprudence (fiqh). Similarly, the branch of study that deals with his internal aspect is called Internal Purification (tasawwuf). These two aspects comprise the totality of the servant. Furthermore, his external self necessarily follows the way of his internal being. This is because the heart is like the king and the limbs are like its soldiers and citizenry. It is customary for the citizens to obey the king in what he orders and shuns against.

The Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) appraised [us] of this meaning when he said, "In the body is a piece of flesh. When it is sound, the whole body is sound; and when it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Is not [this piece of flesh] the heart?"

The soundness of the heart can only come about by cleansing it from all blameworthy traits, small and large. These blameworthy traits from the traits of human nature are the ones that the author (May Allah Most High have mercy upon him) indicates contradict slavehood. These traits brand their bearer with the mark of hypocrisy and disobedience.

Such traits are many among which are: (1) prideful arrogance, (2) self-conceit, (3) showing off in good works, (4) boasting about good works, (5) malice, (6) resentful envy, (7) loving prestige, and (8) loving wealth. Furthermore, many vile branches sprout from these root blameworthy traits, such as: (1) enmity, (2) hatred, (3) humbling oneself in front of rich people, (4) disdain for poor people, (5) leaving clinging to Allah as soon as provision reaches one, (6) fearing a drop in one's social rank, (7) greed, (8) stinginess, (9) feeling one is going to live indefinitely, (10) overbearing rudeness, (11) disliking the truth due to arrogance, (12) rancor, (13) disloyalty, (14) vain competition, (15) putting up a superficial front for others, (16) expressing an attitude different from what one is hiding, (17) hardness of heart, (18) harshness, (19) coarseness, (20) forgetting about Allah, (21)

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roughness, (22) fickleness, (23) haste, (24) rage, (25) zeal for wrong, (26) being annoyed with others, (27) not having much mercy, (28) having little bashfulness, (29) leaving contentment, (30) loving leadership, (31) trying to be higher than others, (32) coming to the aid of one's ego when exposed to humiliation, (33) losing control of oneself when opposed in speech, and the many other similar blameworthy low traits.

The root cause of all the branches and the source of its springs is only seeing oneself [as an existent entity who is at the center of life's experiences], being pleased with the self, making a big deal about its rank, and raising the worth of its affair. This root is what causes disbelievers to disbelieve, hypocrites to commit hypocrisy, the disobedient to disobey, and the one who throws off the noose of slavehood [to Allah] from his neck to throw it off. The author (May Allah have mercy upon him) will mention this point in the next hikma.

The traveler should look towards what will cleanse the lower self and purify it from among the training exercises and systematic struggling techniques that have been elucidated in books about internal purification.

Sheikh Abu Talib (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "The disciple doesn't become among the successively changing² holy men (abdāl), until he exchanges the traits of (claiming) lordship for the traits of slavehood, the traits of the devils for the traits of the believers, and the disposition of beasts for the actions of spiritualists (such as reciting litanies and gaining spiritual knowledge). After such an exchange, he will become among the successively changing holy men who are brought close." He continued by saying, "The way to do this is for him to take control of his lower self. By taking control of it, it will become subservient to him and he will have mastery over it.

If you want to take control of your self, don't give it reign. Rather, make things hard for it and don't make things easy for it. If you let it have reign, it will control you. If you don't constrain it, it will take you over. If you want to gain victory against it, don't let it have its whims, but hold it back from the favorable things its accustomed to. If you don't firmly grasp it, it'll go off with you. If you wish to be stronger than it, make it weak by cutting off its supports and keeping it back from what it loves; otherwise, it'll become stronger than you and wrestle you down."

So when the disciple does these things in the manner that the scholars of the heart have laid out and sticks to the tasks that they have commanded him with, his heart will become clean and his self will become pure. His self will then take on the beautiful characteristics which will make him look beautiful among the servants and with them he will obtain closeness to his Lord (as much as he could wish for). If such is the case, praiseworthy traits will be manifest on him, such as: (1) humbleness for Allah, (2) submissiveness to Him, (3) reverence for His command, (4) keeping to the limits He's set, (5) awe of Him, (6) fearing Him, (7) feeling low in front of His lordship, (8) sincerity in slavehood to Him, (9) contentment with His decree, and (10) seeing Allah's favor upon him in His holding back and giving. In addition, the servant will be characterized by the following attributes when dealing with people: (1) pity, (2) mercy, (3) softness, (4) gentleness, (5) vastness of breast, (6) forbearance, (7) bearing their harm, (8) protecting their rights, (9) uprightness, (10) trustworthiness, (11) dependability, (12) affection, (13) calmness, (14) sobriety, (15) generosity, (16) magnanimity, (17) bashfulness, (18) cheerfulness, (19) sincerity, (20) keeping the heart secure from ill thoughts about them, and other attributes of faith by which the servant reaches the utmost bliss, beauty, and more.

² When one of them dies, another human takes their place.

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I say: These two things (i.e. taking on good traits and leaving bad traits) is what the people of Allah (May Allah be well pleased with them) term "adorning oneself with good traits" and "emptying oneself of bad traits". They also sometimes call the latter purification and the former embellishment. These two affairs are the reality of traveling the path which they talk about. An allusion to this point will be mentioned along with the author's statement: "If it were not for the battlefields of the lower selves, the travel of those traveling would not come to be..." (Hikma #244). So, when this travel is realized for the disciple and ends up at the best of abodes, his slavehood to his Lord (Mighty and Majestic be He) is also realized. So, nothing other than Him owns or enslaves him. Thus, he rises in closeness to his Lord to the noblest of places as a dwelling place and residence. In such a case will the servant be as the author states (in this hikma) "[be able] to answer the call of the Truth." Thus, He will call on him by the title of "O slave" and the servant will answer his Master using the title of "O Lord, I am at your service." He will then be true in his answering and realized in his ascription [i.e. the ascription of being a slave of Allah]. Also, the servant in such circumstances will "be close to His presence", since he will be far from his lower self which tries its best to flee and run away from His presence. When the Truth (Most High) makes him stand in the station of slavehood, he will obtain the rank of closeness to the presence of [His] Lord.. The servant would then be saved from being overburdened and it would be easy for him to act with the actions of the elect. He would become adorned externally and internally with the noblest of adornment, acquiring the merit of resembling the higher gathering [i.e. of the angels]. Allah Mighty and Majestic has said: "Those in His presence aren't too proud to worship Him, nor do they get tired. They sing praises by night and day never ceasing." [al-Qur'an 21:19-20] Allah Most High has also said: "Indeed those in the presence of your Lord aren't too proud to worship Him. They glorify Him and prostrate to Him." [al-Qur'an 206:7] Allah (Mighty be the speaker) also says: "They don't disobey Allah in what He commands them with, but do as they are ordered." [al-Qur'an 66:6] So, the rank of slavehood made them [i.e. the angels] get this specialness. The same is the case for those among the best of the people of Allah who take on the beautiful characteristics of the angels. Although the latter group [unlike the angels and prophets] is only partially saved from acts of disobedience and not divinely protected. The terms "partially saved" and "divinely protected" have been differentiated [by the scholars of this knowledge]. The difference is what Abul Qasim al-Qushayri (May Allah be well pleased with him) mentioned: "The divinely protected one never commits a sin while the partially saved person does experience slips (i.e. acts of disobedience) on rare occasions. However, this partially saved person does not persist in sins: "Those are the ones that repent to Allah shortly (afterwards)." [allusion to al-Qur'an 4:17] And Allah Most High has described His special servants (purified and tried) in noble verses with a lofty and tremendous description and He has prepared for them for this much good. He Most High has said, "The servants of the Merciful are the ones that walk in the earth humbly and when the ignorant confront them, they say, 'Peace.' " up to His statement, "Therein they shall dwell forever, a beautiful place of rest and stay." [al-Qur'an 25:63-76] You should also look at what the scholars of exegesis have said about these verses and also at what those that take derivative means have said.

As for those people other than [in the category the verses mention], they are slaves of their lower desires, enslaved by their worldly selfish gains. Allah Most High says: "Have you seen the one who takes his desire as his god..." [al-Qur'an 25:43]

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The Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, as is related from him, "Wretched is the slave of the gold coin and wretched also is the slave of the silver coin..."

This latter group of people are the slaves of the counted number of things mentioned in His Most High's statement: "There isn't anything in the heavens and the earth except that it comes to the Merciful as a slave. He has enumerated them and counted them in number. Each one of them shall come on the Day of Resurrection alone." [al-Qur'an 19:93-95]

Know that the travel to the presence of the King of kings does not take place except for him whom Allah Most High has given success to know his own lower self and the blameworthy attributes that make it up. Whoever knows this about his lower self continues to view it with suspicion, not giving it the benefit of the doubt taking precautions against it. If the servant doesn't do this, he will fall into acts of disobedience and sins from whence he perceives not. The author (May Allah Most High have mercy upon him) brings this point to attention with his [next] statement:

35

The origin of every act of disobedience, spiritual unmindfulness, and lust is being pleased with the self. The origin of every act of obedience, spiritual wakefulness, and abstinence is not being pleased with the self. To keep the company of an unlearned person who is not pleased with himself is better for you than to keep the company of a learned person who is pleased with himself. For what knowledge does a learned person pleased with himself have? Likewise, what ignorance does an unlearned person not pleased with himself have?

Being pleased with the self is the origin of every blameworthy trait and not being pleased with it is the origin of every praiseworthy one. All those who know Allah and the scholars of the heart are in agreement about this point. The reason for this is that being pleased with the self leads one to cover up its faults and bad traits and to consider its ugly aspects to be agreeable as is said:

The eye of contentment is dim-sighted concerning faults,

Not being pleased with the self leads to the opposite of this, since the servant in such a state is suspicious of his lower self, tries to find out its faults, and is not deluded by the acts of obedience and submission that he experiences. As the second part of the above-quoted verse is:

As the eye of discontent tears the veil exposing bad traits.

So, whoever is pleased with himself finds its state pleasing and finds rest in it. And whoever does such, spiritual unmindfulness overtakes him. Consequently, his heart is swerved from watching over his thoughts causing base desires to overrun the servant. Since the servant doesn't have the awareness of the Divine and religious reminders to fend off and force away these base desires, he is overcome by them. Whoever is

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overcome by his base desires undoubtedly falls into acts of disobedience. The origin of all this is being pleased with the self.

On the other hand, whoever is not content with the self, doesn't find it pleasing, and doesn't find rest in it. Whoever is characterized by this latter description is spiritually awake, ready for unexpected events and occurrences, and watchful over his thoughts. In such a state, the fire of his base desires dies down, so it does not have any coercive power over him. The servant can then be characterized with abstinence. When he becomes abstinent, he avoids all that Allah has forbid and guards over all that Allah has commanded. This is the [real] meaning of *obeying* Allah Mighty and Majestic. The origin of all this is not being pleased with the self.

As the servant is further realized in knowing his lower self, his state becomes more proper and his station rises.

Many statements (more than can be enumerated) have been related from the big scholars and elect leaders concerning blaming their own selves, accusing it [of bad], and not being pleased with it.

Abu Hafs (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "Whoever doesn't constantly accuse his self [of wrong] all the time, oppose it in all conditions, and drag it to what it dislikes for the rest of its days is deluded. Whoever looks at his self finding anything of it pleasing has destroyed himself."

How can the intelligent person be pleased with himself while the noble son of the noble [i.e. Prophet Joseph] said, "I don't find my self free of blame. Indeed the self is ever commanding evil." [al-Qur'an 12:53]

Abu Hafs (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "My viewpoint about my self for the last forty years has been that Allah looks at me in a displeased manner and my actions are a proof for this [view]."

al-Junayd (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "Don't find rest in your lower self even if it obeys you in obeying your Lord."

Abu Sulayman al-Darani (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "I have not been pleased with my self even for a glance of an eye."

It is related from Sariyy al-Saqati (May Allah be well pleased with him) that he said, "I look at my face so many number of times a day fearing that it has become devoid of spiritual light as a punishment for me." He (May Allah be well pleased with him) also said, "Among people are those that if half of them died [spiritually], the other half would not be alarmed. I don't count myself except among them." There are many other similar statements from the sheikhs of the path (May Allah be well pleased with them).

Sheikh Abu `Abd al-Rahman al-Salami (May Allah be well pleased with him) wrote a volume, small in size, great in benefit, about the faults of the self and the means by which one can treat them. So, let the disciple look at it. Also, Imam `Abdullah al-Harth al-Muhasabi wrote a book named *al-Naṣā'ih* in which he collected in healing statements the faults of the self, its tricks, delusions, and evil. He brought to attention the effaced and forgotten ways of the early good Muslims (May Allah Most High be well pleased with them) of searching out, looking for, and regarding what can make actions, states, and selves more proper. In addition, he informs of how they guarded over the purification of their innermost beings and hearts and were cautious about even the smallest of sins.

Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (May Allah sanctify his soul) quoted from it a section in his book relying on its very words, text, and statements. He began this by first praising the author as he is fit and clarified (for the person ignorant of Imam al-Muhasabi) his merit by saying, "al-Muhasabi (May Allah have mercy on him) is

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the learned writer of the Muslim people in the knowledge of dealing with one's Lord. He predated all of the scholars who studied the faults of the self, diseases of the heart that enter into actions, and delusions that enter into acts of worship. His statements are fit to be narrated as are. He was singular in his time for knowledge and worship. He was the select in his time for religious precaution and abstinence. My master al-Hajj `Abbas ibn `Āmir (May Allah Most High's mercy and pleasure be upon him) frequently urged the reading and putting into practice of the truth and correctness contained in the above-mentioned book. I think I heard him say one day, 'No one acts by what is in it except a friend of Allah.' Or he might have said something similar to this." So, let the disciples take to reading it as a litany and be covetous about acting by what it contains, asking Allah Most High for help, success, and rectitude. His intention should be to become sincere to his Master in trying to fix up his internal self and to stand on the foothold of truth in [all] his conditions. Let the disciple make his two travel companions: (1) reading books about Internal Purification and (2) being close to the people of Internal Purification by bonds of friendship and acquaintance. Doing so will strengthen the light of his faith and certainty and negate his inattentiveness in day-to-day religious activities. Nothing takes precedence over this except personally obligatory acts and what quiets down his lower self (such as undergoing fatigue)... Let him not busy himself with other knowledge that throws dust upon the face of his aims and obligates for him the breaking of his covenants and oaths. How many people now-a-days are falling on their face [due to such things]. They have swerved away from the way of the people of Allah, so much so that it has made them acquire vile traits and tremendous diseases of the heart all of which leads them to destruction, wretchedness, and hypocrisy until the Day of Meeting (Judgement). Such things have marked them as liars in their claim that they are seeking with their acts the pleasure of their Master. So, be aware of them and let them beware...

For this reason the author said, "To keep the company of an unlearned person who is not pleased with himself is better for you than to keep the company of a learned person who is pleased with himself. For what knowledge does a learned person pleased with himself have? Likewise, what ignorance does an unlearned person not pleased with himself have?"

The desired aim of companionship is only an increase in one's state and the absence of a decrease in it, as the author will mention in hikma 43 ("Don't keep the company of any one whose state does not uplift you nor his words guide you to Allah.") Keeping the company of someone pleased with himself, even if he is a scholar, is plain damage and has no benefit. This is because his knowledge has not benefited him and his real ignorance which obligates him to be pleased with himself is of the utmost harm. It is as if when he missed the knowledge which could show him his faults (to make him displeased with himself), he missed all of knowledge altogether.

Similarly, keeping the company of someone who is not pleased with himself, even if he is externally ignorant, is sheer good in which there is all benefit. This is because his ignorance is not harmful (to others) and the real knowledge which obligates him to not be pleased with himself is of the utmost benefit. It is as if after gaining this knowledge, he has no ignorance at all.

36

Beams of insight make you witness His closeness to you. Insight *itself* makes you witness your non-existence in front of His existence. Finally, the core of insight makes

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you witness only His existence, making you disregard your non-existence or your existence.

The beams of insight are the lights of the intellect. Insight *itself* is the light of knowledge. Finally, the core of insight is the light of the Truth [Most High].

So, the intelligent people with the light of their intellect see themselves along with their Lord as being close to them (i.e. close in His knowledge and full awareness).

Similarly, the scholars with the light of their knowledge see themselves as non-existent in view of the existence of their Lord.

Finally, the spiritually realized with the light of the Truth [Most High] witness the Truth [Most High] and they don't see anything else with Him.

37

Allah existed and there was nothing with Him and He is now as He has always been.

Time frames are imaginary constructs which have no real existence. The point here is that there is nothing along with Allah Most High, due to His overwhelming oneness:

Nothing besides the Truth remains existent.

Nothing is connected over there and nothing is separate.

The proof of sight has come with that. For I see not

With my eyes except His eye when I look.

Related to this point, the author will mention [in hikma 141]: "The created universe is affirmed through His affirmation and wiped out in relation to the overwhelming oneness of His Being." Then, the author (May Allah sanctify his secret) says:

38

Don't let the object of your hopes be other than Him, since hopes do not pass the Most Generous by.

High ambitions disdain raising needs to other than the Most Generous. In reality, there is no generous one besides Allah Most High. al-Junayd (may Allah be well pleased with him) said, "The generous one is he who frees you of the need to ask."

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al-Harth al-Muhasabi (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "The generous one is he who doesn't care to whom he gives."

It is also said, "The generous one is he who doesn't foil the hopes of the hopeful."

The most comprehensive of the definitions of generosity is: "The generous one is he who when able to take vengeance, forgives; when promises, fulfills; and when gives, gives far more than what was hoped for. He doesn't care how much he gives or to whom he gives. If a need is sought from other than him, he is not content. Finally, if someone seeks shelter and protection with him, he doesn't neglect them; rather, he makes them independent of all other means and intercessors."

Since no one has the right to these descriptions except Allah Most High, it is fitting that the hopes of the hopeful don't disregard Him, seeking out other than Him.

39

Do not ask another to relieve a need that He Himself has placed over you. How shall another lift what He Himself has placed? And how can he who is unable to relieve his own needs relieve those of another?

When Allah Most High places you in need or puts you in an undesirable situation, know that none can relieve it except Him. It is impossible for another to lift what He has placed (in accordance with His oneness which dictates that there is no real performer of actions besides Him and that He has full control over His affair unable to be overcome by anyone). It is also impossible that another person relieve the need while he himself can't relieve his own needs, due to his own weakness. It is among the impossible things for you to have your need relieved by another needy person like yourself.

Some have said, "Whoever relies on temporary things is in delusion and know that everything besides Allah is temporary." Allah is the Lasting and Beginningless Who never ceased to exist nor will He ever become non-existent. His acts of bestowal and bounty are both continuous. So, don't depend on anyone except the One Who continues to bestow you with bounty... in every breath and moment of time.

`Ata al-Kharāsānī (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "I met Wahb ibn Munabbah on the road. So I told him to narrate to me a brief narration which I may memorize.

He replied, 'Allah inspired to Prophet David (On whom be peace and blessings), 'I swear by My might and majesty that no slave among My slaves asks Me for help instead of asking My creation (which I can discern from his intention), except I appoint for him a relief from his distress and a way out, even if the seven heavens and all those therein and the seven earths and all those therein were to plot against him. I also swear My might, majesty, and tremendousness that no slave among My slaves seeks protection with one of My creation instead of seeking protection with Me (which I know from his intention) except that the ropes of the seven heavens are cut off from him, the ground under him gives way, and I don't care in which valley he perishes.' "

Muhammad ibn al-Husayn ibn Hamdan said, "I was in a gathering with Yazid ibn Harun and there was a man at my side whom I asked, "What is your name?"

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He replied, "Sa`id."

I then asked him, "What is your surname?"

He replied, "Abu `Uthman."

I asked him, "What's the story and news with you?"

He said, "My money has run out."

I asked him, "Who do you expect is going to help you out in your situation?"

He replied, "Yazid."

I then told him, "He won't assist you with your need. Your requesting him will not succeed and he will not fulfill your hopes."

He then asked, "And how do you know this? May Allah have mercy upon you."

I replied, "I read in a book that Allah Mighty and Majestic says, 'I swear by My might, majesty, magnanimity, generosity, and exaltedness over the throne in My high station, I will cut off the hope of every hoper that hopes [for help] from other than Me in despair. I shall clothe him the cloth of humiliation among people, turn him away from My closeness, and cut him off from My connection. Does he hope from other than Me in difficulties while [the descent of] hard times is in My control and I Myself can turn it away? He is hoping for other than Me and his mind is trying to knock at the doors of other than Me while the keys to all doors are with Me. All doors are locked while My door is open for whomever calls upon Me. Is there anyone that hopes in Me to relieve difficulties and I cut him off? Or is there anyone who knocks on My door and I don't open it for him? I have made My creation's hopes between Me and them connected. Even so, you [My servant] are attached to other than Me while I have secured for you your hopes and you still are not happy with My guarding over you.

I have filled the heavens with angels that don't tire of My praise and I have commanded them not to close the doors between My servants and Me. Still, My servants don't rely on My statement. Doesn't [My slave] know that whoever is afflicted with a difficulty among My difficulties that no one can take it away except Me? So, why do I see him turning away from Me with his hopes? And why do I see him distracted with other than Me? I gave him out of My generosity what he didn't even ask for. Then, I took it away and he didn't ask Me to return it. Rather, he asked other than Me to get it back. Do you think that when I give presents without first being asked that I won't answer the supplicator when I'm asked? Am I so miserly that My slave thinks of Me as cheap? Don't I own the world and the hereafter? Is not mercy and bounty in My control? Are not [the traits of] magnanimity and generosity for Me? Am I not the object of hopes? So, who will cut off the servant's hopes from Me? Does it not fill the hopers with hope that if I said to the people in My heavens and My earth, 'Hope in Me.' Then, I gave each person among them what they all together thought about that My kingdom would still not decrease even by a limb of a small ant. How shall a perfect kingdom which I maintain decrease?

How wretched are those that despair of My mercy. Also, how wretched are those who disobey Me and don't keep watch for Me persisting in the unlawful not feeling shame from Me.'

The man then requested, "Please write this narration down for me."

So , I wrote it and said, "By Allah, I won't write any more narrations down after this."

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I [i.e. Ibn `Abbad] say: The base that this meaning is built on is the realization of the slave in the station of expecting the best from Allah Most High. For this reason, the author (May Allah have mercy on him) mentions after this:

40

If you don't expect the best from Him due to the excellence of His attribute, expect the best from Him by seeing how He deals with you. For has He accustomed you to anything but good or has He bestowed upon you anything but favors?

Expecting the best from Allah most High is one of the stations of certainty and people concerning this are of two types: (1) distinguished and (2) common. The distinguished people expect the best from Allah because of His high qualities and lofty characteristics. The common people expect the best from Allah because He showers blessings on them and shows them His bounty and generosity. The difference between the two stations is obvious.

For this reason, it is not feared for the first group to change [their opinion about Allah] while it *is* feared for the second group to do so. Since, the people of the first station (when they became realized in the knowledge of Allah Most High and obtained the lights of certainty by which their hearts became tranquil and their souls calm) had no space left in them to accuse Allah and no place left to think badly of Him.

Conversely, the people of the second station haven't been lifted above looking at the external actions [of Allah]. Consequently, varying actions of Allah have varying effects on them. So, many a time when something displeasing happens to them, the strength of their hearts weakens. Thus, they are not completely free of thinking badly about Allah and letting their lower selves whisper to them leading them to be anxious and impatient. So, let the servant in such a state look at the meaning of Allah's statement: "An perhaps you dislike something while it is better for you." [al-Qur'an 2:216] and the likes of this. Also, let him give more weight to the more common state [of Allah manifesting His bounty] than to the less common state [of Allah putting him in a disliked situation].

Abu Muhammad `Abd al`Aziz al-Mahdawi (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "Expecting the best from Allah entails cutting off baseless doubts about whether something will happen or not. Since baseless doubts are killers... Whenever you allow them to reign, you have perished by yourself. Also included in this same category is listening to the whispers of Satan and the lower self."

I say: Expecting the best is required from the servant concerning his worldly affair and his affair in the next world. As for his worldly affair, it is by putting faith in Allah to bring to him benefits and comforts without much labor and toil. As for light efforts [in trying to gain benefits and comforts], they are allowed and he may get rewarded for them, as long as these efforts don't make him miss supererogatory and obligatory acts of worship. As for his affair in the next world, it is by being strong in hope that his good actions will be accepted and he will be fully rewarded in the place of reward and recompense. This expectation will lead him to rush to follow Allah's command and perform righteous actions, finding them sweet, joyful, pleasing, and easy to do energetically.

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Yahya ibn Mu`adh said, "The most dependable of hopes is the hope of the servant in his Lord and the most true of expectations is expecting the best from Allah Most High."

Among the opportunities for expecting the best from Allah Most High (in which it is not proper for the servant to leave it) are the times of hardship, trials, and descent of misfortunes in wealth and body. Doing so will make the servant avoid falling into anxiety and discontentment. This meaning will be related in hikma 106: "Whoever assumes that His gentleness is separate from His destiny does so out of his short-sightedness."

Also among the greatest of times for expecting the best from Allah Most High is during death. It has been narrated in a hadith, "Let not any one of you die except that he is expecting the best from Allah Most High."

Additionally in the hadith narrated from Jabir, it says, "Whoever among you is able to expect the best from Allah while dying should do so." Then he recited this verse: "And that assumption of yours which you assumed about your Lord ruined you." [al-Qur'an 41:23]

Furthermore, Allah Most High has been narrated to have said, "I am as My servant things of Me. So, let him think about Me as he wills."

Abu Talib al-Makki (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "Ibn Mas`ud used to swear by Allah that no servant expects the best from Allah Most High except that He gives him the best. This because all good is in Allah's control. When Allah gives the servant the state of expecting the best from Him, He has also given the servant what he is expecting. This is because the One Who let him expect the best is the One who wanted to make him realize his expectation."

It has been narrated from Abu al-Nasr ibn Hayyan that he said, "I went out to visit Yazid ibn al-Aswad in his sickness and I met [on the way] Wathila ibn al-Asqa` who it turned out also wanted to visit Yazid. So, we both entered upon him. We found Yazid lying on his bed. When Yazid saw Wathila he started motioning to him with his hand. So, Wathila went towards him and sat on the bed. Yazid ibn al-Aswad then took hold of both of Wathila's hands and put them on his own face.

Wathila then said, 'I want to ask you something.'

Yazid then replied, 'Nothing will you ask that I know about except I'll answer you.'

Wathila then asked, 'What's your opinion of Allah Most High [in this state]?'

He replied, 'By Allah, my opinion about Him is good.'

He then told Yazid, 'Rejoice, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) say, 'Allah Most High says: 'I deal with My servant as he expects of Me [both] if he expects good and if he expects bad.' "

It has been narrated from Abu Sa`id al-Khudri (May Allah be well pleased with him) that he said, "The Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) visited a sick person and asked him, 'What do you expect from Allah?'

The sick person said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I expect good.'

He (May Allah bless him and give him peace) then said, 'Expect from Allah what you will, for indeed Allah Blessed and High [deals] with the believer as the believer expects Him to.'

Abu Hurayra (May Allah be well pleased with him) related that the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Expecting the best from Allah is from the excellence of worshipping Allah."

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I say: The ahadith and traditions about hoping [in Allah], expecting the best from Allah, and about the vastness of His mercy are more than can be enumerated. Reading such texts is among the things that strengthen the disciple in this station. So whoever wants healing in this matter should read the chapter on *hope* in *Qūt al-Qulūb (Nourishment for the Hearts)* and *Ihyā` al-'Ulūm al-Dīn (Revival of the Religious Sciences)*...

Then the author (May Allah have mercy on him) clarifies the method by which the servant becomes realized in the station of expecting the best from Allah Most High. This realization is obtained by sticking to the door of Allah and clinging in one's heart to His oneness. He alludes to the fact that this is the ultimate pleasure and the end of all desires and not what the lower self seeks of understood pleasures and desires, which quickly fade away and vanish. The author [in the next hikma] asserts that not accepting this fact is due to the blindness of the heart, which deserves to be marveled at by every possessor of intellect:

41

Astonishing indeed is [the act of] him who tries to run away from the One Who is always with him and instead seeks the company of those things which are bound to never remain with him: "For it is not the eyes that go blind; rather, it is the hearts in the breasts which go blind." [al-Qur'an 22:46]

The running of the servant from his Master by turning towards his lusts and following his desires is a result of blindness in his heart and ignorance of his Lord. This is because he has exchanged what is higher for what is lower and he preferred the temporary over the permanent. If he had insight in his heart, he would have preferred the Ever-lasting over the perishing and he would have done what the magicians of Pharaoh did when they believed in their Lord and did not pay attention to what Pharaoh promised them concerning worldly honor, gifts, being brought close [to Pharaoh], and ennoblement. Additionally, they did not give a darn about what he threatened them with concerning worldly punishment, death, and crucifixion on the trunks of date palms. Rather, they said, "We won't prefer you over what has come to us of clear signs and over the One who created us." [al-Qur'an 20:72] And they said, "Allah is better and more lasting." [al-Qur'an 20:73]

The hearts of these magicians became enlightened and they began to witness their Beloved; so, what happened with them happened.

42

Do not travel from one created thing to another created thing being like the donkey who turns the millstone (the ground it moves from is the same ground it arrives at).

Rather, travel from created things to the Creator: "And to your Lord is the final destination." [al-Qur'an 53:42] Also reflect on the statement of the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace): "So, whoever's emigration was to Allah and His Messenger, his emigration was really to Allah and His Messenger. And whoever's emigration was to the world so that he may obtain it or to a woman so that he may marry her, his emigration was really towards what he emigrated for." So understand

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the statement of him on whom be peace and blessings and contemplate this affair if you have understanding.

Working for rewards, ranks, high degrees, and spiritual stations is a defect in one's state and an impurity in one's sincerity. The person who works for such is a traveller from one created thing to another. The reason for such wrong motivations is the person still gives respect to his ego and wants it to obtain a high rank or acquire by its efforts a divine gift. All these aforementioned aims are among the created things. And all created things are equal in their being other than Him, even if some of them are spiritual illuminations.

The author's striking of the similitude of a donkey and a millstone is a way of exaggerating the repulsiveness of those who work towards created things. It is also a subtle way of calling them to have good manners with Single Compulsor so that they realize the meaning of His Most High's statement: "And to your Lord is the final destination." [al-Qur'an 53:42] If they realize the meaning of this verse, they will make Him the end of their travel and make Him the devotion of their hearts; their actions will [be free from all wrong aims] and only be a way to fulfill the obligations of their slavehood and the rights of His Lordship; they will not run to their egos/selves in any state. This is the realization of the special sincerity that issues from seeing His oneness. May Allah make us among those who experience such with His grace and bounty and He is able to do all things.

The hadith that the author mentions further clarifies the point listed earlier. And it also contains an issue deserving reflection and contemplation and Allah knows best. The second part of the hadith points to the fact that those who emigrated for other than Allah or His Messenger have no share in the arrival and closeness to which those who emigrated towards Allah and His Messenger have. It is as if the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) mentioned the world which the emigrant wishes to obtain or the woman which he wishes to marry to allude to all selfish gains - finding fault with making them ends no matter what these selfish gains are... The Prophet's statement "his emigration is then for Allah and His Messenger" indicates the travel from created things to the Creator. This is what is desired of the servant as has been clarified. As for the Prophet's statement "his emigration was really towards what he emigrated for", it signifies remaining with created things and moving from one created thing to another. This is what the servant is commanded against in a subtle manner.

So, let the disciple have high ambitions and intentions until he does not even turn to glance at anything other than Him.

A man requested Abu Yazid (May Allah be well pleased with him), "Enjoin me with something."

He replied, "If he gives something to you from what is between the throne and the ground, say to Him, 'No. Rather, it is You that I want.' "

Abu Sulayman al-Darani said, "If I were given a choice between entering the High Garden and two units of prayer, I would have chosen two units of prayer. That is because in the High Garden, I am with my selfish portions whereas in the two units of prayer, I am with my Lord."

al-Shibli (May Allah Most High be well-pleased with him) said, "Fear the plot of Allah [against you] even in His statement 'Eat and drink,' [al-Qur'an 77:43]." He meant by this that do not be drowned in your selfish portions. Rather, be in everything for Him and not for yourself. So, His Most High's statement "Eat and

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drink" even if it is externally an ennoblement and blessing, it is internally a test and trial to see who is actually in it for Him and who is in it for his selfish portion. Then, the author (May Allah Most High be pleased with him) says:

43

Do not accompany him whose state does not lift you nor his words guide you to Allah.

The author talks here about the rule of companionship which is a big principle among the principles of the people of Allah. In this rule are many benefits for which reason the ancient and modern people of Allah pay due attention to it. The author apprises us of the benefits of companionship in his statement "Do not accompany him whose state does not lift you nor his words guide you to Allah". The lifting of states and the guiding to Allah is the benefit of companionship. The meaning of an uplifting state is that its possessor has an aspiration connected with Allah and is above created things. Such a person does not resort to other than Allah Most High in fulfilling his needs. Likewise, he does not depend on other than Allah in all of his affairs. People have been disregarded by his eyes. So, he does not see from them the ability to harm or benefit. Furthermore, his own self has been disregarded from his eyes. So, he does not see for it any actions nor does he demand for it a selfish portion. He is in all his actions riding the Sacred Law without going to extremes or neglecting it. This is the state of those who know Allah and declare His oneness.

So accompanying him whose state is thus (even if his external works and supererogatory actions are few) free from danger, leads to a praiseworthy end, and pulls in every benefit both in religion and the world. This is because a person's nature is derived from other people's natures. The self naturally loves to follow those whose state it finds pleasing.

However, the person being accompanied does not need to be perfect in all of the listed attributes since almost no one is like that. It is enough for the accompanied to surpass the accompanying in these attributes. So the accompanied should be of a higher state and more correct speech.

Who ever is not described by the listed praiseworthy attributes and only functions according to external reality is of no benefit in companionship. Rather, such a person may increase the accompanying in bad since he will call the accompanying to put on a show and beautify himself for the accompanied. All of this leads to committing enormous sins of the heart; and sins of the heart are much more severe than sins of the limbs.

Yusuf ibn al-Husayni al-Razi (May Allah be well pleased with him) said, "It is more beloved to me that I meet Allah [on the Last Day] with all the external acts of disobedience than to meet Him with a tiny amount of dissimulation [i.e. putting on a show for people] ..."

Some of the scholars have said, "Don't associate with any one except him with whom you increase in piety and don't decrease in your state..."

Some have said, "Be with the sons of the world according to external etiquette. Be with the sons of the hereafter according to external knowledge. Finally, be with the knowers of Allah in any way you want."

It was said to one of the righteous, "So and so loves you and mentions you often."

He replied, "This person is beloved to me, I respect him, and acknowledge his worth. However, it is better for me to meet the Devil one thousand times than to meet him even once."

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It was then asked, "How is that so?"

He replied, I fear that I will try to put on a show for him and he for me."

al-Sheikh Abu Talib al-Makki (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "This group of scholars of the heart do not keep company except when both sides agree on four points:

- a) They do not find fault with eating constantly without keeping supererogatory fasts.
- b) They do not find fault with fasting constantly without interval days.
- c) They do not find fault with sleeping all night without getting up to pray.
- d) They do not find fault with praying all night without sleeping.

... All conditions are equal in your companion's sights. So, your companion does not increase his respect for you due to your fasting and standing for prayer at night. Additionally, your companion does not decrease his respect for you due to your eating constantly or sleeping all night."

The scholars of the heart say, "If the accompanied increases his respect for the accompanying with seeing an increase in spiritual works and decreases his respect for the accompanying with seeing a decrease in spiritual works, it safer both of their religions to separate and is further away from showing off in good works. This is because the lower self innately loves praise and disliked blame. One of its tribulations is that it wants its "high" state to be seen by others by making apparent what is considered pleasing in front of people. It does this to courts praise and avoid blame."

So if one accompanies a person along with whom one's lower self does the aforementioned, it is not from the Path of the truthful nor is it the desire of the sincere. Rather, staying away from such people is more proper for the heart and safer for one's religion. Keeping the company of such people corrupts the heart, decreases faith, and weakens certainty. Such company is a cause for showing off in good works and it is this showing off which makes religious actions, futile, worthless, and obligates one to be disregarded from the eye of the Possessor of Majesty.

al-Thawri used to say, "Whoever deals with people goes to and forth in front of them. Whoever goes to and forth in front of them, puts on a show in good works for them. Whoever puts on a show for them falls into that which they have fell and perishes as they have perished."

A person of wisdom used to say, "Don't take as brethren people who change their dealings with you when they are in four states: (1) in anger, (2) in contentment, (3) in avarice, and (4) in capricious desire..." In another place he said, "Whoever when choosing a brother or a companion considers plenteous external spiritual actions or stops with external perfect states has proved his ignorance of this Path which goes deeper into higher realities. This is because external actions and states fluctuate while the higher reality of the heart stays constant after the reaching [of Allah]. If in addition to his ignorance of the Path he lacks the knowledge of true brotherhood dressing up his actions and putting on a show for people in order that he may have a lifted rank in their sight, he will enter into inapparent association of others with Allah; and associating others with Allah will take him out of the reality of Allah's oneness. So, his foot slips after having a firm hold and he is disregarded from the sight of his Lord; so, He does not take charge of his affair."

The lower self is tribulated with loving praise and commendation and having its rank affirmed by displaying its [good] attributes. A companion that calls a person to such is among the most accursed and harmful people to him. One of them becomes a trial for the other. So, let them separate since his companion is

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ignorant. Let a person not keep such company who will decrease his state and cause calamities of the heart to enter upon him. Rather, such a person should stay by himself and be true in his state regardless of whether it is high or low without coming near any one - but not severing oneself entirely from everyone. This is better for him and leads to more praiseworthy consequences. The intention of the author corresponds to what we have mentioned. The accompanied state and words should both issue from his attachment to Allah.

Sahl ibn `Abdullah said, "Beware of accompanying three types of people: (1) heedless oppressors, (2) hypocrite reciters of the Qur'an, and (3) ignorant sufis (i.e. those that claim to have traveled a Path but have no knowledge).

Yusuf ibn al-Hasayn al-Razi asked Dhu al-Nun al-Misri about whom he should accompany and Dhu al-Nun replied, "Someone from whom you don't hide anything from what Allah knows about you."

Hamdawn al-Qassar said, "Keep the company of the people of Allah. They give the one with shortcomings many excuses and don't overly extol the one with many excelling attributes." The allusion in the latter point is that by accompanying them, one can overcome conceit in one's works.

al-Junayd said, "When Allah wants good for a disciple, he gives him the companionship of the people of Allah and keeps him from the companionship of the [boastful] reciters of the Qur'an.

`Ali ibn Abu Talib said, "The worst of friends is he who makes you put on an untrue guise in front of him and makes you resort to excuse-giving." He also said once, "The worst of friends is him with whom his friends don't feel home with..."

The conclusion of all this is that by accompanying the people of Allah, one can obtain the most perfect of benefits as is not the case with other than them of the people associated with religion or knowledge. This is because they have been specially endowed with the realities of Allah's oneness and knowledge of Him which others do not share. Additionally, the utmost hope is that their state will flow into those that accompany them since it is said, ""Whoever is realized in a state, those around him share in it." Whoever sits in front of the fragrance maker's shop does not fail to find pleasant aromas. This is just talking about being in their presence and sitting next to them; so, what do you think about actually accompanying and becoming acquainted with them?

Some of the scholars have described such people by saying, "The person of Allah is he who does not know of other than Allah either in this life or the next. Additionally, he does not see with Allah any one else. Everything has become subservient to him while he has not become subservient to anyone. He has been given control over everything while nothing controls him. He takes a portion from everything while nothing takes a portion out of him. The turbidity of everything becomes pure and serene for him while nothing makes his purity and serenity turbid. The One has busied him away from everything else. The One has become sufficient for him from everything else."

Review these characteristics and see how great and lofty they are, how noble is the state of him who is characterized by them, and how rare are such people in existence. May Allah make us benefit from such people. May He bestow upon us their blessings. In accompanying such people, the disciple obtains an increase which does not come about without them, even if he were to engage in spiritual struggles and various types of pain-bearing exercises...

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Sidi Abul `Abbas al-Mursi said, "What need do I have of Alchemy when by Allah I accompanied people who can pass by a withering tree and point to it and it starts bearing pomegranates from that very instance. So, whoever accompanies such people has no need for alchemy. ... The friend of Allah when He wills [through Allah] can free one of all needs."

He also said, "It only takes me one glance at a person to make him free of all needs."

His teacher, Abul Hasan al-Shadhili said, "Abul `Abbas is a spiritually-perfected man. By Allah, a desert dweller comes to him and urinates on his shins, but the evening doesn't come upon this desert dweller except that Abul `Abbas has made him reach Allah.."

We will later mention in hikam #183 about the author's (i.e. Ibn `Ata'illah) accompanying of Abul `Abbas and what Abul `Abbas made him reach by the blessing of merely his gazing at the author.

44

Perhaps your state is bad, but appears to you to be good because your companion is even worse than you.

This hikma notes the greatest of the calamities that can enter the heart of the person who goes against what we have previously mentioned - who goes ahead and accompanies someone whose state is lower than his. This calamity is to find the state one is in agreeable, which causes the person to be pleased with himself by seeing its presumed well-being. As we mentioned before (in hikma #35), this act is the root of all evil.

45

No action from an abstinent heart is scarce and no action from an avid heart is plenteous.

The worth of actions is according to the state of the heart of those who perform them. So, acts of obedience that emanate from those abstinent in the world are really plenteous even if physically insignificant. Similarly, good actions which emanate from those avid for the world are really insignificant even if physically plenteous.

The reason for the above is that those abstinent remain safe from the calamities of the heart that infringe upon the sincerity of their actions (e.g., showing off in good works people, putting on a superficial front for others, and seeking worldly returns from religious works). The abstinent consider such things insignificant; so, their actions are accepted and their small works are made plenteous for them.

One the other hand, those avid for the world experience calamities of the heart which invalidate their actions and infringe upon their sincerity causing their actions not to be accepted. So, their apparently plenteous actions become small and insignificant.

The leader of the believers, `Ali ibn Abu Talib said, "Be more concerned about the acceptance of an action than you are of the action itself. No action is small which is done with god-consciousness. How shall an action which is accepted be small?"

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Allah Most High has described the believers as having plenteous [actions and rewards] for their sincerity and lack of showing off in front of people. It has been said concerning Allah Most High's statement: "O you who believe, remember Allah with plenteous remembrance." [al-Qur'an 33:41] that they should remember Him with sincerity; so, sincerity here is called plenteous. Sincere remembrance is that which singles out with full intention the Countenance of Allah, the Tremendous.

Allah has also described the hypocrites as remembering Allah scantily for their insincerity and showing off in front of people. He Most High has said: "They put on a show for people and do not remember Allah except a little." [al-Qur'an 4:142]

It has been narrated from Ibn Mas`ud that two units of prayer from the abstinent scholar are better than the worship of the regular worshippers even if the latter were continuous and never-ending.

Some of the Companions said to the first post-Companion generation, "You worship and struggle more plenteously than the Companions of the Messengers of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace), but they were better than you."

It was asked, "How is that so?"

The reply given was, "They considered the world more insignificant than you do."

Some of the Companions also said, "We searched out all actions, but we didn't find anything in this world or the next more likely to convey one [to the goal] than considering the world insignificant."

Abu Sulayman al-Darani said, "I asked Ma`ruf al-Karakhi about those who obey Allah, by which means are they able to obey?"

He replied, "By extracting the [love of] the world from their hearts. If anything of the world were in their hearts, not even one prostration from them would be proper..."

al-Sheikh Abu `Abdullah al-Qurashi said, "A person complained to one of the righteous that he does good actions but does not taste any sweetness in his heart."

The righteous person replied, "This is because you have (in your heart) the daughter of Iblis (i.e. the world) and the father [often] visits the house of his daughter [and she resides in your heart]. And his entering into her house does not bring anything but depravity."

Abu Muhammad ibn Sahl (May Allah Most High be well-pleased with him said, "The person who does not love the world is given the like of the reward of the scholars and worshipers together; then, the rest of the believers have the likes of only a portion of what he got. No one on Resurrection Day will be in a better state than the scrupulous scholar who did not love the world."

46

Excellence in actions is a fruit of excellence in spiritual states. Further, excellence in spiritual states comes from becoming realized in the stations of the descending [Divine support].

Excellence in actions is fulfilling all of their obligatory preconditions with proper manners of slavehood to Allah Most High. It is also to avoid seeking selfish worldly gains and also rewards in the hereafter.

Excellence in spiritual states is that they be safe from the diseases of the heart, free from egocentric claims and be stamped with the stamp of truthfulness.

Becoming realized in the stations of descending [Divine support] is by the heart imbibing what the Truth [Most High] sends down to it of the stations of knowledge and Divine cognition causing all doubts to be annulled.

These three things mentioned above follow one after another. This is what al-Imam Abu Hamid meant when he said, "Every station of certainty is connected to some knowledge, a spiritual state, and good actions. So, knowledge yields a spiritual state and a spiritual state yields a good action."

This statement of the author is a type of evidence for what he mentioned [in the previous hikma] about the abstinent and avid person:

47

Don't leave verbal remembrance of Allah for lack of presence of heart with Allah in it. This is because your neglecting His verbal remembrance is worse than your lack of presence of heart in His remembrance. And it is quite possible that He lift you from mere verbal remembrance to remembrance in a state of spiritual wakefulness- and from remembrance while in spiritual wakefulness to remembrance while experiencing Allah's presence - and from remembrance while experiencing His presence to remembrance in absence of everything besides Him. "And that is not hard for Allah." [al-Qur'an 14:20]

Practicing verbal remembrance of Allah is the shortest [and easiest] Path leading to Him and is a sign of His friendship. It is said that remembrance of Allah is the [red] carpet leading to His friendship. Whoever has been led to the remembrance of Allah has already been led to what the [red] carpet leads to. And whoever is deprived from the remembrance of Allah has been distanced from Him.

A poet said:

*Remembrance of Allah is the greatest door that you enter...
Leading to Allah. So watch over it with all breaths.*

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Imam Abu Qasim al-Qushayri said, "Remembering Allah is the label of friendship with Him, the light source for reaching Him, the realization of true discipleship, and a sign for a correct beginning and a pure end. So, there is not anything beyond remembering Allah. All praiseworthy attributes return to remembering Allah and have it as a source. The merits of remembering Allah are more than can be enumerated. It would have been sufficient if there were nothing more than Allah Most High's statement in His Mighty Book: "Remember Me and I will remember you." [al-Qur'an 2:152] and His Most High's statement narrated from the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace): "I deal with My servant as he expects Me to and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I remember him in Myself. If he remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a gathering better than it. If he draws nearer to Me by a hand-span, I draw nearer to him by an arm's length. If he draws nearer to Me an arm's length, I draw nearer to him one arms-span. If he comes to Me walking, I come to him running." This hadith is in both Sahih Muslim and Sahih Bukhari.

The scholars say that among the special qualities of remembering Allah is that it is not tied down to any particular time unlike other acts of worship. So, there are not any time [except a few] that the servant is not requested to do so, either with an obligatory request or an optional one.

Ibn `Abbas said, "Allah inscribed all obligatory acts with an known quantity and conditions in which one is excused from them - except practicing remembrances. For it, Allah did not put down a known quantity beyond which one cannot practice it nor did He excuse anybody from it - except the person who is not conscious or sane. Rather, He has commanded His servants to remember Him at all times: So remember Allah standing and sitting and on your sides. [al-Qur'an 4:103]"

He Most High has also said: "Remember Allah with much remembrance." [al-Qur'an 33:41] - which means to remember Him by night and day, at land and at sea, while travelling and while at home, in wealth and in poverty, in health and in sickness, in private and in public, and in all other conditions. The Quranic Exegete Mujahid said that "much remembrance" in the verse means that one never forgets Allah.

It has been narrated from the Messenger of Allah (May bless him and give him peace) that he said: Keep making plenteous remembrance of Allah until it is said that you are crazy.

Thus, it is fitting for the servant to make much remembrance in all of his conditions, engross all of his time in it since leaving and neglecting it is worse than being absent-minded while practicing it. So, he should remember Allah Most High with his tongue even if he lacks presence of heart in it. Perhaps remembering Allah with lack of presence of heart may lift him to remembering Allah with attentiveness (which is a description of the intelligent). And perhaps remembering Allah with attentiveness may lift him to remembering Allah with presence of heart (which is a description of the scholars). Finally perhaps remembering Allah with presence of heart may lift him to remembering Allah while being absent from other than the Remembered (which is the rank of the realized knowers and friends of Allah). Allah Most High has alluded to this point when He said, "And remember your Lord when you forget." [al-Qur'an 18:24] - which means forget other than Allah while remembering Him. At that point, you are truly a rememberer of Allah. In this station, the remembrance of the tongue stops while the servant is wiped out in seeing Allah...

al-Wasiti has said alluding to this station, "The ones who make remembrance of Allah [with their tongues] are more heedless than those who forget everything including their verbal remembrances [in annihilating themselves]..."

Ibn `Abbad's Sharh al-Hikam al-`Ata'iyah - And Useful Appendices

Abul `Abbas ibn al-Bana' said in his introduction to `Abdul `Izz al-Din ibn Mudhaffar al-Shafi`i's book *The Rational Secrets in the Prophetic Words* which I saw in his handwriting, "Among the best type of remembrance of Allah is that which rises above thoughts, being sent down from the Remembered Himself. (Lofty be His remembrance)." This is the real **silent dhikr** according to the people of Allah... The elucidation of this is that the heart while remembering Allah is free from everything all together. Nothing remains in it except Allah (Lofty be His remembrance). In such a case, the heart becomes the house of the Truth and is filled by Him. So, verbal remembrance involuntarily manifests itself in this state. At this point, the clear truth is tongue by which the rememberer speaks. If this rememberer stretched out his hand, it would be as if Allah were his hand. If he listens, it would be as if Allah were his hearing. The Remembered (Most High) has fully taken charge and owns the heart and limbs of this person. So, He makes them move in His pleasure. He has also taken full control over the attributes of this slave; so, He changes them as He wills according to His desires. This is why verbal remembrances emit themselves from the servant without formal undertaking. Likewise, acts of obedience are done energetically and in pleasure without strain. "That is the bounty of Allah which He gives to whom He wills. And Allah has tremendous bounty." [al-Qur'an 57:21] "Allah is with those who have god-consciousness and those who excel in good works." [al-Qur'an 16:128].

Allah describes the heart of the mother of Moses (upon whom be peace) as becoming empty like such in His the Truth's statement, "And the heart of the mother of Moses became empty." [al-Qur'an 28:10] - meaning that it became empty of everything except the remembrance of Moses. She almost spoke of him involuntarily from remembering him without prior planning. Rather, here leaving verbal remembrance of Moses was an act of patience springing from the fact that Allah made her heart firm so that she may be among the believers. [He made her heart firm by] inspiring to her that Moses would be among the messengers.

These [states of the remembering] we are mentioning are milestones and stations of ascent which only those travelling the Path really know experientially. The regular scholars know these things by merely acknowledging their truth [without experiencing them]. So, beware of denying the verses of Allah lest you become among the deaf and dumb in darkness.

The One Remembered cannot be described by being non-existent, covered by a veil, enclosed in a place, specific to a particular time, nor as being absent. He is not described by the fluctuating attributes of created things. He is present with His Entity and attributes. He views our private and secret meetings. He is close to everything and closer to the one who remembers Him than himself. This is because He existentiates him, knows about him, has full will and power over him, and plans his affairs out. He created creation, but their attributes do not fit Him. He brought into existence the great number of things, but their innate meanings do not restrict Him. Glory be to Him. He is the High, the Great. [end quote of Sheikh Abul `Abbas about the third station of the stations of remembering Allah].

So, it is not fitting for the servant to consider it a far shot that he reach this noble station. It is not hard for the Knowing Giver of [Spiritual] Openings to make him reach such. Thus, the servant should undertake external means [such as verbal remembrances] and it is left to Allah to raise the veil.

Among the signs of the heart's death is leaving sadness over missed acts of obedience and leaving regret over slips into disobedience.

When the heart is alive with faith, it feels sad about the acts of obedience that it misses and regrets the slips into disobedience it experiences. This also dictates the presence of happiness when one is used [by Allah] for acts of obedience from evil acts of disobedience. It has been narrated in a hadith, "Whoever's good deed make him happy and bad deeds make him sad, he is the believer" [al-Hakim] If the servant does not have sadness about missed opportunities and regret for committing bad deeds, he is dead of heart. This is because the actions of the servant (good or bad) are signs for the presence of Allah's pleasure or anger for the servant.

When Allah Most High gives the servant the success to perform good acts, the servant is made happy by it since it is a sign for His pleasure for him. In such a case, his hope predominates. And when Allah Most High abandons and does not protect the servant letting him commit acts of disobedience, the servant is made sad since it is a sign for His anger. In such a case, his fear predominates. Hope pushes the servant to earnestly work towards obedience. Hope does not dictate that one leave acts of obedience and leave sadness over what one has missed of acts of obedience due to feeling safe from the plot of Allah in delusion.

Fear pushes the servant to go to extremes to avoid acts of disobedience. Fear does not dictate that one perform acts of disobedience leaving regret because one has despaired of the Mercy of Allah.

In the hadith of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (May Allah be well-pleased with him) he said, "When we were with the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace), a person came upon us, kneeled his camel, and then walked towards the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace). O Messenger of Allah, I hurried my camel for nine days. I drove it towards you for six making my night sleepless and my day full of thirst. I have now put down my camel to ask you about two things which have been making my nights sleepless."

The Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) asked, 'Who are you?'

The man replied, 'Zayd al-Khayl (Zayd of the Horses).'

The Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) responded, 'Rather, you are Zayd al-Khayr (Zayd of good). Ask your question for perhaps it is enigmatic.'

The man said, 'I have come to ask about the sign by which one knows that Allah wants [good] for one and the sign by which one knows that Allah does not want [good] for one.'

The Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) replied, 'Excellent! How did you find yourself this morning?'

He said, 'I found myself this morning loving good and its people, loving that it be acted by, and yearning for it. When I do a good act, small or big, I am sure that it will be rewarded.'

The Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "This is the very sign [you asked about] o Zayd. If he wanted bad for you, he would have made you inclined towards it . In such a case, he wouldn't care in which valley you perish. "

Zayd then said, "This is enough for me." He then made of with his camel.

49

Don't let a sin become so great in your eyes that it prevents you from expecting the best from Allah Most High. Whoever knows his Lord considers his sin small in relation to His generosity.

Considering A sin great on the part of its commiter is of two types.

The first is that it seems so great that it pushes him to make repentance from it, stop doing it, and making a firm determination not to return to its like. This sort of considering a sin great is praiseworthy. Additionally, it is a sign of faith in a servant as we have mentioned previously [in the explanation of the last hikma].

`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "The believer sees his sins as big as the base of a mountain fearing that he will be requited for them. And the wicked sees his sin like a small fly on his nose, which he shoos off [not thinking much of it]."

It is said, "Every time an act of obedience is considered small [by its doer], it becomes big with Allah. Similarly, every time that an act of disobedience is considered big [by its doer], it becomes small with Allah Most High."

The second type of considering a sin big is that which causes one to despair and makes one think badly of Allah Most High. This sort of considering a sin big is blameworthy and infringes on true faith. In reality, it is worse for him than his sins. The reason for this type of considering a sin great is ignorance of the attributes of the Master, the Giver of good, the Generous, and Magnanimous. This [act of ignorance] issues from considering oneself great and drawing an analogy based upon one's intellect and conjecture.

If one were a real knower of Allah, he would consider his sins insignificant in relation to His generosity and bounty. How important is the servant or of what great value is he that he can fall into a sin which his Lord cannot pardon or it is so big that He cannot forgive.

The author says in his book *al-Tanwir*, "Know that He has to have some slaves in His dominion for which He can erect His forbearance, show His mercy to and forgive, and make fit for being rescued by the pleas of others on the Day of Judgement. Understand the Prophet's (May Allah bless him and give him peace) statement, 'By the One in Whose hand is my life, if you were not to sin, Allah would have made away with you and brought a people who sin and then ask Allah Most High for forgiveness so that He may forgive them.' Also understand the Prophet's (May Allah bless him and give him peace) statement, 'My pleading [on the Day of Judgement] is for the practicers of enormous sins from my community.'

A man came to the teacher Abul Hasan al-Shadhili (May Allah sanctify his secret) and said, 'Sidi, just yesterday such and such sins were on our limbs [before we were guided to the Path]...' The man seemed to find it strange that such could happen.

Abul Hasan replied, 'It is as if you want that Allah Most High not be disobeyed in His kingdom. Whoever loves that Allah Most High not be disobeyed in His kingdom loves that His forgiveness not be made manifest and the pleading of the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) not be. How many a sinner whose bad deeds and acts of disobedience are many, but the divine Mercy is written for him. The

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Lord displays mercy to the servant in accordance with the strength of his faith, even if the servant knowingly disobeys.' "

Therefore, it is not fitting for the servant to consider his sins so great that it leads him to despair from His mercy expecting bad from Him. Rather, he should repent to his Lord from it and return from it to him. In a hadith, the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "If it weren't for the fact that a sin is better for a believer than being conceited about his good actions, Allah Most High would never let a sin get in between Him and a believer." From this you know that sins prevent a person from being conceited about his good acts, which is the greatest veil between the slave and his Master. This is because the conceited person looks up to himself and not up to his Lord thinking his acts of obedience and worship are great, finding rest in them. Sins in the other hand make the servant have fear and wariness making him flee to Allah Most High away from his own self. Conceit turns the slave away from Allah Most High while sins turn him towards Him. Conceit drives him towards his own self while sins drive him towards his Lord. Conceit leads him to consider himself independent while sins lead him to poverty [i.e. in need for Allah's mercy]. The most beloved attribute of the slave to Allah Mighty and Exalted is the slave's poverty towards His master. The noblest of the states of the believer is that which throws and drives him towards Him

50

No sin is small if He shows you justice and no sin is big if He shows you benevolence.

When high divine attributes become manifest, the actions of those who perform them become futile. So when the divine attribute of justice manifests itself on whom He hates and despises, his good works become futile and his small sins become enormous [in His sight]. Likewise when the divine attribute of benevolence manifests itself on whom He loves, his bad deeds vanish and his big sins become small ones [in His sight].

Yahya ibn Mu`adh (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "If He makes the servants measure up to His justice, no good deeds are left for them. Likewise if His benevolence reaches them, no bad deeds are left for them. Abd among his supplications was, "My God if you love me, my sins are forgiven and if You despise me, my good actions are not accepted."

And how beautiful is the statement of Abul Hasan al-Shadhili (May Allah Most High be well-pleased with him) [in the hizb al-barr (a.k.a. hizb al-kabir)], "And make our bad deeds of those whom You love and do not make our good deeds those of whom You hate. For good deeds are useless along with Your hatred and bad deeds do not hurt along with Your love."

And among the private supplications of the author is: O my God how many an act of worship I perform or spiritual state I erect except that Your justice destroys my dependence on it and Your benevolence frees me from need of it.

51

No action is more likely to be accepted than that which you become absent from and whose presence you deem insignificant.

The manuscripts that we have read "No action is more likely [to benefit] hearts than that which..." The meaning of this version is that the heart does not turn towards nor consider significant the action described by what the author mentions. In not turning towards it and disregarding it, the heart remains proper and is free the slavery of seeing the action. In such a case, the heart remains with its Lord and not with the action. The author will mention a few words along this line later [in hikma #59].

However most probably the author wrote "No action is more likely to be accepted than that which..." But, the copyist made a transposition error changing the work *accepted* (qabul) to *hearts* (qulub)... The meaning of this version is that the safety of the works from internal calamities is a condition for their acceptance - as their performer in such a case is actually god-fearing and "Allah only accepts from the god-fearing". [al-Qur'an 5:27].

Actions are only saved from internal calamities by accusing the self of not fulfilling their rights and seeing its shortcomings in it. Consequently, the performer becomes absent from the action and considers its presence insignificant. So, he does not find rest in it nor depend on it. If the performer of the action is not described by such, but rather looks up towards it, considers it great, and forgets about Allah Most High's favor in giving him the success to perform it, this makes him fall into self-conceit causing his action to become worthless and his effort wasted.

Abu Sulayman al-Darani said, "Every time I find an action of mine pleasing, I search it out [for faults]."

Ali ibn al-Husayn (May Allah Most High be well-pleased with him) said, "Your seeing an action is a proof that it will not be accepted from you. This is because an accepted action is raised up beyond your sight. Likewise, your not seeing an action is a proof for its acceptance."

A knower of Allah was asked about the sign of an accepted action and he answered, "Your forgetting about it and your disregarding it totally." The evidence for this is in Allah Most High's statement: To Him ascends the goodly words and the righteous action. He raises it up to Him. [al-Qur'an 35:10]. So the sign of Allah Most High raising up an action is that nothing of it remains with you. If something of it remains in your sight, it hasn't been raised up to Him - for there is a great difference between your presence and His presence.

Thus it is fitting for the servant that when he performs an action it becomes forgotten over twice according to what we have mentioned about accusing the self and seeing its shortcomings until the servant's action is accepted.

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52

He only makes spiritual experiences come over you so that with them you may come to Him.

A spiritual experience is what comes to the heart concerning divine knowledge and spiritual subtleties to purify the heart and cleanse it until it is fit for entering Allah's presence. This is because the divine presence is unreachable by hearts made turbid by created things and stained with the filth of others. Thus, He only made the spiritual experience come to you so that you may with it come [to Him].

53

He makes spiritual experiences come to you so that He may save you from the hand of others and free you from slavery to created things.

Created things and things other than Him try to snatch and steal you away [from Him]. This is because of your love for them, your finding rest in them, and your dependence on them. Thus, He sends you spiritual experiences to deliver you from the hand of those that seized you and free you from the control of those that shackled you. There is an allusion to this point in the similitude that Allah Most High strikes in the example of the disbeliever in His statement: Allah strikes the example of a slave in which there are many owners who argue with each other and the slave who belongs solely to one man. Are the two equal in example? [al-Qur'an 39:29]

So, whoever is delivered from the hand of others and freed from slavery to existential realities, no created thing has a part or share in him; rather, he belongs solely to Allah Mighty and Majestic.

54

He sends you spiritual experiences to take you out of the prison of your existence into the expansiveness of beholding Allah.

The prison of the servant is beholding himself and watching out for his selfish gains. The expanse of beholding Allah is that the servant become absent from seeing himself by beholding the Tremendousness of Allah Most High, beholding His Majesty, and beholding His upholding creation in its movements and rest.

Abul Qasim al-Nasrabadhi (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "Your prison is your lower self. When you leave it, you find endless relaxation." The author will mention this point in hikma #247.

55

Spiritual illuminations are the riding platforms of hearts and innermost beings.

The lights of faith and certainty are vehicles which carry the innermost beings and hearts to the presence of the Knower of the Unseen. These are the aforementioned spiritual experiences.

56

Light is the army of the heart as darkness is the army of the lower self. When Allah wants to give victory to His servant, He helps him with the armies of light and cuts off from him the support of darkness and others

Light is unifying Allah and having certainty while darkness is associating others with Allah and having doubt. The heart has an army and the lower self has one. The war between the two armies is a contest. So when Allah wants to give victory to his servant, He fills his heart with its armies [of light] and cuts off from the lower self the help of its troops [of darkness]. When Allah wants to abandon the servant, the matter is the opposite of what we mentioned.

An example is when the heart inclines towards a praiseworthy action which is painful in this world but rewarded with pleasure in the next world and the lower self inclines towards a blameworthy action that is pleasurable in this world but requited with pain in the next world, the two armies engage in a fight. Light from the command of Allah Most High runs to the side of the heart and darkness from the whispers of Shaytan and his gathering races to the help of the lower self. Then, the two battle lines engage. If a predestined command of bliss from Allah Most High reaches the servant first, the heart is guided by the light of Allah Most High and considers this world's affairs trivial [as compared to the next]. Thus, the heart acts by what it is inclined towards even if it is painful in this world as it hopes for pleasure in the next world with it. Likewise if a predestined command of wretchedness from Allah - and we ask Allah for refuge from such - reaches the servant first, the heart neglects the light and the darkness blinds it from the benefit in the hereafter, becoming deluded by the worldly pleasure. Thus, the servant acts by what the lower self was inclined towards even if it may cause pain in the hereafter seeking it for its worldly pleasure.

When the two battle fronts meet and the fighting between them is intense, the servant has no way out except to flee to and take refuge with Allah Most High remembering Him much, truly depending on Him, and seeking protection with Him from Shaytan.

In these five past hikmas, the author has repeated a similar meaning with different words. This is his habit in many parts of this book. May Allah be well-pleased with him.

57

Light reveals, insight judges, and the heart approached or turn away.

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These three differing terms are used to convey three distinct ideas. Light helps remove the veil from unseen spiritual things until they become clear and are viewable.

Insight (which is the sight of the heart) helps to judge the correctness of what is viewed.

Finally, the heart can approach by acting by what insight sees or it can draw back by not acting by what insight sees.

58

Let not an act of obedience make you glad because it came from you. Rather, be glad for it because it came from Allah to you. Say: With the bounty of Allah and His mercy, let them be happy. It is better than what they amass. [al-Qur'an 10:58]

Becoming happy with an act of obedience is of two types. The first is becoming happy with it by seeing it coming from Allah as a blessing and favor. This type of happiness is praiseworthy and is desired for the slave. This type of happiness is a way of thanking Allah for the act [of obedience].

The second type is becoming happy with it seeing it as coming from oneself by one's own preference, choice, power, and strength. This type of happiness is blameworthy and is forbidden against. This type of happiness shows ingratitude towards Allah's blessing. It is also counted among prideful conceit, which is known to make actions worthless. So, becoming happy with it in the second sense is like becoming happy with nothing.

In the end of this book the author will mention the praiseworthy and blameworthy types of being happy with a blessing.

59

He has cut off those traveling to Him and those who have reached Him from seeing their good actions and spiritual states. As for the travelers, it is because they have not realized sincerity with Allah in them. As for those that have reached Him, it is because He has made them absent from them by their gazing towards Him.

Allah blessed both of the above mentioned parties by cutting them off from seeing their actions and states. Doing so, He has made them remain with Him and not with other than Him. He has done such with those that have reached Him with their accord and with the travelers without their accord - "And to Allah prostrates everyone in the heavens and earth willingly or unwillingly" [al-Qur'an 13:15].

He has cut off those that have reached Him from seeing their actions and states by making them witness Him in the presence of His closeness. Whoever sees Him, does not see anything other than Him along with Him since it is impossible that a person see Him and also gaze at other than Him.

Similarly, He has cut off those traveling to Him from seeing their actions and states by making them acknowledge their insincerity and egotistic claims in them. So, the travelers are always accusing themselves of not fulfilling the rights of their good actions or not purifying their spiritual states.

Ibn `Abbad's Sharh al-Hikam al-`Ata'iyah - And Useful Appendices

al-Nahjawri said, "Among the signs of the person whom Allah has taken charge of in his states is that the person see shortcomings in his sincerity, unmindfulness in his remembrances, decrease in his truthfulness, laxitude in his spiritual struggles, and lack of care in showing his need for Allah. So, he considers all of his states displeasing and increases in neediness to Allah to bring him to his goal until he becomes annihilated from other than him"

Abu `Amr Isma`il ibn Najid said, "No one has a pure standing in slavehood until he sees all of his actions as being a show for people and all of his states as being false claims."

Abu Yazid said, "If only a single verbal declaration of Allah's oneness would become pure from me, I would not worry about anything afterwards."

A narration from al-Wasiti alludes to these two states: al-Wasiti entered Nisabur and asked the companions of Abu `Uthman, "What did your sheikh used to enjoin you to do?"

They answered, "He used to enjoin us to stick to acts of obedience while seeing shortcomings in them."

al-Wasiti replied, "He enjoined you with pure fire worship. He should have instead commanded you to be absent from your works by seeing the One Who makes them come about."

The teacher Abul Qasim al-Qushayri said, "al-Wasiti only wanted to save them from possible self-pride in actions [by looking at them]. He did not mean to invalidate the act of seeing shortcomings or to break one of the proper manners [with Allah's friends]."

60

Branches of humiliation only grow high from seeds of avarice.

The word the author uses for *high* means tallness. It is said, "The date tree becomes high and lofty when it becomes tall". Allah Most High says, "And the date trees so high..." [al-Qur'an 50:10]

The word branches is the plural of branch, which is what springs forth from the trunk of a tree...

The word seed is a germ which is sowed in the soil.

All of these words are used as metaphors.

[Avarice is wanting what is in the hands of other people.] Avarice is among the greatest calamities of the lower self and infringes on the person's slavehood. Rather, wanting what is in the hands of people is the source of all other calamities of the heart since it only comes about by pure attachment to people, seeking resort with them, depending on them, and becoming slaves to them. This involves an utterly vast amount of humiliation and it is not permissible for the believer to make himself low [for other than Allah].

Additionally, wanting what is in the hands of people contradicts higher faith. Higher faith offers dignity [backed by Allah]. The dignity that the believers are characterized by only comes about by their raising their ambitions [above created things] to their Master, by their hearts becoming tranquil with Him, and their reliance on Him and not other than Him. This is the dignity that Allah has granted his believing slave. Allah Most High has said, "To Allah belongs all might, to His messenger, and to the believers..." [al-Qur'an 63:8]

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Just like dignity is among the attributes of the believers, humiliation is among the attributes of the disbelievers and hypocrites. Allah Most High has said, "Those who ardently oppose Allah and His Messenger are among the humiliated." [al-Qur'an 58:20].

Abu Bakr al-Warraq said, "If avarice was asked, 'Who is your father?', it would answer, 'Doubt in what Allah has decreed.' If it were asked, 'What is your profession?'. It would respond, 'Causing humiliation [for the one who practices me].' If it were asked, 'What do you lead to?' , it would reply, 'Deprivation.' "

Abul Hasan al-Warraq al-Nisaburi has said, "Whoever feels in himself love for the world has killed his self with the sword of avarice and whoever has avarice of something becomes humiliated and with his humiliation, he perishes." ...

The person with avarice is necessarily corrupt of religion and bankrupt of the lights of certainty. The author has said in *al-Tanwir* , "Ask your lower self to practice abstinence more than your ask it to practice anything else. And cleanse yourself of avarice for obtaining things from people. If the person with avarice tried to cleanse himself with the water of the seven seas, he would not become pure except by losing hope of obtaining things from people and raising his spiritual ambition above people."

[...]

Practicing this type of abstinence will lead a person to take his needs directly from Allah, speak by Allah, and act only for Allah. He will be on clear proof and have advanced insight. This is the type of abstinence practiced by the successively changing holy men (abdāl) and the voraciously truthful.

We are not talking about the type of abstinence practiced by the external worshippers that issues from not giving people a benefit of a doubt and from baseless suspicions.

We have mentioned this do that people know that avarice is the opposite of abstinence. We mention more about this topic the explanation of hikma #190

61

Nothing draws you like illusion.

Illusion is a non-existent affair and is the opposite of existent reality. The lower self with its shortcomings is drawn to illusive and false matters more than it is attracted to firm realities. This is because the lower self is more comfortable with illusion. Having hope of obtaining things from people (i.e. avarice) is among the false illusions and is an act of blindly accepting an incorrect guess. Having hope in people is a hope that does not have any hope of being fulfilled. The realized spirituals are very far from such false hope. Their ambitions are not attached to anything but Allah, they do not depend on anything except Him, and they are not fearful of anything except Him. Their hearts do not even pay attention to illusions and imaginations connected with other than Allah. Thus, they are free of avarice and are characterized by contentment and abstinence. Consequently, they live good and happy lives.

Ibn `Abbad's Sharh al-Hikam al-`Ata'iyah - And Useful Appendices

Contentment is a tremendous spiritual station among the stations of certainty and it is the start of the states that those pleased with Allah have. Some of the knowers of Allah have said, "The servant is not truly content until even if every desirable thing came to the door of his house (of what people of the world desire), he would not even look towards these things and would not even the door for them as he is already content with the state [Allah has put him in]."

There are narrations from the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) that Allah's statement "We will make them live good lives" [al-Qur'an 16:97] indicates lives full of contentment.

62

You are free from what you have no hope for and a slave for what you are avid.

Having a desire for a thing is a proof of loving it and wanting to obtain it. And this is the same as worshipping it. And losing hope in obtaining something is a proof that the heart is no longer occupied by it and is independent of it. And this is the same as freedom from it.

[...]

63

Whoever does not approach Allah by [regarding] the gentle acts of His grace is drawn to Him by the chains of tribulations.

Noble souls approach Allah due to their regarding the gentle acts of His grace and the successive showers of His bounty and blessings. Wicked souls are not drawn to Allah except by the chains of tough trials and the befalling of misfortunes in one's wealth and body.

The metaphor of chains and being dragged is well-fitting.

Abu Madyan has said, "It is Allah's pattern that He first draw servants into His worship by expanding their sustenance and always giving them relief [from pain] so that they may return to Him by means of His blessings. But if they do not come towards Him [e.g., they draw even further away], He tries them by giving them sadness after happiness so that they may return to Him by this means. This is because Allah wants people to approach Him, regardless of whether it is voluntarily or against their will."

64

He who is ungrateful for blessings exposes himself to losing them while he who is grateful ties them down [from escape].

Thanking a blessing obligates that it will stick around and increase. And not thanking a blessing obligates that it go away and leave one. Allah Most High has said, "If you are thankful, I will increase you [in

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blessings]" [al-Qur'an 14:7] And Allah has said, "Indeed Allah does not change the state of a people [by removing their blessings] until they change what is in themselves [of thankfulness for them]." [al-Qur'an 13:11]

[...]

65

Fear from the presence of His goodness towards you despite your continuous misbehavior with Him to be a way of gradually misleading you. "We shall gradually lead them [to destruction] from whence they perceive not." [al-Qur'an 68:44]

Having fear of being gradually misled by blessings is an attribute of the believers and not having fear from such even though one is constantly misbehaving is an attribute of the disbelievers.

The scholars have said, "Among the signs of being gradually misled is continuously disobeying but being deluded by the continued ease and regarding the delay in punishment as a proof that one has reached Allah." And this is among the non-apparent plot of Allah as He has said: We shall gradually mislead them from whence they know not. [al-Qur'an 68:44]. This is done by Allah making them assume that they are fine, but they are not so. Thus, He will continue to mislead them a little bit at a time [until when its too late] and then He will take them to account suddenly. In this meaning is also the verse 44 of chapter 6 of the Qur'an: So when they forgot what they were reminded of [by continuously disobeying], We opened for them the doors of all [good] things until they became happy with what they received [without thanking Allah for it], We took them to account suddenly and they became hopeless [of mercy].

Sahl ibn `Abdullah has said, "The meaning of Allah's statement "We shall gradually mislead them from whence they know not" is: We shall support them with blessings and make them forget to thank Us for them. Thus, when they find peace with the blessings and become veiled from the One who gave the blessings, We take them to account.

Ibn `Ata'illah explains the meaning of the verse as, "Every time they perform a new act of disobedience, we increase the blessings and make them forget to ask forgiveness of the act of disobedience."

66

Among the ignorance of the disciple is that he breaks the rules of etiquette and upon seeing the punishment delayed, he says, "If this were bad etiquette, it would have cut off the divine help and obligated being distanced." But, it may cut off the divine help from whence he knows not - even if it only prevents an increase. Further still, the disciple may be distanced without knowing it - even if it is by His leaving him alone to do what he wants.

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This is a type of being gradually misled which we have noted in the last hikma. Bad manners from the disciple obligate punishment. But, punishment is of various types. Some punishments are given right away and some punishments are stored up for later. Some punishments are apparent while others are hidden. The apparent punishment is that of pain and the hidden punishment is that of being veiled [from Allah]. Punishment with pain is for those who commit external acts of disobedience while the punishment of being veiled is for those that do not observe proper manners with the Knower of the Unseen. And sometimes a delayed punishment of being veiled is worse for the disciple than an immediate punishment of pain.

[...]

67

When you see a slave whom Allah has long established in regular worship, do not undervalue the gift his Master has given him even if you do not see the mark of the knowers of Allah nor the glow of the lovers of Allah on him. For if it were not for [Allah's] sent spiritual help, he would not have been able to worship [for so long].

Allah's special servants are of two types: (1) those brought near and (2) and the righteous [on the right side].

Those brought near are those that have sacrificed their own wants and desires and have used themselves to fulfill the rights of their Lord to exhibit slavehood to Him and seek His pleasure. These are the knowers of Allah and the lovers of Him.

The righteous are those that have not given up their wants and desires but have been established in good acts and worship so that they may be rewarded for such by high ranks in Paradise. The righteous include the externally abstinent and the external worshippers. Both of these types of people receive divine help in their station...

So when you see a servant who Allah has long established in good external acts and continuous verbal remembrances and has helped him in this, recognize this as Allah's will for him and do not find insignificant his state because you do not see on him the mark of the knowers of Allah (which includes leaving one's own desires and becoming free from wants in front of the One Who wills Himself) nor the splendor of the lovers of Allah (such as being enamoured by the pleasure of their beloved, being in a good mood all the time, and being boastful of Him). If it were not for Allah's sent spiritual help, these people would not be able to continue to worship him externally. Thus, these people are also included in Allah's special concern and protection. So, do not find small what Allah has given them nor the rewards they will gain from such. Finding such insignificant is from your own ignorance and deficiency in intellect. And the author will later say, "No one looks down on worship except the ignorant." (hikma 122)

68

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**A faction Allah has established for His service and a faction He has chosen for His love.
"We send support to these and support to those as a giving of Allah and the giving of
Allah is not restricted." [al-Qur'an 17:20]**

The Truth Most High has full volition and control. He is not asked about what He does and while people are asked of such. Thus, He has established a faction of people for His service until they are by His service proper for His Paradise. These are the externally abstinent and the external worshippers as we mentioned in the last section. Similarly, He has chosen a faction of people for His love until they are by His love fit for His closeness and for entering His presence. These are the knowers of Allah and the learned ones.

[...]

69

Spiritual experiences are almost always surprises so that the slaves do not lay claim to them due to their own preparations.

Spiritual experiences are noble gifts and presents from Allah Most High. He honors His servants with them. Thus, they are rarely ever expected; rather, they happen without advance notice so that the servants may not lay claim to them and see themselves deserving them due to their own preparations. Allah's gifts and presents are high above needing prior reasons (e.g., the servants good actions) for being given; rather, they are only an expression of the generosity and bounty of the Most Generous and Most Bountiful.

70

Whoever you see answering all questions he is asked, describing all events he sees, and mentioning everything he knows, recognize his ignorance.

Answering every question asked, describing every event seen, and mentioning everything one knows are signs of one's ignorance as the author states.

As for answering all questions, it dictates that the person claims to know all there is to know and that is impossible for humans as Allah has said, "You have only been given of knowledge a little." [al-Qur'an 17:85]. How can a person then answer every question he is asked unless he has complex ignorance? Additionally, he must examine the situation of the person who is asking the question to see if he is fit for a response and not respond to those who are not fit for a response. Thus, he would do what the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) did when a man came to him and asked him, 'Please teach me strange esoteric pieces of knowledge.' The Prophet refrained and replied, 'Have you mastered these basic subjects of knowledge (naming a few basic subjects)?' When the man replied in the negative, the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) stated, 'First master these basic subjects and then come back to me so that I may teach you strange/esoteric pieces of knowledge.' Just like Allah has asked the scholars not to conceal knowledge from

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those who are fit for it, He has also asked them to guard it from those who are not fit for it. Whoever does not follow this principle is ignorant.

As for describing everything one has seen, it is a type of revealing secrets which must be kept. It is said, "The hearts of free [intelligent] men are the burial grounds for secrets." Secrets are a trust from Allah Most High to the servant; thus, revealing them is an act of betrayal. "And Allah does not love those who betray" [al-Qur'an 8:58] Also, one can only express spiritual experiences using allusions pointing to the meaning and using detailed word descriptions for such experiences is a way of broadcasting and wasting them [on people who are not fit for such]. Additionally, using detailed word descriptions for them causes them to be even more unreachable [for the common man] since spiritual experiences cannot really be understood in with words. And the common person who comes across such detailed explanations is likely to reject the concepts being discussed and attack the high-level knowledge of the noble leaders of the Path.

Abu `Ali al-Rawdabari said, "Our knowledge consists entirely of allusions and when it is expressed with detailed words, it becomes obscure."

As for mentioning everything one knows, it is caused by not distinguishing between the various subjects of knowledge ... which is a sign of ignorance.

71

He only made the next world the domain for rewarding His believing slaves because this world cannot fit what He wants to give them and He considers them higher than to reward them in a domain that will not remain.

He has only made the reward of believers to be in the next life according to what we know for two reasons.

The first is that the world cannot fit what He wants to give them of pleasurable experiences both physical and spiritual. As for physically speaking, it is because the world is low and has small regions [which people must share] and Allah will give common believers in the next world as has come in hadith exclusive ownership of a region which takes five hundred years to cross in a journey. Then, can you even imagine how large the domains are of the special believers [e.g., knowers of Allah, scholars, and martyrs]. So, one obviously can see that the earth is too small to reward each of the believers with ownership of such a large domain. As for spiritually speaking, it is because the world is inherently low, deficient, dirty, and insignificant and the things which the people of Paradise will enjoy are noble and high as have come in hadith: the place of placing a small whip in Paradise is better than the entire world and what it holds. And that the light of the bracelets of the maidens of Paradise outshines the light of the sun, etc. And Allah's statement is sufficient in this matter: And no soul knows what has been hidden from it from pleasurable experiences bringing peace to the eyes. [al-Qur'an 32:17] And the statement of the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) narrating the statement of Allah: I have prepared for My believing servants what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has conceived of.

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The second reason is that Allah has raised the ranks of His believing servants far above that He reward them for their obedience in a domain that is perishing, going away, and terminating. This is because everything that perishes even if it remains for a long period is equal to nothing in the end. Rather, He has guaranteed them a permanent pleasurable living in the persisting kingdom [in Paradise]. And remarkable indeed is the honor He has bestowed them by calling them with His name al-Karim (the Noble) and al-Hayy al-Ladhi La Yamut (the Living Who Does Not Die) as has come in the tafsir of His Most High's statement in the Qur'an 76:20: Allah will send an angel to His friend in Paradise telling him to ask permission to enter upon His slave and if he grants permission then enter but else return. Then, the angel will ask permission to enter from behind seventy veils and enter upon him with a written letter from Allah Mighty and Majestic whose title reads "From the Living Who Does Not Die to the living who does not die". Then, when the believing servant opens the letter, he finds that it states: O My servant I long to see you; so, visit Me. Then, he will ask the angel whether he came with a lightning-fast flying vehicle of transportation (buraq) and the angel will answer in the affirmative. So, he will ride the fast flying vehicle but his desire to meet his Lord will be even greater and thus he will leave the flying vehicle of transportation and be carried by his desire and anticipation [even faster] leaving the vehicle of transportation behind until he reaches the Place of Meeting.

72

He who finds the fruit of his works in this life should consider it a sign of their acceptance in the next life.

The fruit of acts of obedience in this world is finding sweetness while performing them and this happens for most acts which are performed regularly while initially finding the acts undesirable and hard to perform.

One of the knowers of Allah said, "No good act exists except that there is some hardship associated with it which one must be patient with. Whoever perseveres through its difficulty will enter into relaxation in ease. This starts with striving against the self, then actively going against one's desires, then bearing the distress of leaving the material world, and these will lead to eternal delight and pleasure."

Utbah al-Ghulam (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "I spent twenty years with distress during the night and then I spent twenty years with pleasure during the night."

Tabit al-Banani (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "I recited the Qur'an for twenty years with distress and then I recited it for twenty years with pleasure."

One of the scholars said, "I used to recite the Qur'an but did not find any sweetness in it. Then, I started reciting it like I was hearing it from the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) reciting to his Companions. Then, I ascended to a rank higher and I started reciting the Qur'an like I was hearing it from Jibra'il giving it to the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace). Then, Allah granted the gift of another rank and I started reciting it like I was hearing it from the One Who Speaks with it. And at that time, I experienced a delight and pleasure which I could not hold myself back from."

What we have mentioned of sweetness and pleasure in actions is only the fruit of actions which are sound and free of showing off and having egotistic claims.

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Abu Turab (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "When the servant is true in his actions, he finds its sweetness before he actually starts performing them. And if he is sincere, he finds the sweetness while he is performing them."

Actions which have these characteristics are accepted by the bounty of Allah Most High.

A hadith states: Allah does not accept an action from someone seeking prestige or showing off for people.

And the proof that an action which has these characteristics is accepted is Allah's statement: Allah only accepts [actions] from the god-fearing. [al-Qur'an 5:27].

...

73

If you want to know your rank with Him look to what He has established you in.

This is a fair scale [by which one can know one's rank with Allah] and is in conformity with the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace), "Whoever wants to know his rank with Allah, let him look to Allah's rank in his own heart. This is because Allah ranks a servant according to how the servant ranks Him in his ownself." And this rank in a servant's heart of Allah is in reality what Allah *has established him in* (as mentioned in the main hikma) since the servant performs no actions himself according to higher reality.

al-Fudayl ibn al-`Iyad (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "A servant only worships Allah according to His rank with Allah."

Abu Talib al-Makki (May Allah be well-pleased with him) said, "If the servant looks with honor to his Master, regards His laws (of what is unlawful) with awe, and races to please Him, Allah honors his rank in the hereafter, magnifies his worth, and races to give him happiness in eternal pleasure. And when the servant does not give weight to the rights of Allah, His laws, and sacred rites, Allah Most High humiliates him, lowers his rank, and gives him distress in painful punishment." And we seek refuge from the latter.

Wahb ibn `Abullah said, "I read in some books that Allah says: O son of Adam obey Me in what I have commanded you and do not try to inform me of what is best for you since I know my creation best. I only honor him who honors Me and I only humiliate him who considers My commands insignificant. I do not look to giving the servant his rights until he discharges My rights."

74

When He grants you obedience and frees you of need from it, know that He has showered His blessings on you externally and internally.

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The servant is asked to do two things: (1) conform to Allah's commandments externally and (2) cling to Allah internally. Clinging to Allah means feeling free of need to other than Him. When Allah grants the servant these two things, he has showered upon him His blessings both externally and internally and He has made him reach the endpoint of all hopes in this world and the next - Glory be to Him, Lofty and Majestic is He.

75

The best thing you can ask Him for is what He asks of you.

If you have no recourse but to ask Him, then ask Him for that which He has asked you for. He has asked you to remain steadfast in His worship. Asking for this is better than asking for your selfish portions and desires. In such a case, you will be existing *through Him* and living *for Him* and He will give you what you ask for right away without making you wait. If you ask for obtaining your selfish portions and desires, it is likely that there will a delay in your receiving an answer or a withholding of an answer; additionally in a such a case, you will miss out on the proper manners of supplication [due to the impatience and then disappointment you show].

...

76

Being sad about missing acts of obedience without rising to perform them is a sign of delusion.

The author speaks here about the false type of sadness which accompanies crying as it is said, "And how many an eye flows with tears while the heart remains hard." This is from the hidden plot of Allah Most High where Allah has prevented him from doing [the actions] that which benefit him and given him this false crying so that the servant may be deceived [that he is actually on the right path].

Rabi`ah al-Basri heard a man lamenting, "O my [great] grief."

She replied, "Rather, say: O what little is my grief for if you were truly sad, you wouldn't even be able to [find an opportunity] to breathe calmly [due to your being busy trying to reverse the causes for your grief (i.e. by catching up in obeying Allah)]."

As for true sadness, it drives one to perform actions and acts of obedience. And this true sadness is one of the stations of the those travelling the Path.

Sheikh `Ali al-Daqqaq said, "The person who is truly sad travels a distance in the Path in merely a month what a person who is not sad would cover in many years."

And there is a hadith with this meaning: Allah loves every sad heart.

In the Torah, there a statement which says: When Allah loves a servant, He places a (sad) wailing voice inside his heart and when He hates a servant, He places a (cheerful) musical voice inside his heart."

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The Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) used to persist in this type of sadness and be in continuous contemplation. It is also said that when sadness is absent from a heart, it becomes ruined and empty. And whoever has not tasted this type of sadness will not be able to taste the delight of worship.

To recap, if sadness does not cause a person to earnestly race towards [catching up on] acts of obedience, then it is a sign of delusion and is **not** one of the stations of the people travelling the Path.

77

The knower of Allah is not he who when he motions finds the Truth closer to him than his motion. Rather, the knower of Allah is he who does not have a motion due to his being annihilated in His existence and vanished in witnessing Him.

A motion is an allusion which is more subtle than an explicit explanation. The scholars of this Path use these type of allusions when talking amongst themselves about the secrets of the Oneness of Allah. ... If a person uses an allusion and sees Allah as being closer to him than his allusion, he is not really a knower of Allah - since he differentiates and sees other than Allah. Knowers of Allah are annihilated in His existence and have vanished in witnessing Him. And this latter type of person is absent from his allusion, from the person making the allusion, and what he is alluding to.

[...]

78

Hope is what is accompanied by action; else, it is just a fancy.

Hope is a noble station among the stations of certainty. Hope drives one to strive in actions of worship as we mentioned before about sadness (in hikma #76). This is because the person who hopes for something proceeds towards it and the person who fears something flees from it. As for false hope in which the person is lax about performing actions of worship and boldly disobeys Allah, it is not called hope among the scholars - rather, it is called a fancy or vain desire and [is a sign of] being deluded about Allah.

Allah has blamed people who hold such fancies while persisting in the love of the world. He calls such people (bad) remnants as He has said: And then came after them a remnant who inherited the Book who freely take enjoyment [from the forbidden] and say it will be forgiven for us. [al-Qur'an 7:169]

Ma`ruf al-Karakhi said, "Seeking Paradise without any actions is a sin among the sins and hoping for intercession without any reason is a type of delusion. And hoping for mercy from Someone one does not obey is ignorance and stupidity." He also said, "Hoping for mercy from Him Whom you do not obey is a sign of being abandoned and being dull-minded."

[...]

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The Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "The intelligent one is the who takes himself to task and works for what is after death and the incapable one is the one who lets his self follow its desires and then hold vain hopes about Allah."

[...]

79

The goal of the knowers of Allah Most High is to be true in His slavehood and to fulfill the rights of His lordship.

The knowers of Allah have a higher goal with their Lord than the goals other people have. This is regardless of whether these other people are external worshippers, externally abstinent, or scholars of Sacred Knowledge. This is because the only goal of the knowers of Allah is being honest in His slavehood and fulfilling the rights of His Lordship without seeking for themselves any portion or being egocentric. And everyone else besides them do not leave their selfish portions and goals. [...]

Sidi Abu Madyan said, "What a difference there is between the one whose ambition is built on the maidens and castles of Paradise and him whose ambition is built upon the lifting of the veil and being in the Presence [of Allah]."

80

He gives you happy expansion so that you will not get accustomed to sad contraction and He gives you sad contraction so that you do not [restfully] stay with happy expansion. And He extracts you from both of these states so that you may be for Him and nothing else.

Happy expansion and sad contraction are two states which the knowers of Allah sometimes experience, and they correspond to the hope and fear that the beginning disciples experience. These states are caused by the spiritual support sent to the internal heart of the servant and the strength of these states is determined by the strength of the sent spiritual support.

The point here is that these states are deficient compared to a higher state which is above these. These lower states are experienced with an ego center [whereas the higher state is not]. Allah's gentle dealings with the servant dictates that He first makes him experience these lower egocentric states and then extracts him from them through annihilation away from the ego-center to subsistence through his Lord.

al-Faris said, "First comes sad contraction and then happy expansion. Then, the servant experiences no contraction nor expansion. This is because contraction and expansion occur only when the servant regards himself as existence and not while he is annihilated or is in subsistence."

[...]

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The author of the Book *`Awarif al-Ma`arif* has explained the terms expansion and contraction with a long detailed explanation; so, whoever wishes for more details can look there.

81

**The knowers of Allah are more fearful in happy expansion than in sad contraction.
Few are those who limit themselves to proper manners in happy expansion.**

The knowers of Allah are only more fearful in expansion than they are in contraction is because expansion is in agreement with the caprices of the lower self. Thus, their fear issues from their returning to their lower self and tasting egocentricism. And this dictates being thrown out and being far [from the Presence of Allah].

Yusuf al-Razi wrote to al-Junayd saying, "May He not make you taste the taste of your lower self for if you taste it, you will not taste any good after that."

This is why the scholars of the Path have made part of manners to stick to contraction and feeling heart-broken when happy expansion comes over one. However, this is difficult and only a few people keep to proper manners in this state as the author mentions later.

[...]

82

The lower self takes its portion from happy expansion while it has no enjoyment in sad contraction.

Here the author hints that keeping to proper manners is difficult in expansion. This is because the lower self has a selfish interest in expansion as this leads to it being engulfed in happiness. And this unbridled joy is usually not controllable until the servant falls into bad manners.

As for contraction, the lower self has no selfish interest in it and thus is safer.

[...]

83

Sometimes He answers you but [in reality] withholds and sometimes He withholds from you but [in reality] gives.

Allah's preventing the servant from engaging in his desires, fancies, and habits is a plenteous gift from Him since with such He has made the servant remain with Him and cut him off from his lower self. The opposite of this is the true withholding even if it seems like a gift externally.

Sheikh Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-`Arabi said, "When you are withheld from that is His giving and when you are given that is his withholding. So, choose abstinence over taking." So, it is wajib on the servant that he leave planning and choosing to Him Who is in charge of such and he will not be devoid of good [if he does such].

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84

When He opens the door of understanding to you His withholding becomes His giving.

The explanation of this will come when the authors says (in hikma #93): When He gives, he makes you witness His benevolence and when He withholds, He makes you witness His coercion. He is making Himself known to you and approaching you with gentleness in both states.

85

**The physical world is on the top surface a façade and beneath is a cause for caution.
The lower self is tricked by its façade while the heart is cautious of what is beneath.**

The physical world is everything that the lower self can have an interest in, such as the enjoyments of the world and its flowers. The physical world is splendid on the outside and ugly on the inside. ...

It is lovable, sweet, and green on the outside but is a pungent corpse on the inside. The lower self looks towards its external beauty and is deluded by it and causes the person to perish. The heart looks at the ugly interior and takes a lesson from it and saves the person from its misery. And this meaning is found in previous revelations that the disciples of Jesus asked him to describe the friends of Allah upon whom there is no fear nor do they grieve and he replied by saying, "They are those whom the Book speaks about and they speak with the Book. They are those whom the Book teaches about and they teach with the Book. They are those for whom the Book stands and they stand [in prayer] with the Book. They look at the internal reality of the world when the rest of the people look at its external [beauty]. They see the consequence of affairs while the rest of the people look to the immediate reward of the world. Thus, they assign death to that which they fear will give them death and they leave that which they know will leave them. Thus, they are nourished in the world by verbal remembrance [*dhikr* of Allah]. Their happiness in the world is in being sad. Whatever of the world comes towards them, they reject. And whatever is raised in their eyes of the world, they abase. They see the world as old and worn and they do not try to make it look new. The physical world becomes ruined in front of them and they do not fix it up. The world has died in their hearts and they do not try to revive it. They build with their world the provision of the afterlife. They enliven the remembrance of death and give death to the remembrance of life. They love Allah and love His remembrance. They obtain with His light and give light to others. A wondrous good is for them and a wondrous good is with them."

One of the friends of Allah said, "No part of the beauty of the world was displayed to me except I was shown its internal [ugliness] and I realized how one can be deluded by its [external beauty]."

Abu Talib al-Makki commented, "That this state is a sign of Allah's special attention to those who are close to Him and are His friends. Whoever sees the world with its first intrinsic [ugly] quality is not deluded by its secondary quality [i.e. its external beauty]. Whoever knows the world for its internal reality is not amazed / pleased with its external [beauty]. Whoever is shown [in a spiritual vision] the world's outcome does not desire its decorations.

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And Jesus said, "Woe be to you, the bad scholars, the example of you is like the sewerage pipe. The external is made of clean plaster and the internal is filled with rotten feces."

86

If you want power that does not go away, do not try to get power [from things] that go away.

The power which does not go away is independence from external causes depending only on the Primary Cause for everything. The reason for this is that Allah is permanent and does not fade [while other than Him fades and goes away]. The power which does not go away comes from clinging to Him. The power which goes away comes from relying on external causes [e.g., bodily strength, wealth, ties with influential people, etc.] while being absent from the Creator of these causes. All external causes are ever-perishing and thus power derived from them is ever-perishing and is not permanent.

The person either has power which is permanent or power which is perishing since these two are mutual exclusives of each other. If you choose permanent power through Allah Most High, no one will be able to abase you.

It is narrated that a man rightly accused the Khalifah Hārūn al-Rashīd of unjust conduct. Harun al-Rashid wanted to punish the man for his public accusation. First, he ordered that the man be tied along with his unruly horse so that the horse may trample over him. The deputies of Harun al-Rashid did as they were commanded but the horse did not hurt the man. Then, Harun al-Rashid ordered that the man be thrown in a house and that the door should be cemented closed. The deputies of Harun al-Rashid did as they were commanded but the man was later seen freely roaming a public garden while the door of the house was still cemented closed. When Harun al-Rashid was informed of this, he asked that the man be brought to him and said to him, 'Who took you out of the house?' The man replied, 'The One Who put me in the garden.' Harun al-Rashid then asked, 'And Who put you in the garden?' The man replied, 'The One Who took me out of the house.' Harun al-Rashid then ordered, 'Give him mount on a horse and travel with him throughout the land announcing that this man is a man that Harun al-Rashid wanted to abase whom Allah has given power to and thus Harun was unable to do it.'

If you try to derive power from external causes, these causes will eventually fail you and lead you to a state in which you are even more in need than you were before trying to obtain strength from these causes.

[...]

A weeping man entered upon a knower of Allah and the knower asked him, "Why are you crying?"

He answered, "Because my [spiritual] teacher died."

The knower of Allah responded, "And why did you make your teacher someone who dies?"

[...]

87

The real miracle folding [of the earth] is that the span of your worldly life is folded up and you see the next life closer to you than your own self.

Folding up the remnant span of one's life is only possible for a person for whom the light of certainty has shined over his heart. In such a case, life on earth vanishes from his sight and disappears from his consideration and he sees the next life already present in front of him. Rather, he sees the next life closer to him than his own self since his own essence is ever-perishing and disappearing in this respect. Whoever's state is thus, it is not possible for him to love the absent perishing present world; rather, he switches his priority to the next world which is present and permanent.

From this, you should understand that desiring the world and preferring it to the hereafter is a result of weakness of certainty. Whoever's heart is not enlightened by the light of certainty, he does not see the Great King [and His Kingdom]. And whoever does not see such loves the world while it amounts to nothing. And whoever loves the world is not worth anything to Allah Mighty and Majestic be He.

Thus the true miracle folding of the earth is what is described in the first paragraph. This vanishing of the physical world from one's sight is a gift that Allah bestows to His friends and with this gift they become true slaves of Him. As for the miracle we hear about when a traveller reaches his destination in a flash (which is also called the folding up of the earth), there is a chance that it is part of Allah's hidden plot leading one to destruction.

[...]

88

Accepting material benefit from people is deprivation and being denied material benefit from Allah is grace.

People giving you material benefit is a deprivation in reality due to your seeing other than Allah in their giving and your being satisfied by obtaining your selfish desires. Conversely, Allah withholding material benefit from you is an act of grace as He has forced you to remain at His door in supplication and relieved you from being veiled by external causes.

We can also say that taking material benefit from people is deprivation since it leads you to love them and become thankful to them and being denied material benefit from Allah is a gift since He is our beloved and everything from our beloved is beloved.

And how beautiful is the statement of the poet:

*I will not wear good clothes if other than You clothe me
And I will not accept the world if other than You give me*

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`Ali ibn Abu Talib said in his inherited statements, "Do not place between you and Allah another bestower of gifts. Count gifts received from other than Him as a n unwanted debt."

Some wise men have said, "Accepting gifts [from people] is harder for you than being patient with nothing."

One scholar said, "The power received from staying away from people's charity is better than the happiness received from enjoying it."

89

Allah is high above that He deal with a slave in cash and reward him only with a promise of credit.

The rewards for actions are not confined to the next life. Many times, Allah rewards His friends while still in this world as a further encouragement for them to strive in performing actions. And these friends of Allah are able to reach a state in which all of their actions are accepted in all situations. This is a tremendous ennoblement and favor from Him Mighty and Majestic be He.

90

It is enough of a reward for your obedience that He chose you to perform the act.

This is an explanation of the reward mentioned in the previous hikma which the friends of Allah receive while still in this world. The reward is that Allah makes them acknowledge His greatness, loftiness, and pride along with which they consider insignificant their own selves and their being fit to be given the responsibility to worship Him. In such a state, He supports them in actions by making them easy and His love captures their hearts while His closeness overcomes them. Consequently, their own selves become low, their existence vanishes, and shame/modesty overcomes them. This is the ultimate reward and gift which can be given to one in this world according to the scholars of Allah, those who are prevented by His present existence from looking at future rewards consisting of other than Him.

91

What He opens up to their hearts and send forth of His intimacy during worship is enough of a reward for the worshipers.

This is another explanation of the reward which Allah ennoble His friends with while they are still in this life. He opens to them divine knowledges and sends over their hearts subtle states through which they can breathe the spirit of His intimacy and enjoy His Sacred Presence. These are signs of the greater pleasure [which the knowers of Allah can experience] along with which all other rewards become like nothing.

[...]

92

Whoever worships Him for gain or to ward off punishment has not fulfilled the rights of His attributes.

Doing actions to gain reward or to ward off punishment from the Master is defective and is not the state of the expert fully-realized spirituals. In order for the slave to fulfill the rights attributed to his Master, he cannot work to gain benefit for himself or to ward off punishment. This is because he is a slave whose Master has all right over him while he does not have any right over his Master. This is a sign of the highest stages of love for Allah since the lover gathers all his efforts to please his beloved. The lover does not have any desires except what his beloved wants. So, the servant should perform acts of obedience for his Lord alone for the sake of His Majesty, Tremendousness, and other praiseworthy attributes which others do not share.

If the person acts against this and works to gain his own selfish shares, he has not fulfilled the rights of the attributes of His Master. This is a result of his own ignorance and heedlessness and a sign that he does not love his Lord nor know Him.

[...]

93

When He gives, He makes you witness His benevolence and when He withholds, He makes you witness His coercion. He is making Himself known to you and approaching you with gentleness in both states.

It is requested from servants that they know who their Master is with His high attributes and beautiful names. They cannot truly learn this about Him except through His actions by which He makes Himself known to them. His actions are the life situations which they find themselves in... Then, know that the life situations that they find themselves in are of two types: (1) that which is in agreement with their desires and disposition, which is called a gift and bestowal and (2) that which is not in agreement with these two things, which is called withholding.

In the state of bestowal, He is making you witness His benevolent attributes such as, open-handedness, generosity, goodwill, gentleness, and affection.

In the state of withholding, He is making you witness His coercive attributes such as, overpowerance, lofty pride, divine dignity, and independence.

Thus, it is fitting O servant that you do not distinguish between the two states if you wish to know your Lord. You will only be able to do this if the love of your selfish desires does not engulf you. When you understand this, His withholding becomes a bestowal in reality. He is in both conditions blessing you with favors and approaching you with gentleness.

[...]

94

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Being denied only causes you pain since you do not understand Allah's reason for withholding.

Since Allah's withholding and giving are both tremendous blessings (as explained above), let the disciple find rest in both of these states. If he feels hurt from being denied and delight in being given to, it is due the lack of his understanding and the short-sightedness of his knowledge.

Rather a more perfect and better state for him is that he feels pain in being given to and pleasure in being withheld from. As Ibrahim al-Khawwas has said, "The path of the disciple is not correct until he acquires two attributes: (1) dependence on Allah Most High and (2) gratefulness to Allah for being deprived of worldly benefit with which others are tried."

And the disciple is not complete until he acts better in front of Allah in being denied than when he is given. And the sign of his truthfulness is that he finds a sweetness in being denied which he does not experience when he is given to. He does not display this to other than his Creator. He does not see other than the King and does not hold other than what He gives him....

95

Perhaps, He opened for you the door of worship but did not open for you the door of acceptance; and perhaps, He decreed for you a sin and it became a reason for your reaching Him.

It is proper for the servant to stop looking at the external forms of things and look at their internal realities instead. The external forms of obedience do not necessarily indicate their acceptance - as they could be filled with diseases of the heart, such as insincerity. Insincerity prevents an act of worship from being accepted.

Similarly, external forms of disobedience do not necessarily indicate that the person is far or ousted from the Divine closeness. Rather, these acts of disobedience of the servant may be a reason for his reaching his Lord and entering His presence. This is why it is said, "Perhaps an act of disobedience enters a person into Paradise." And this meaning is found in the hadith of Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be well pleased with Him) that the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "I swear by the one in Whose Hands is my life that if you were not to commit acts of disobedience, Allah would have gone away with you and brought people who commit acts of disobedience and then ask Allah for forgiveness so that He may forgive them." The explanation of this hadith is that it often happens that the person who obeys Allah becomes conceited, admires the fact that he is obeying, depends on the act, and becomes arrogant because of it looking down on those who do not perform it. On the other hand, the person who disobeys often seeks shelter with Allah feeling in need, apologizes to Him, considers himself small looking up to those who do not perform it.

Abu Hazim said, "Sometimes the servant does an act of obedience which please him when performing it while Allah has not created for him a more harmful bad deed. And sometimes the servant does an act of disobedience which saddens him when performing it while Allah has not created for him a more beneficial good deed." The meaning of this is that if the person performing a good deed feels conceit or arrogance, Allah may

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nullify this good deed along with many of his other good deeds [as has come in some narrations of previous peoples]. Likewise if the person feels sad when performing a bad deed, Allah may place in his heart a trembling fear which will last until He meets Allah Most High while the fear is still alive in his heart [and as a result Allah forgives him as has come in some hadith].

96

Disobedience followed by feeling low and in need is better than obedience followed by pride and arrogance.

Feeling low and in need is among the characteristics of slavehood. Pride and arrogance conflict with these characteristics and are the attributes of Lordship. There is no good in an act of worship which is accompanied by something which conflicts with slavehood - since it will nullify its reward. Similarly, there is no blame on an act of disobedience which is accompanied by the attributes of slavehood - since they will nullify its punishment.

Abu Mafyan said, "The broken-heartedness of the disobedient is better than the bold-heartedness of the obedient."

[...]

97

Two blessings are necessarily universal for all created things: (1) the blessing of being first created and (2) the blessing of continuous subsistence.

The blessing of being created and the blessing of being kept existent are two intrinsic blessings shared by all created things as by default all things are non-existent and fading into nothingness. So, the blessing of creation removes the previous non-existent state - else things would still be non-existent. And the blessing of being kept existent removes the subsequent non-existent state - else things would perish and fade away.

Abu Madyan said, "The Truth Most High is totally independent. The creation are given support. The support is from the spring of the Existent. If the support were cut off, all creation would perish."

What the author mentions here is a preparation for explaining that the servant is intrinsically in need.

98

He blessed you first by creating you and then by continuously keeping you existent.

This is one part of the whole principle given before this. Your existence and your continual subsistence is actively carried out [by Allah]. One should not become heedless of this fact. Similar to this is the existence of faith and love of obedience in your heart which He produces and keeps there like the dislike of disbelief and disobedience. These are all blessings from Allah which one cannot earn or obtain oneself.

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If Allah did not bless you with these two blessings, you would have wandered in darkness, got lost, and have become drowned in the sea of ignorance.

[...]

99

Need is your intrinsic attribute and external causes only remind you of such. Intrinsic need does not go away by incidental causes.

When it has been established that the two blessings of being created and being continually kept subsistent always stick to you and you are intrinsically non-existent, then it is known that your being in need is intrinsic to you. Thus, intrinsically-speaking, you are always in extreme need even if you appear to be independent due to the two aforementioned blessings. These two blessings are only contingent and not intrinsic for you. And intrinsic attributes are not effaced by contingent ones.

Allah only sends you external causes which threaten your existence or subsistence to remind you of your hidden intrinsic need. This allows you to stay within your rank and discharge the rights of slavehood so that you do not transgress your limits.

One scholar said, "Pharaoh was only able to say 'I am your most high lord.' [al-Qur'an 79:24] due to the length of painless relief in wealth he was afforded for four hundred years. During this time, he did not get even a single headache, fever, nor muscle/vein sprain/pain. If he had been afflicted with a migraine for an hour or lack of energy every day, that would have busied him away from claiming lordship."

The author said in his book *Lata'if al-Minan*. Feeling in extreme need is in conformity with the reality of the slave - since the slave is contingent and all contingent things are intrinsically in need of Someone to support them. Just like the Truth Most High is independent forever and for always, the slave is in extreme need forever and for always. And the slave cannot even leave this intrinsic state of need, not in the world not in the hereafter. Even after entering Paradise, the slave will be in need of Allah Most High - except for the fact that Allah will immerse his need in blessings which will cover him. And this is how higher realities are treated - in that they do not experience change either in the visible world nor invisible world in either this world or the hereafter.

Thus knowledge has the quality of removing the veil and volition has the quality of specifying a particular choice. Whoever's spiritual light becomes expansive, his feeling of extreme need never goes away. And Allah has blamed people in the Qur'an who only feel extreme need of Him when external causes [of fear] are present. And when these external causes go away, their feeling of extreme need also goes away. He Glorified be He has said, "And when bad befalls you in the sea all those you call on fail you besides Him and when He saves you and brings you to land you turn away [from Him] and indeed human is an ingrate." [al-Qur'an 17:67] and "When pain touches man, he calls on us while lying on his side, sitting, or standing, but when We make the pain go away, he walks past [ungratefully] as if he did not call upon us to lift the pain before and thus are their actions made to appear pleasing to those who are wasteful." [al-Qur'an 10:12] and "Say who saves you from the darkness of the land and sea calling upon us humbly and in fear: if You save us from this, indeed

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we will be thankful. Say Allah saves you from this and from all distresses but then you ascribe [this rescue] to something else [besides Him]." [al-Qur'an 6:63-64]. And there are many more such ayahs which have come in this meaning.

And since the common man is too dense to grasp these unchanging higher realities, Allah puts over them external causes which bring them into a state of feeling extreme need so that they may recognize the overpowering might of Lordship and His Tremendousness³.

100

The best of your times is the time in which you see your poverty and are pushed back to your humility.

Feeling in need is the best of your times due to your presence with Your Lord at these times and your cutting off hopes for intermediaries and external causes which distance you and veil you. And in consideration of this, times of need are the best of your times and are your celebration and holiday days as the author will mention in hikma #174.

It is narrated that `Ata' al-Salami did not have food to eat for seven days and was not able to do anything out of the ensuing weakness and he became extremely happy because of this and said: O Lord if you do not feed me for three more days, I will consecrate to you one thousand units."

Fath al-Musili returned to his house one day but did not find any food, any oil to light the lamp, nor any firewood and he started praising Allah Most High and feeling humble in front of Him saying: What was the external cause by which I deserved this great treatment with which you treat Your friends in the world?"

Bishr al-Hafi said, "It reached me that the daughter of Fath al-Musili had insufficient clothing [to go out in public] and it was said to him, 'Are you not searching for someone to clothe her?' And he replied, 'I will not clothe her until Allah sees her insufficiency in clothing and my patience about such.' And then when it was the nights of winter, he gathered his family and tried to clothe them properly and then said, 'O Allah what was the external cause of this blessing which you only give to Your close friends and loved ones in the world. Am I among them so that I may know and be happy about it?' "

Fudayl ibn `Iyad was crying one cold night and said: O my Lord you have made me hungry and made my family hungry. You have gave me insufficient clothing and gave my family insufficient clothing. You have made me sit and made my family sit in a house without a lamp and You used to do this a long time ago with Your friends and those who obey You. What did I do to this deserve this great blessing so that I may keep doing it to keep gaining this blessing?

It was said to Rabi` ibn Khaytham that the price of food had become high and he replied, "We are not that important to Allah such that He make us starve. He only makes His friends starve."

³ This point here is the reason for the dauntingly huge trials and tribulations which will befall the believers near the end of the world as without these large trials (such as the Great Deceiver), the common believer does not take care to give enough attention to His Lord and Master without Whom he cannot even exist. These trials are the external causes which will remind the neglectful believers of what their primary concern should be.

101

When He makes you feel you do not fit in with people, know that He wants to open for you the door of intimacy with Him.

The opening of the door of intimacy with Allah is by becoming estranged from people. And for this reason, it is said: becoming cozy with people is a sign of spiritual bankruptcy. When He opens for you this door, you feel estranged from everything other than Him and become realized in being intimate with Him. And the meaning of feeling estranged is that your heart is repulsed by them and you withdraw with your secret away from them. And nothing of these things are significant to you in your heart and are not satisfied by obtaining them.

An example of this is that Abu Yazid al Bustami was given the ability to experience all sort of metaphysical wonders and was then asked, 'Did you like any of it?' And he replied, 'I didn't see anything that I liked.' Then, it was said to him, 'Indeed, you are the servant of Allah in truth.' " So when the servant is in this state, he has become realized in intimacy with Allah and stable in His Holy Presence. ...

102

When He causes your tongue to supplicate, know that He wants to give you.

Supplication happens when the knot of silence is undone. Silence from supplication is a sign that the person considers himself independent with external causes and not in need. So when this knot is undone by the person recognizing his need, his tongue becomes free to supplicate and he does while feeling extreme need and thus is answered. Allah has promised in the Qur'an [27:62] to answer those who express extreme need and Allah does not break promises.

The Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said in the hadith of `Abdullah ibn `Umar, "Whoever is given permission to supplicate, the doors of Mercy are opened for him. And Allah does not like to be asked any thing more than He likes to be asked for forgiveness and relief in this world and the next."⁴

The Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) also said, "Whoever is given supplication is not deprived from an answer."

Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Khaffaf said, "How can he not be answered when He loves his voice. If it weren't so, He would not have opened up the door of supplication for him."

The Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said in the hadith of Anas ibn Malik "When Allah loves a servant, He pours over him tough trials making them flow [successively] and when the servant calls upon Him [for relief] the angels say, 'It is a familiar voice' and Jibra'il says, 'O Lord, your servant so-and-so is calling on You, so please answer him.' And Allah replies, 'Leave My servant as he is since I

⁴ Many similar hadith are found in the common collections.

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like to hear his voice.' So, when the servant says, 'O My Lord', Allah replies, 'Yes. I am here My servant. You will not call on me to relieve a trial except that I relieve it. And you will not ask me for anything except that I will give it to you. Either I will give it to you right away - or I will store up for you something better [in the hereafter] or I will turn away from you a trial which is greater than it in value.' "

103

The knower of Allah always feels extreme need [for Him] and he finds no rest in other than Him.

The knowledge of the knowers of Allah first comprises the knowledge of their ownelves - in that they are poor and in need of the Mighty Compeller. And according to the level of which they know themselves, they are able to know their Lord. For this reason, the knower of Allah never is free from feeling extreme need. In explaining Allah's statement "And who answers the one who calls in extreme need?" [al-Qur'an 27:62], Abul `Abbas al-Mursi said, "The friend of Allah never ceases to feel in extreme need."

The teacher Taj al-Din ibn `Ata'illah (May Allah sanctify his secret) said in summarizing the previous statement of his teacher (i.e. Abul `Abbas al-Mursi), "The common people are only brought into extreme need by negative external causes. And when these causes go away, their feeling of extreme need goes away. And the reason for this is that sensory illusion has engulfed what they witness. If they had witnessed Allah's all-encompassing grasp [of the heavens and the earth], they would have known that their extreme need for Allah is permanent and never goes away."

And the knower of Allah does not find rest in other than Him since he is estranged and his heart feels distaste from everything besides Him as mentioned before. And it is as if the author intended to teach you with the previous passages concerning not fitting in with people and supplicating to Allah with one's tongue two attribute of the attributes of the knowers of Allah.

104

He has illuminated the exteriors with the light of His actions and illuminated the interiors with the light of His attributes. For this reason, the external lights fade and set while the lights of the hearts and innermost beings do not set. It is said: *The sun of the daylight sets at night but the sun of the hearts does not go away.*

The lights of the exteriors are the things perceived by the physical senses and the movements of the person's body. And the lights of the interiors are the divine knowledges, subtle spiritual sensations, and understandings that the internal of the servant experiences. Thus, the external lights are connected with the time-bound physical actions of Allah and these are the spiritual meanings and subtleties contained within the physical forms. And the internal lights are connected with the timeless attributes of Allah. It is due the

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difference of the two realms concerning their time-bound and timeless nature, their dependence and independence, their perishing and permanent nature that the author mentions that the lights of the exteriors fade away and the lights of the interiors remain.

Then, the author quoted a famous verse of poetry whose meaning is clear and the preceding verse is:

*The shining sun of he who loves [His Lord] rises in the night
And gives light and as such it never sets.*

[...]

105

Let the fact that He is trying you soften the pain of trials. The One from Whom the trials have come is the same as the One Who wants the best for you.

When the servant knows that Allah acts mercifully and wants to befriend him while gazing at him, he should not pay attention to all the apparently painful trials that He sends. As such trials do not lead to anything but good [in the end]. So, let the servant think the best of his Lord and be content that these trials are what Allah has chosen for him. And let him have certainty that in these trials are various hidden benefits which Allah only knows. As Allah Most High has said: And perhaps you dislike a thing but it is better for you. [{al-Qur'an 2:216}]

Abu Talib al-Makki said in explaining this aforementioned verse of the Qur'an, "The servant dislikes being wanton and in need, being unknown by people, and physical or emotional pain while these things are better for him in regard to the next life. And he likes being wealthy, being free of pain, and being popular but these things are worse for him in Allah's sight and lead to bad consequences in the next life."

And also in this meaning is Allah's statement, "And He has showered on you blessings both apparent and hidden." The scholars state that the apparent blessings are the pleasurable favors and the hidden blessings are the painful trials. And with this in view, one can see that everything that befalls the believer is a blessing. And to Allah belongs the praise for His blessings.

[...]

106

Whoever thinks that His gentleness is separate from His destiny is only shortsighted.

Not seeing Allah's gentleness in His decrees is a sign of weakness of certainty and lack of thinking the best of the Wise Decree. If the servants sight were perfected and became stronger, he would have seen in each decree so many benefits that they could not be counted. And there would still be even more benefits which he

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could not see. And with such in view, one can understand the statement of a good person and knower of Allah who said, "I became sick once and wished that the sickness would not go away."

`Imran ibn Husayn had edema⁵ and had to lie flat on his back for thirty years unable to stand up or sit down. They had bored a hole on his suspended wood fiber bed on which he lay for his feces and urine to drop. In this condition Mutarrif and his brother al-`Ala' ibn Shakhīr came to visit him and Mutarrif began to cry after seeing his state. `Imran ibn Husayn asked, 'Why do you cry?' Mutarrif answered, 'Because I see you in this tremendous condition.' `Imran ibn Husayn answered, 'Don't cry for I love what Allah has made beloved to me.' And then he said, 'I'm going to tell you something, Mutarrif, that perhaps it may benefit you; but, don't tell any one else until I die: Indeed the angels visit me and I befriend them and they give their salam to me until hear it.'

[...]

107

It is not feared for you that the Path becomes confusing. It is feared for you that your whims overtake you.

The Path to Allah is clear and lighted as the Truth Most High Himself has taken responsibility for it. And for it, He sent down the divine books and dispatched the messengers. Additionally, He has put up many signs and proofs for its existence and how to travel it. Thus, it is not feared for the servant that he is unable to find the Path; rather, it is feared for him that his whims and desires overtake him until they blind him away from his Lord.

Ahmad ibn al-Khadrawiyy al-Balkhi said, "The Path is in clear view. The truth is illuminated. And the caller to it is heard. So there is no chance to become confused about it except from blindness."

108

Glory be to the One Who has hidden the secret of being special with the cover of coarse humanness and has become manifest with His tremendous lordship by obligating slavehood.

The secret of being special is the realization of the knowledge of Allah which the friends of Allah have alone attained. Along with this secret, existence and form do not remain. And Allah gives this secret to them after they have become prepared and ready for it. And it is among the subtle wisdom of Allah that He then covers up this secret by making apparent their coarse humanness which makes it appear that others exist and have form.

⁵ Edema is a serious disease in which the internal organs become oversized due to excessive fluid build up such that the person can no longer make normal body movements without pain.

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If Allah did not cover up this secret with outward physical forms, then the secret of Allah would be wasted out in the open unprotected. And this is what the author says in his book *Lata'if al-Minan* : The sun must necessarily have some clouds in front of it [to provide shade from its blinding light] and the beautiful woman must have a veil in front of her face [to shield the beauty from undeserving eyes].

And the way Allah makes apparent on His friends their coarse humanness is by making them described by need and other attributes which creation have [e.g., falling ill]. And this need is the reality of being a slave who needs a Lord and worships Him. Thus, Allah's Tremendous lordship becomes apparent to us from behind the veil of slavehood. And if slavehood did not exist, then His lordship would be hidden and not seen.

In this meaning Abul Hasan al-Shadhili said, "Slavehood is a gem which lordship has brought forward. So, glory be to the Subtle and Aware Who is able to do all things."

And the words *glory be to the One* are very proper in meaning for the author to have mentioned here.

109

Do not complain to your Lord about a delay in answering your requests. Rather, blame yourself for side-stepping proper manners.

When you call upon your Lord with a request and do not see an answer, think the best of Him. Do try to accuse Him of not fulfilling His promise as He does whatever He wishes. He is not questioned about what He does. Rather, search out your own self and its shortcomings in its manners [with Him] as it is more proper to be blamed.

Your lower self can display bad manners in several ways. One way is you supplicate so that you may be answered and in this you assign for yourself an objective [other than Allah] and this infringes on the perfection of your slavehood. And this meaning is also found in hikma 166 where the author states "Do not suppose your supplication will cause Him to give lest your understanding suffer. Rather, supplicate to Him to show your slavehood and to fulfill the rights of His lordship."

Another way is that you assume that you have not been answered as it apparently seems that you did not receive your request. However, it is not among the preconditions of being answered that you clearly see the answer. Rather, Allah can hide the answer from your sight for the internal benefits you receive in such a state. Answering is His affair and He can answer in any way He wants regardless of whether you notice the answer or not. And this meaning has already been mentioned in hikma 6 "Don't let the keeping back of something you are fervently asking for make you despair. He has guaranteed an answer to your prayers in those things He chooses for you, not in those things that you choose for yourself, and at the time He wants, not at the time you want."

And third way is the worst in that you oppose your Lord in His decree and command and accuse Him of not answering when you see a delay in the response.

And then the author mentions the state in which the servant is within proper manners while obtaining the ultimate of objectives:

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110

When He makes you follow His command externally and gives you complete surrender to Him internally, He has given you a tremendous blessing.

These two affairs that the author mentions are obligatory for you to establish your slavehood to your Lord (and not other than Him). When Allah makes these two things easy for you and makes you guard the rules for these two affairs, He has given you a tremendous blessing. So what do you wish for and desire after that if you are true slave to Him?

Abul Hasan al-Shadhili said, "I kept the company of a brother in din in the wilderness until we broke off from people and started living in a cave hoping that Allah would open for us the spiritual blessings which He opens for His friends (*awliya*). We stayed there in the cave saying to each other that perhaps this Friday Allah will make us among His special friends or perhaps this month. But, Allah did not open any spiritual doors for us. We were in this state when an old man showed up at the door of the cave asking us permission to enter. We granted him permission and he entered giving his greeting of salam. We asked him, 'Who are you?' And he replied, 'I am a slave of the King.' And with this we knew that he was among the special close friends of Allah and we asked him, 'How is your state?' And he instead asked us repeatedly as if blaming us, 'How is your state?' And then he said, 'How is the state of him who says to himself that perhaps this Friday I will become a special friend of Allah or perhaps this month? There will be no special divine friendship (for such a person), nor any prosperity, nor good things in this world, and nor good things in the next world. Will you two not just worship Allah in sincerity for His sake as He has ordered you? He has said: I have not created the jinn nor man except to worship Me. [{al-Qur'an 51:56}].' He then left us and we recognized our mistake and realized that Allah sent him to us as mercy. I then returned to my self in blame and said to it, 'O my self, who are you, what is your great action, and what is your worth? You amount to nothing. Then, we made repentance and asked for forgiveness from Allah Most High. Afterwards, Allah opened for us the door (which we were seeking) due to His generosity and bounty."

111

Not everyone whose specialness is proven has finished His training.

Specialness here us that the Truth Most High makes apparent on some of His servants traces of His care and gentle handling of his affairs [through divinely-sent gifts]. Among the people are those who keep receiving these gifts until they reach full knowledge of Allah in which they are free from seeing others and the created universe and these are the very elect of the Those Brought Near, those who have knowledge of Allah and love for Him. Others who receive these divinely-sent gifts are kept back from reaching the peak of perfection and instead are given in according to their state plentiful knowledge and righteous actions. This latter group consists of the general body of Those Brought Near and the elect of the People of the Right Hand. These are the constant worshippers, those abstinent, those who engage in physical struggles, and those who are constantly

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reciting verbal dhikr. Even if this latter group shares in the divine gifts which Allah gives the group first mentioned (e.g., constancy in establishing worship), they still have not become free from seeing themselves and have not given up their desire for selfish portions [even if these portions be spiritual]. Rather, this latter group finds rest in external causes and are tied down by the presence of the veil. Nevertheless, the Truth Most High chooses this latter group manifesting miracles at their hands to make their lowerselves be at peace and to fortify the certainty of faith in their hearts. Contrarily, He withholds from the first group such miracles since they are free of need of them as they are already firmly-rooted in certainty and spiritual strength being well-established [in the vision of His Entity].

This meaning is mentioned by the author of the book *`Awarif al-Ma`arif* when he says, "Sometimes a person to whom the meanings of divine destiny are not revealed is better than the person to whom they are revealed. This would happen if Allah turns away true knowledge of Him via these gifts. As for the people who are already close to Allah, they do not find strange any effects of His power and do not consider big anything which they see as a result of His attribute of power. Rather, they see His power being manifest from behind the curtain of the external causes of the physical world."

[...]

112

No one looks down on worship except the ignorant. The spiritual fruits of worship are found [forever] in the next life while worship itself ceases with the end of this world. And it is more befitting to concern oneself with the opportunity which will cease to exist. He seeks from you worship and you seek from Him spiritual fruits. What is the rank of what you seek compared to what He seeks?

Worship is the external and internal acts which have reward associated with them according to Shari`ah. And spiritual fruits are the internal subtle feeling and lights which come over the servant by which his breast is expanded and his heart and innermost being is enlightened. Worship is from the servant to the Truth and spiritual fruits are from the Truth Most High to the servant.

Worship is more worthy of concern from the servant than spiritual fruits for two reasons. The first reason is that worship is specific to this temporal world and will not exist after the world is over and has vanished. Thus, it is befitting for the servant to do much worship (e.g., engaging in regular physical or verbal awrād) before the opportunity to perform worship passes him by. The second reason is that worship is a right you owe to the Truth Most High and spiritual fruits are your selfish portions which you desire to gain from Him. And it is more befitting that you stand to discharge His rights by performing worship than that you seek your selfish portions and keep your ambition confined to them.

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Now that it is established that worship is has a merit over spiritual fruits as far as the servant is concerned, then it is known that considering worship insignificant is the epitome of ignorance. Additionally, the author stated in *Lata'if al-Minan*, “Know that Allah has placed (different) metaphysical lights in the various acts types of worship. So whoever misses out on a type of worship will be deprived of the metaphysical light associated with that act. So, do not miss out on any type of worship and do not consider yourselves free of need of engaging in regular external and internal acts of worship. And do not be content with what those with false claims are content with such that higher realities flow from their tongues but the associated spiritual lights are absent from their hearts. The Truth Most High has connected worship with knocking on the doors of the unseen. So, whoever stands up for worship with the proper internal manners, the unseen is not veiled from him. The veil of the unseen is only due to the internal and external faults of the servant. Your cleansing yourself from these external and internal faults will open for you the door of the unseen. Do not be among those who seek Allah to obtain their own selfish shares and do not take their own selves to tough account for Allah. The latter is the state of the ignorant who have not understood directly from Allah nor has divine help come to them. ...”

[...]

113

Sent divine support is in accord with your level of preparedness and spiritual illuminations are in accord with the purity of your innermost being.

Spiritual divine support sent to the heart of the servant is in accordance with the strength of his preparedness which has become ingrained in him. And the appearance of the lights of certainty is in accordance with the purity of the soul of the servant from the turbidity of being attached to sensory phenomena and finding rest in other than Allah.

114

When the heedless wakes up [in the morning], he sees to what he shall do and when the intelligent wakes up, he sees to what Allah will do with him.

The first thought which occurs to a person is a good measure of the level of his unification of Allah. So when a heedless person wakes up, the first thought which occurs to him has to do with ascribing an action to himself. Thus, he says, “What shall I do today?” Consequently, he is busied by his own planning away from looking towards His Master. All this is due to his heedlessness away from Allah and thus he deserves to be left to fend for himself scattering his mental energy while still being unable to obtain his goals. As for the intelligent person, the first thought which occurs to him has to do with ascribing an action to Allah. Thus, he says, “What shall Allah do with me?” Consequently, he is looking towards Allah Most High and what He will send to him. All this is due to his intelligence and constant vigilance and thus Allah will be sufficient for him in

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fulfilling his hopes and freeing him of all occupations. He will also make him content and make his eyes find rest in the good actions and states which He will establish him in. This is a great sign of felicity and a blessing from Allah Most High which He gives to his special friends.

[...]

115

Perpetual worshippers and those externally abstinent are only estranged by everything [in this world] due to their absence from Allah in everything. If they saw Him in everything, they would not be estranged by anything.

External worshippers and those externally abstinent are veiled away from their Lord due to their regarding themselves as existent and caring for their selfish portions. Thus, they flee from things and feel strange with them since they see their lowerselves in these other things. ...

Abul Hasan as-Shadhili (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "You have exalted a thing when you have claimed to have abstinence in it."

Thus, the external worshippers and those abstinent fear that the things of the world will prevent them from their objectives and make them miss their desires by turning their attention towards them and being tempted by them. If they were of the people knowledge and love of Allah, they would have seen Him apparent in all things and their eyes would find rest by gazing upon Him busying themselves away from their own selves. Thus, they would not be estranged by anything nor fear temptation from them. This is because they see these things as perishing and not amounting to anything in this perspective.

116

He has ordered you in this world to regard creation and He will unveil to you in the next world the perfection of His Entity.

The level of vision a servant has of His Lord is according to the amount Allah makes Himself manifest to him. Thus, the servants in this world see Him apparent in created form with their insights from what their hearts see of Him behind the veil. For this reason, Allah has commanded them to view creation in this world and in the next world they will see Him with the light of their eyes without any veil. And there is no preventive factor which precludes this level of manifestation and unveiling (in the next world).

117

He knew that you would not be able to practice patience concerning [seeing] Him. So, He, made you witness [in this world] what is apparent of Him.

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Not being patient concerning Allah comes from experiencing the joys of knowledge of Him and is a high state. This state points to the fact that the servant is constantly joined in heart with Allah. And this special type of heart-joining eventually leads to soul vision of Allah and entering His presence. As for viewing Allah, literally speaking, it is not possible in this world due to the world's lowliness, defects, and its perishing nature. Thus, Allah honors his servant in this world by making Him witness His actions to console Him for impatiently wanting to see Him without any veil. Thus, the servant is distinguished by this special type heart-joining and soul vision until Allah makes him enter Paradise as a true resting place. ... In Paradise the servant will be with Allah viewing Him for ever and that is not hard for Allah.

118

As the Truth knew that you would get bored, He made worship of multifarious color. And as He knew about your worship binges, He prevented you from it at certain times - so that your concern would be to establish prayer and not just prayer. Not every person praying has established prayer.

Making worship seem enjoyable (by coloring it with positive emotions) during fatigue and barring one from it when one is greedy for it are two tremendous blessings.

119

The formal prayer purifies the heart from the dirt of misdeeds and opens the door to the unseen.

120

The formal prayer is a place for intimate conversation [with Allah], for intense purification, for the widening of the fields of the innermost beings, and for the shining of bright lights. He knew your weakness; so, He decreased their number. But, He also knew your need for them; so, He increased their spiritual worth.

121

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When you request a compensation for your action, you are asked to prove that you are true in it. And it is enough for a person to remain safe [from punishment without any reward].

122

Do not ask to be rewarded for an action which you do not create. Is it not enough of a reward for your action that He accept it?

123

When He wants to display His bounty on you, He creates and ascribes to you.

124

There is no end to your blame if He leaves you to yourself and there is no end to your praise if He displays His generosity on you.

125

Cling to the attributes of His lordship and become realized in the attributes of your slavehood.

126

He has forbid you from claiming that which is not yours of what people own. Would He then allow you to lay claim to His attributes [which He owns] while He is the Lord of the worlds?

127

How shall normal laws break for you when you have not broken from yourself your habits?

128

The [best] state is not in your requesting [Him]. The [best] state is that you be given excellent manners.

129

He has not requested from you anything like your feeling a hard pressed need. And there is no quicker way to get divine gifts than feeling low and in need.

130

If you were not to reach Him until after all your bad traits vanish and your claims disappear, you would never reach Him. Rather when He wants you to reach Him, He covers your traits with His traits and makes you reach Him with that which is from Him to you and not that which is from you to Him.

131

Were it not for His beautiful covering no action of yours would be fit for acceptance.

132

You need His forbearance more when you obey Him than when you disobey Him.

134

Divine covering is of two types: (1) a cover from disobedience and (2) a cover in disobedience. The common people ask Allah Most High for the latter fearing that their rank in the eyes of people may fall. The elect ask Allah for the former fearing that their rank in the eyes of the King and the Truth may fall.

Ibn `Abbad's Sharh al-Hikam al-`Ata'iyah - And Useful Appendices

135

The One Who accompanies you does so knowing your faults full-well. This is none other than your Master, the Generous. The best companion is He Who seeks you and not to get something from you.

136

If the light of certainty shone for you, you would see the next life so close that you need not travel to it. And you would see the beautiful things of the world being shattered by their inevitable end.

137

You are not veiled from Allah with anything existent. Rather, you are veiled from Him by imagining that something is existent along with Him.

138

If He were not apparent in the physical world, eyesight would not have grasped it. If His attributes were to become manifest, the physical world would vanish.

139

He has made apparent everything since He is the Hidden. And He has folded up the existence of everything since He is the Apparent.

140

He has permitted you to view what is in the physical world; but, He has not allowed you to stop with their physical structure. "Say: Look at what is *in* the heavens" [al-Qur'an 10:101] May He open for you the door of understanding. He did not say "Look at the heavens" lest He point you to the existence of physical bodies.

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141

The physical world is affirmed through His affirmation and wiped out in relation to the Oneness of His Entity.

142

People praise you for what they think is in you. So, blame yourself for what you know is in you.

143

When the believer is praised, he becomes shy in front of Allah that he be praised for something he does not see in himself.

144

The most ignorant of people is he who leaves what he knows for certain in exchange for what people only guess about.

145

If you are praised for what you are not worthy, praise Allah for what He is worthy.

146

When the externally abstinent are praised, they enter sad contraction as they see the praise as coming from people. When the knowers of Allah are praised, they enter happy expansion as they see the praise coming from the King and the Truth.

147

If when given to, you enter happy expansion and when withheld from, you enter sad contraction, consider this a proof for your parasitic nature and lack of truthfulness in your slavehood.

Ibn `Abbad's Sharh al-Hikam al-`Ata'iyah - And Useful Appendices

148

When you fall into a misdeed, do not despair of attaining continuous obedience with your Lord. It may be the last misdeed decreed for you.

149

When you want Him to open for you the door of hope, look towards what He has sent you. When you want Him to open for you the door of fear, look towards what you have sent him.

150

Many a time you gain benefits in a night of sad contraction which you do not gain in the bright day of happy expansion "You do not know which one of them is more beneficial to you". [al-Qur'an 4:11]

151

The domain of spiritual lights are the hearts and the innermost beings.

152

Light placed in the heart comes from the treasures of light from the unseen world.

153

Some light unveils for you His actions. Other light unveils for you His attributes.

154

Perhaps the hearts can prematurely stop with spiritual lights like the lower-selves are veiled by the coarse physical world [both, are other than Him].

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155

He has hidden the lights of the innermost beings with the coarse human exteriors so that they would not lose their value by being made plain and by being popularly mentioned.

156

Glory be to Him Who does not guide to His friends except whom He wills. And He does not make any one reach His friends except he whom He wishes to make reach Him.

157

Perhaps, He let you see the unseen metaphysical world but veiled you from seeing the secrets of His servants.

158

Whoever sees the secrets of the servants and does not try to imitate divine mercy, his seeing such is a trial for him and a reason for misfortune to befall him.

159

The portion of the lower self in acts of disobedience is plain and known while its portion in acts of worship is hidden and secret. And treating a hidden [disease] is difficult.

160

Perhaps showing off in good works has entered upon you from where people do not see you.

161

Ibn `Abbad's Sharh al-Hikam al-`Ata'iyah - And Useful Appendices

Your wanting people to know your specialness is a proof for your lack of truthfulness in your slavehood.

162

Vanish from sight the eyes of people on you with the eye of Allah on you. And be absent from their coming towards you by seeing Allah approaching you.

163

Whoever knows the Truth witnesses Him in everything. Whoever is annihilated in Him is absent from everything. And whoever loves Him does not prefer anything over Him.

164

The Truth is only veiled from you due to His being extremely close.

165

He is only veiled [from you] due to His being too obvious and He is hidden from physical sight due to the tremendous light [of His Entity].

166

Do not suppose your supplication will cause Him to give lest your understanding suffer. Rather, supplicate to Him to show your slavehood and to fulfill the rights of His lordship.

167

How can your later supplication be a cause for His predestined giving?

168

A Detailed Guide for the Path to Allah

A pre-eternal command is high above needing an external cause.

169

His special concern for you is not due to anything you have done. Where were you when His special concern and care took charge of you? There was no sincerity in actions in His pre-eternity nor the presence of spiritual states. At that time, there was only mere benevolence and great gifts

170

He knew that His slaves would want to know whom His special concern is for. So, He said, "He chooses for His mercy whom He wills" [al-Qur'an 2:105]. But, He knew if He left them at that they would leave performing actions depending only on the pre-eternal command. So, He said, "Indeed the mercy of Allah is closer to those who act excellently." [al-Qur'an 7:56]

171

On His volition depends everything and His volition depends on nothing.

172

Sometimes manners dictate for them to leave supplication relying on His pre-decided division and due to them being busy with His remembrance.

173

Only he who can forget is reminded and only he who can neglect is told to be attentive.

174

Times of need are the celebration days of the disciple.

175

Perhaps, you gain benefits in times of need which you do not gain in fasting and prayer.

176

Having [hard pressed] needs is the domain for divine gifts.

177

If you want divine gifts, rectify your feeling of need. "Charity is only for the poor". [al-Qur'an 9:60]

178

Become realized in your attributes and He will strengthen you with His: Realize your humility and He will strengthen you with His pride. Realize your incapability and He will strengthen you with His ability. Realize your weakness and He will strengthen you with His power.

179

Perhaps a person who has not obtained constant rectitude [in beliefs, actions, and states] may be given miracles.

180

The sign that the Truth has established you in a state is that it is always present and you are able to reap its fruits.

181

Whoever instructs gaining strength from his good deeds is silenced by bad deeds. Whoever instructs gaining strength from Allah's goodness is not silenced by misdeeds.

182

The spiritual lights of the wise men travel faster than their words. Wherever the light falls, there understanding is reached.

183

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Every statement spoken has a covering describing the heart of the one uttering.

184

Whoever has permission to instruct, his explanations are understood by the ears of people and his allusions appear to them lofty.

185

Perhaps spoken higher realities appear with a loss of light if you do not have permission to express them.

186

Their explanations are from sudden overflowing states or for guiding a disciple. The former happens to the beginners and the later is for the well-established and realized.

187

Spiritual instruction is nourishment for the listeners. And you will not get except that which you [are ready] to imbibe.

188

Sometimes the beginner describes a station of which he only has had a small taste and sometimes the advanced describes it after having in it realization. And only the one with insight can distinguish.

189

The traveler should not speak about his spiritual experiences since that will decrease their effect on his heart and detract from his truthfulness with His Lord in them.

190

Ibn `Abbad's Sharh al-Hikam al-`Ata'iyah - And Useful Appendices

Do not stretch your hand to take something from people unless you see that the Giver through them is your Master. And in such a state, take what is in agreement with [external] knowledge.

191

The knower of Allah often is shy from asking his Master to relieve His need sufficing himself with His will. So, why would he not be shy from asking His creation for his needs.

192

When you are confused about two matters, follow the one harder for the lower self. For only the rightful duty seems hard for it.

193

Among the signs of following one's desires is speeding towards mandub acts of worship while being lazy about wajib acts of worship.

194

He tied down wajib acts to specific times so that you would not be deprived [of their reward] from procrastination. And He expanded your free time so that some choice [in performing actions] would remain for you.

195

He knew that [most of]His slaves are not self-motivated in seeking Him; so, He obligated for them obedience to Him. He pushed them towards Him with the chains of obligation. Your Lord is amused by a people who are pushed to Paradise in chains.

196

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He has obligated you to serve Him but in doing so He has only obligated you to enter His Paradise.

197

Whoever finds it impossible that Allah will save Him from his lusts and take him out of his heedlessness has declared divine power impotent. "And Allah is able over all things" [al-Qur'an 18:45]

198

Perhaps He engulfed you in darkness [after being in light] so that you recognize the tremendous blessing He has given you.

199

Whoever does not recognize blessings in their presence is reminded of them in their absence.

200

Do not let showers of blessings stun you away from being thankful for them as that will lower your rank.

201

Lust engrained in the heart is a disease hard to cure.

202

Lusts are not driven from the heart except by terrifying fear or restless longing.

Ibn `Abbad's Sharh al-Hikam al-`Ata'iyah - And Useful Appendices

203

Just like He does not like an action done for others along with Him, He does not like a heart with others in it along with Him. The insincere action, He does not accept. The insincere heart, He does not approach.

204

Some light is granted permission to reach and some light is granted permission to enter.

205

Sometimes spiritual light descends but finds the heart filled with images of physical things and thus goes back to where it came.

206

Empty your heart of others and He will fill it with divine knowledges and secrets.

207

Do not find slow His giving but find slow your approaching [Him].

208

Duties assigned to specific times can be made up for when missed but the rights of the moments of time cannot be made up for if missed. In every moment, Allah has on you a new right and important matter. How will you discharge a previous right when you are busy discharging Allah's current right?

209

What has passed of your life cannot be replaced and what you have used well cannot be priced.

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210

You do not love something except that you become its slave and He does not love that you be a slave to other than Him.

211

Your obedience does not benefit Him and your disobedience does not harm Him. He has only ordered you to do this and prohibited you from doing that for your own gain.

212

His might is not increased by him who approaches and His might is not decreased by him who turns away.

213

You reach Allah by reaching knowledge of Him; otherwise, our Lord is high above that something be connected to Him or He be connected to something.

214

Your closeness to Him is by your seeing His closeness to you. Otherwise, where are you that you would be close to Him.

215

Higher realities dawn upon you at once and after you have received them, they are explained: When We recite, follow the recitation. Then, We will explain [the meaning]. [al-Qur'an 75:18-19]

216

When divine spiritual experiences come over you, they destroy your habits: Indeed when kings enter cities, they ruin them. [al-Qur'an 27:34]

217

Spiritual experiences come from the presence of the Subjugator. For this reason, they do not collide with anything except they knock it out: Rather, we hurl the truth at falsehood; so, it knocks it out until falsehood vanishes. [al-Qur'an 21:18]

218

How can the Truth veil Himself with something when He is apparent in that thing and He is [also independently] present and existent.

219

Do not despair of the acceptance of an act which you perform without feeling His presence. Many a time He accepts an act whose fruit you do not taste now.

220

Do not give purity value to a spiritual experience whose fruit you do not yet know. The benefit from rain clouds is not the rain but the fruits [which grow thereafter].

221

Do not wish that a spiritual experience had remained [with you] after it has already spread its lights and placed its secrets. You have in Allah independence from everything but nothing can make you free of need from Him.

222

Your wanting something (other than Him) to remain [when it is departing] is a proof that you are not present with Him. And your feeling sad for losing other than Him is a proof that you have not reached Him.

223

Pleasure even if manifest in many forms is only through viewing His closeness. Pain even if manifest in many forms is only through being veiled from Him. The cause for

A Detailed Guide for the Path to Allah

pain is the presence of the veil. The perfecting of pleasure is by viewing His noble Countenance.

224

What the hearts find of sadness and depression is from their being denied the vision [of Him].

225

From the perfecting of His blessing on you is that He give you that which suffices and prevents you from that which will cause you to transgress.

226

Let the things that make you happy be fewer and the things that make you sad will be fewer.

227

If you wish not to be abandoned, do not seek protection from things that do not last.

228

If the beginning entices you, the ending repulses you. If the external invites you, the internal bars you.

229

He has only made the world a place of others and a mine for troubles so that you would not love it.

230

Ibn `Abbad's Sharh al-Hikam al-`Ata'iyah - And Useful Appendices

He knew that you would not accept mere advice; so, He made you taste its [bitter] taste to ease your separation from it.

231

Useful knowledge is that whose light rays spread in the chest and tear away the veil from the heart.

232

The best knowledge is that which is accompanied by godfearingness.

233

If knowledge is accompanied by godfearingness, it is for your favor; else, it is to your detriment.

234

When you are pained by people turning away from you or directing blame towards you, suffice yourself with Allah's knowledge of you. If you are not satisfied with His knowing of you, then your not being satisfied with His knowing is a greater misfortune than people hurting you.

235

He only made injury flow from their hands onto you so that you would not find rest in them. He wants to push you away from everything so that nothing busies you away from Him.

236

When you know that Shaytan does not forget about you, do not forget about Him in Whose Hand is your forelock.

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237

He only made Shaytan an enemy so that he would drive you towards Him. And He made your lower self move you [to do bad] so that your approaching and repenting to Him would never cease.

238

Whoever asserts that he is humble is in reality arrogant - as humbleness is a high state. And if you assert for yourself a high state, you are arrogant.

239

The humble person does not see himself above what he does but sees himself below what he does.

240

Real humbleness issues forth from witnessing His Tremendousness and lofty attributes.

241

You cannot leave [your] attributes without seeing [His] attributes.

242

The believer is busied by the praise of Allah from being regardful of himself. And he is busied by the rights of Allah from remembering his selfish shares.

243

Ibn `Abbad's Sharh al-Hikam al-`Ata'iyah - And Useful Appendices

The true lover is not he who hopes for compensation or seeks his own aim from his beloved. Rather, the lover spends himself on his beloved. The lover is not he who expects his beloved to spend on him.

244

If it were not for the battlefields of the lower selves, there would be no travel for the travelers on the Path since there is no distance between you and Him that your journey would shorten and there is no separation between you and Him that your reaching Him would eliminate.

245

He placed you in the middle realm between His physical world and metaphysical one to inform you of the loftiness of your rank among His creatures. You are a gem enclosed by the shells of created forms.

246

The cosmos is large in respect to your body but is not large in respect to your soul.

247

He who lives in the physical world locked out of the unseen world is imprisoned by his surroundings and encircled by the frame of his body.

248

You are with created things as long as you do not witness the Creator. When you witness Him, created things are with you.

249

It is not necessary that specialness entails one has no rough human characteristics. Specialness is like the light of the sun filling the horizon, whereas the horizon has no light in itself. Sometimes He takes away the trait of specialness from you and makes you return to your rough human limits. Thus, the light of day is not from you and does not belong to you; rather, it is merely being put over you.

250

His actions point to His names. His names point to His attributes. His attributes point to His Entity since it is impossible for an attribute to be existent all by itself. Subjects of divine attraction have His Entity revealed to them. Then, He makes them see His attributes. Then, He makes them return to deep understanding of His names. Then, He makes them see His actions. Those traveling the Path under a teacher experience these things in the reverse order. The place where the second group ends up is where the first group started. And the place where the second group starts is where the first group ends. But, each experiences the stages slightly differently. So, perhaps the two groups may meet on the Path, these going up and those going down.

251

The lights of the heart and innermost beings are only fully perceived in the unseen metaphysical world similar to how the light of the sky is only seen in the physical world.

252

Finding fruits of one's worship in this life is a glad tiding of the reward in the next life.

253

How can you ask for a reward for the action *He* has bestowed on you? How can you request reward for the truthfulness *He* has given you?

254

For some, their spiritual lights precede their remembrances. For others, their remembrances precede their spiritual lights. For others yet, their remembrances and spiritual lights occur together. Still others have no spiritual lights nor any remembrances - and we seek refuge with Allah from that.

Ibn `Abbad's Sharh al-Hikam al-`Ata'iyah - And Useful Appendices

255

Some people perform dhikr to gain an illumined heart. Other people gain an illumined heart and a result perform dhikr. For others, dhikr and illumination are simultaneous; this last group's has dhikr which guides and lights which are followed.

256

True dhikr on the outside is only from the vision of Allah's Entity and contemplation on the inside.

257

He made you witness before He asked you give witness. Thus externally, one speaks of His divinity and in one's heart and innermost being, one realizes His all-encompassing oneness.

258

He has given you three gifts: (1) He has let you remember Him; if it were not for His bounty, you would not be worthy to engage in His remembrance, (2) He made you mentioned along with Him as He has affirmed your relation to Him, and (3) He made you remembered by Him and thus He has perfected His blessing on you.

259

Sometimes a long life is fruitless. And sometimes a short life is extremely fruitful.

260

Whoever is blessed in his age, he is able to reap much from the blessing of Allah in a very short time. So much so, that one cannot explain [the immensity] nor even allude to it.

261

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A sign of abandonment is that you become free from things that busy but still do not turn towards Him - and that your barriers become fewer but still do not travel to Him.

262

Contemplation is the journey of the heart through other than Allah.

263

Contemplation is the lamp of the heart. When it goes away, there is no light for it.

264

Contemplation is of two types: (1) contemplation of belief and faith and (2) contemplation of witnessing and seeing. The first is for those who are apt to learn lessons [from what they see] and the second is for those that experience the vision [of Allah] and have insight.

[The wise sayings of Ibn `Ata'illah are 264 in number. We pray that we are able to make available Sheikh Ibn `Abbad's commentary on all of these sayings for the benefit of the English-speaking people.]

This Appendix is under construction.

Appendix I - The Role of Self-Induced Thought Control in the Path

Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim

Section 0: Introduction

Know that the parts of the din are three: (1) Islam, (2) Iman, and (3) Ihsan as explained in the *Guiding Helper*. The way of the Path to Allah is to instruct the aspiring disciple to first rectify the outwards of his Islam and Iman, which consist of his performing righteous actions and holding correct beliefs. Rectifying these two parts of the din is a prerequisite for obtaining the everlasting fruits of the third. It is not that a person with incorrect actions or spurious beliefs cannot replicate the state of an `arif (advanced knower of Allah) or demonstrate spiritual prowess comparable to that of an `arif in this world; but, it is that this person who has skipped the prerequisites will be deprived from the true fruits of Ihsan which only evince themselves in the next world, the everlasting hereafter.

Thus, the pseudo-`arif may appear identical to the true-`arif in this world; but, the pseudo-`arif (who firmly holds onto spurious beliefs and persists in disobedience to his Lord without repentance) may very well find himself in the Hellfire (with its physical and spiritual punishments) while the true-`arif (who fulfilled the preconditions of Islam and Iman) will be placed in the highest of all gardens, *Jannah al-Firdaws*, and be given the opportunity to reap the fruits of his state of `Irfan (both physically and spiritually) for eternity without any pain in any form whatsoever.

With that said and done, we have decided to place the main methods for reaching `Irfan or Ma`rifah in this Appendix knowing full-well that some of the insincere may replicate the states, experiences, and abilities of the `arif without fulfilling the preconditions of Ihsan. And our justification for laying the methods plain and bare is three-fold: (1) the number of highly-qualified teachers who are promoting the systematic study and dissemination of this knowledge has dropped sharply (even though teachers who vaguely know how to achieve the end result of `Irfan are still a large number), (2) we have warned the insincere that the consequence of skipping Islam and Iman while jumping directly to Ihsan is nothing less than torment in the grave and punishment in the Hellfire, and (3) we have well-explained the danger of treading the Path without a teacher in the *Guiding Helper* and thus expect that users of this Appendix already have a qualified teacher in the Path to Allah.

Section 1: Unraveling the Puzzle

Know that Allah creates systematically and not haphazardly. The human body is a par-excellence highly-sophisticated machine that when in the hands of a highly-qualified knowledgeable individual, the body can perform miraculous tasks and survive the most daunting of circumstances. Similarly, the human mind is a

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par-excellence extremely-advanced supercomputer that when in the control of an adept user can exert its influence on the person's body, heart, soul, and surrounding circumstances with amazing efficacy. Lastly, the spirit/soul or *ruh* is the greatest gift given by Allah to humans and unlike the body and the mind, it can transcend time and space being engrossed in the timeless, formless, and endless sea of Allah's Entity.

So the puzzle that has vexed the learned of mankind since their inception is *If I am such a wondrous creation of Allah with an amazing body, mind/heart, and soul, how can I achieve my full potential?*

This Appendix is designed to summarize the answer to this question and designed to lay the groundwork for a larger systematic reference work [written we hope by some other scholar of the present or future].

The answer to this question in brief is: *Gaining mastery over the full potential of one's body, mind/heart, and soul is done initially through the conscious control of one's thoughts and mental imagery.*

In this Appendix for purposes of brevity and sticking to the subject matter at hand, we will not examine how thoughts and mental imagery can be used to effect changes in the human body. Similarly, we will not delve into how control over one's *ruh* can allow one access information from and effect changes in the physical and metaphysical worlds. We hope that these subjects will be dealt with in the longer work we mention above.

Rather, our main goal here is to unravel the secrets of the human spiritual heart and the human spiritual soul. We will explain how the human mind can unlock these secrets and effect changes on the spiritual heart and the soul through controlled thinking and use of mental imagery. And we will explain how the disciple can use controlled thinking and imagery to help reach his end goal, which is knowledge (ma`rifah) of Allah, along with the regular regimens of dhikr (remembrances), mudhakarrah (spiritual teachings), mujahadah (physical struggles), and muraqabah (watching over oneself) taught by the teachers of the Path.

Section 2: What are thoughts and what is mental imagery?

You must first realize that a thought is made up of two instances of mental imagery joined together by a link. In other words, mental imagery is the building block of thoughts. Or another way of saying it is that a thought is an affirmation of a link between two distinct objects of mental imagery. A thought is crystallized by your confirming it as true and existent.

As an illustrative example, one may conjure up the image of a cool hidden garden with date palms and a water pool. Next, one may conjure up the imagine of one's person. Then, one may link the image of the garden with the image of one's person with the **simple thought**:

I am in the garden.

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Now, one may link together more than two objects of mental imagery in a **complex thought**. Each complex thought can be broken into multiple simple thoughts (i.e. a thought with just two simple instances of mental imagery linked together). An example of a complex thought is

I am relaxing under the shade of the date palm with my feet dipped in a cool water pool.

We can break this above complex thought into the following five series of simple thoughts:

I am relaxing.

I am in a garden.

I am under the shade of a date palm tree.

My feet are dipped in a water pool.

The water pool is cool to the touch.

In this section, we have only given examples of thoughts of physical things, you may draw an analogy to thoughts about non-physical ideas.

Learning this definition of thoughts and mental imagery is a prerequisite for learning how to use thoughts and mental imagery as a tool in the Path.

Section 3: States of the Heart

Know that your spiritual heart is directly affected by the conscious thoughts that your mind engages in. In other words, thoughts are the pilot of the heart and can lead the heart into praiseworthy and blameworthy states.

[As a side note in the advanced sections of the Path, imagery can become the pilot of the *ruh* able to make it travel and perform desired tasks.]

Section 4: Gaining Control of Thoughts and Mental Imagery

Once one realizes that thoughts and imagery control one's heart and soul, the obvious question arises about how one can use this fact towards one's advantage?

The common man can exercise only minimal control over the thoughts and mental imagery that his mind engages in. So little is this control that the common man outright denies that anybody could have greater control over the thoughts and imagery his mind engages in. As a result, he fails to see how he could use his own thoughts and mental imagery to affect the state of his heart, soul, and body.

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In the Path, we teach disciples that total (or close to total) thought and imagery control is possible in the mind. However, to achieve such involves practicing rigorous continuous exercises. We will outline some of these methods and exercises in this section. But, before we do that, we would state that the goals of these exercises are three:

- a) Give the disciple the ability to actively manipulate any pre-existing thought train or mental image changing it to have any desired characteristic.
- b) Give the disciple the ability to actively introduce any thought or mental image into his mind totally replacing any pre-existing thought or image.
- c) Give the disciple the ability to completely stop his active conscious thoughts whenever he wills and for however long he wills replacing it with a physical void.

Exercise 1

The purpose of this exercise is to teach the disciple goal (a) above. The disciple must start watching over his thoughts all day and night long shooting for a score of 500. He will review his thoughts to make sure that his mind does not beautify or find pleasing any aspect of the physical world (i.e. dunya). Additionally, he will make sure that his mind does not find having leadership in any affair in the world as desirable. As soon as his mind concludes that an object in the physical world or leadership in the physical world is pleasing and desirable, he will manipulate the image of this object or position of leadership to make it appear undesirable and repulsive. If he performs this manipulation within 60 seconds, he has succeeded in obtaining one point. If he realizes only after sixty seconds that his mind found something in the physical world pleasing or leadership of it desirable, he will lose one point. The disciple will start with zero points and work his way up to 500. The disciple will perform this exercise for a minimum of forty day. In order to count a point in his favor, the thought about the desirable physical object or leadership must have occurred without the disciple's conscious volition. In other words, the bad thought must have occurred outside of the disciple's conscious control.

It is obvious that in order keep track of the points, the disciple will need to keep a small diary in which he writes down the date and a few details about the bad thought and whether or not he was able to successfully counter it within 60 seconds. He will keep a running tally of his score until he reaches 500 or reaches forty days.

Failed attempts may be ignored and there is no need to subtract from one's gained credits.

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Exercise 2

The purpose of this exercise is to teach the disciple goal (b) above. The disciple will practice the following exercise for fifteen minutes a day up until six months or until he has mastered goal (b) above (whichever comes first) and is not bothered by stray thoughts which he cannot control.

The disciple will find fifteen minutes in the day or night in which he does not have any other major preoccupations.

...

Exercise 3

The purpose of this exercise is to teach the disciple goal (c) above. The disciple will practice the following exercise for forty weeks.

The disciple will review the twenty unlawful states of the heart mentioned in footnote 2646. The disciple will review and understand the discussion in section 6 of this appendix. The disciple will understand the mechanics thoughts as outlined in section 2 of this appendix.

The disciple must practice this exercise from the time he wakes up in the morning until the time he goes back to sleep.

The disciple must stop his mind from reaching the conclusion of the arguments which lead to the twenty major unlawful states of the heart. In the event, he is not able to stop his mind from reaching the blameworthy conclusion, he must give himself a conditioning hardship. This conditioning hardship will keep increasing in difficulty as he approaches the forty week limit:

- a) During the first two weeks, he need only say "astaghfirullāha wa atūbu ilayh" everytime he is unable to stop his mind from reaching a conclusion which leads to a blameworthy state to the heart.
- b) During weeks three to six, he must recite verse 255 of Surah Baqarah every time his mind reaches a blameworthy conclusion.
- c) During weeks seven to fifteen, he must recite Surah al-Fatihah and Surah Ikhlas every time his mind reaches a blameworthy conclusion.
- d) During weeks sixteen to twenty-five, he must recite the last three surahs of the Qur'an in Arabic (Ikhlās, Falaq, and Nās) every time he is unable to stop his mind from reaching a blameworthy conclusion.
- e) During weeks twenty-six to thirty, he must perform one wet ablution for each time his mind reaches a blameworthy conclusion. This will entail that he will get very wet. However,

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to avoid getting sick, he can wait to perform these wet ablutions in a warm place and delay them in the event that he is sick.

f) During weeks thirty-one to forty, he must perform one wet ablution and one two-unit Prayer of Repentance for each time his mind reaches a blameworthy conclusion.

By the end of the fortieth week, he should not reach many more than three blameworthy conclusions with his mind - if he is successful in this lesson.

In the event he is not successful, he may take a six month break and try again next year.

Section 5: Remaining Safe While Controlling Thoughts

Self-induced thought control can be a physically stressful exercise on the mind. It is not out of the realm of possibility that extreme negative effects evince themselves on the person engaging in self-induced thought control. Among the possible negative effects of this exercise are:

- a) Brain stroke
- b) Extreme change in personality {e.g., from jovial to cynical or sadistic}
- c) Fainting spells
- d) Extreme loss of body weight or physical sickness
- e) Mental disorder
- f) Lapses into a temporary coma {like an epileptic fit}

To avoid these extreme states the disciple must make sure that he stops his thought control exercises as soon as fatigue or pain manifest themselves in his brain or body. For example, if he starts having sharp or dull pains in his upper head, he should stop his exercise immediately and not take the risk of falling into one of the above negative states.

Additionally, the disciple should learn how to take continuous relaxing breaths. In other words, he should change his normal way of breathing as follows:

- a) Try to breathe mostly or exclusively through the nose as opposed to the mouth
- b) Try to breathe with deep and slow relaxing breaths instead of fast and shallow breaths
- c) Try to keep proper upright torso posture while breathing
- d) Try to reduce the number of breaths needed in one minute {e.g., to 10 inhales and 10 exhales or lower}

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If the disciple follows the breathing technique outlined above, he is much less likely to fall into an extreme negative state while attempting to control his thoughts and mental imagery

Additionally, when the disciple feels that he is becoming too intense, he should soften his state by repeatedly uttering peace and blessings on the Prophet in Arabic until his state cools down. He may use the following dhikr to do this:

Allahumma salli `ala sayyidna muhammadin
tibbi l-qulubi wa dawa'iha
Wa `afiyati l-abdani wa shifa'iha
Wa nuri l-absari wa diya'iha
Wa `ala aalihi wa sahabihi wa sallam.

The above dhikr means:

O Allah, send you peace and blessings on the Prophet,
The treatment of the hearts and their medicine,
The relief of the bodies and their cure,
The light of the eyes and their illumination
And on his family and companions.

If the disciple follows the three recommendations outlined this section, he will greatly reduce the chances of acquiring a negative state with his attempts at thought control.

Section 6: Avoiding blameworthy states of the heart

Know that your mind in its inner levels uses syllogistic deduction to reach its conclusions. The conclusions that are reached and affirmed in your mind have direct affects on the state of your heart and body.

As an example, we will give the premises and conclusion of the mental argument that your mind uses to reach the state of arrogance (kibr).

Arrogance (General form):

- a) I have quality A.
- b) Quality A is desirable.
- c) Person X does not have quality A.

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- d) People who have quality A are superior to people who do not have quality A.
- e) Therefore, I conclude that I am superior to person X.

Arrogance (Specific Thought Train):

- a) I am a big scholar and know lots of details about din.
- b) Anyone who has studied the Qur'an and Hadith knows that the primary texts extensively praise seeking knowledge and having knowledge. Therefore, I see that having knowledge is desirable.
- c) However, I see that the imam of Masjid al-Nur is not as knowledgeable as I am.
- d) People who have knowledge are superior to people who do not have knowledge and are more fit to be respected.
- e) Therefore, I conclude that I am superior to the imam of Masjid la-Nur and am more fit than him to lead the prayer and be respected.

Now, every time the person's mind goes through this syllogistic argument and reaches the conclusion in letter (e) (this happens at lightning fast speed and the unassuming person may not even realize what is happening until its too late), his heart goes into a state of arrogance. And as the argument is repeated in the person's mind over and over again, his state of arrogance becomes firmer and more deeply rooted. A person who has been having such unbridled thought trains for many years re-enforced by his apparent physical experiences will have a very tough time getting out of this unlawful and blameworthy state of the heart.

Showing Off (Riya') (General form):

- a) I am performing or will perform action A.
- b) Person X is or will be watching me.
- c) If person X finds my act pleasing I will gain a benefit (e.g., praise) from him and if person X finds my act displeasing I will incur harm (e.g., blame) from him.
- d) Benefit is good and is to be sought and harm is bad and is to be avoided.
- e) Therefore, I should perform action A for person X.

Showing Off (Riya') (Specific Thought Train):

- a) I am praying a formal prayer in front of a renown scholar.
- b) This renown scholar is watching me.
- c) If this renown scholar finds fault with my formal prayer, he is likely to blame me and if he finds my formal prayer correct, he may praise me.

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- d) Praise is good and is to be sought and blame is bad and is to be avoided.
- e) Therefore, I conclude that I should perform this action calmly and with proper etiquette (unlike I do when I'm alone) since this renown scholar is watching me.

Now, every time the person's mind goes through this syllogistic argument and reaches the conclusion in letter (e) (again this happens at lightning fast speed and the unassuming person may not even realize what is happening until its too late), his heart goes into a state of showing off (riya'). And as the argument is repeated in the person's mind over and over again, his state of riya' / nifaq becomes firmer and more deeply rooted. A person who has been having such unbridled thought trains for many years re-enforced by his apparent physical experiences will have a very tough time getting out of this unlawful and blameworthy state of the heart.

Manic Depression (General form):

- a) Event A has happened.
- b) Event A is extremely undesirable.
- c) I have no control over the occurrence of event A.
- d) Therefore, I conclude that event A may happen again and I will not be able to do anything about it.

Manic Depression (Specific Thought Train):

- a) The big war in the Middle East over oil has killed many people, maimed children, and ruined millions of people's lives.
- b) All of the repercussions of the war are very undesirable and make me feel like crying.
- c) I wish I could do something about the war but it seems that no matter what I do it still follows its destructive course and the people in decision making roles do not listen to me.
- d) Therefore, I conclude that destructive wars like this will continue and the world will spiral downward into even more terrible undesirable situations.

Now, every time the person's mind goes through this syllogistic argument (or a similar one) and reaches the conclusion in letter (d) (again this happens at lightning fast speed and the unassuming person may not even realize what is happening until its too late), his heart goes into a state of depression. And as the argument is repeated in the person's mind over and over again, his state of depression becomes firmer and more deeply rooted. A person who has been having such unbridled thought trains for many years re-enforced by his apparent

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physical experiences will have a very tough time getting out of this blameworthy state of the heart and is likely to either live a very unfulfilling life or become suicidal.

Similarly, we can issue a general form and specific thought train example for all other blameworthy states of the heart which the scholars speak of. And the ways a person can break out of these states are many among which are:

- a) Learn to stop the thoughts all together and see the ultimate reality that Allah is in charge and in reality none exists besides Him. Thus, the person must not consider himself existent, nor people, nor the events that take place in the world. Rather, only three things exist: (1) Allah's Entity, (2) Allah's Attributes, and (3) Allah's Actions. And when he knows such, he will realize that individuated objects cannot be superior or inferior to each other as in reality they do not exist, that it is futile to try to work for or show off for such individuated objects/people, that these objects/people have no more control over the situation than himself in reality and the only decision maker is the Wise with Whom our meager intellects cannot compete, etc.
- b) Counter the blameworthy thought trains above with counter-arguments that disprove or balance out the arguments. Thus, the conclusions of these counter-arguments will lift the heart out of the blameworthy state one degree at a time.

Section 7: Achieving praiseworthy states of the heart

The methods and arguments in section 6 may be reversed to learn how this works.

Section 8: What is the role of verbal remembrance (dhikr) in the Path?

Regular verbal remembrance can said to have two major purposes: (a) train the person's mind to concentrate on one subject at a time and learn how to turn off distracting thoughts and (b) give nourishment to the soul of the person strengthening it step-by-step until it is equal to or supercedes the strength of the physical aspect of the human.

Section 9: What is the role of physical struggle (mujahadah) in the Path?

The main purpose of mujahadah can be said to be to lower the priority / value of the physical world in the sight of the disciple. As when the physical world becomes hard and undesirable instead of easy and pleasurable, the disciple's inclination will shift away from it. Thus, mujahadah is not an end goal, but a means of bringing a person attached to physical experiences into the realm of the spiritual non-physical aspects of his being.

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Section 10: What is the role of watching over oneself (muraqabah)?

The main purpose of muraqabah is to first teach the disciple how to view himself objectively and then proceed to viewing all of his experiences from a non-egocentric location.

Section 11: What is the role of the Sheikh and his spiritual teaching (mudhakah)?

The purpose of the Sheikh is to remind the disciple of Allah and his duties to Him and aid in his being objective about his travel in the Path aiding him in breaking all of his normal habits.

Section 12: Going to Allah Beyond the Limits of the Mind and Heart

Once a person has come out of the prison of continuous subject-predicate thought, his soul will be free to explore the metaphysical world and eventually go beyond the metaphysical world and become engrossed in the vision of Allah's infinite, timeless, and formless Entity.

[This Appendix is still under construction.]

Appendix II - Imam al-Nawawi's Introduction to His Book of Prophetic Dhikr

Al-Adhkar (The Remembrances) Written by, Yahya ibn Sharaf an-Nawawi

Introduction

All praise is for Allah, the One, the Compeller, the Mighty, the Forgiving, the Decreeer of destinies, the Distributor of affairs, the Wrapper of the night around the day in which is an enlightenment for those with hearts and eyes, the One who aroused from His creation whom He chose and made him enter the elect group. He gave the opportunity to whom He picked from His slaves and made him among the righteous. He gave sight to those who loved him and made them abstain from this world. They strove for His pleasure, prepared for the lasting abode, avoided what angers Him, and were on their guard against the Hellfire. They tried with earnestness to obey Him and stuck to his remembrance by evening, early morning, and during the changing of conditions in the hours of the night and day. So, their hearts became shining with gleaming lights.

I praise Him and I transmit praise for all of His blessings. I ask Him for an increase in His favors and His generosity. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, the Tremendous, the One, the Self-Subsistent, the Mighty, the Wise. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant, messenger, sincere friend, loved one, and bosom friend, most favored of creation, most generous of the forerunners and those that followed subsequently. Praise of Allah and His peace be upon him, on all of the prophets, on the family of each, and on all the good people.

Afterwards: Allah, the Tremendous, the Mighty, and the Wise has said, "Remember Me and I will remember you." [2:152] And He Most High has said, "I have not created the jinn nor humans except that they worship Me." [51:56] So, it is known from this that among the best - or the best - condition of the servant is his remembering the Lord of the worlds and his preoccupation with remembrances related from the Rasulallah (May Allah bless him and give him peace), the chief of the messengers.

The scholars (May Allah be pleased with them) have written many books about actions by night and day, prayers, and remembrances. These books are well known among the *`arifin* (those who recognize Allah). However, these books have been lengthened with chains of transmissions and repetitions. Consequently, the ability of the seekers of knowledge has fell short of these books. I have intended to make things easy for those desirous of such knowledge. So, I began to put together in this book in a short form the main points that (have been) mentioned for those concerned. I have cut short most of the chains of transmission of what I mention in preference of brevity. This is because this book is written for worship not for becoming acquainted with chains of transmission. Rather, most people dislike transmission chains even if they are short. The objectives are learning remembrances, acting by them, and elucidating misconceptions for those seeking the right path. I shall mention, *insha'allah*, instead of the long chains of transmission what is more important than them and what is often overlooked: the clarification of the *sahih* hadith, the *hasan* ones, the *da'if* ones, and the *munkar* ones. This is what most people need to know [since, they can not determine this themselves] except the very few among the Hadith scholars. This is what the student gains from the righteous master memorizers and the community of skilled scholars who can be depended upon. I shall add, *insha'allah*, some of the precious jewels from the knowledge of Hadith, delicate points of Fiqh, important fundamental principles, exercises of the soul,

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and manners that those who follow the path emphasize. I shall mention all of these things in a clear way so that it is easily understood by the general people who are acquainted with Fiqh.

There is a narration in Sahih al-Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) that Rasulullah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Whoever calls to guidance has a reward similar to the rewards of those who follow it and this does not decrease anything from the (follower's) reward."

Hence, I wanted to help the people of goodness by making its path easy, by pointing it out, and by elucidating how one travels it... I will include in the beginning of the book some important sections that the reader of this book and others interested need to know about. When I mention a companion of the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) who is not famous among the non-scholars, I make known that he in fact is a companion so that there is no doubt about his companionship of the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace).

I only mention in this book the ahadith that are in the famous books which are the foundation of Islam. These books are five: Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih al-Muslim, Sunun Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, and al-Nisaa'i. However occasionally, I narrate from different books some of which are famous while others are not.

As for the divisions and the chains of transmissions, I do not mention them except in rare situations. I also do not transmit from the famous foundational books the *da`if* ahadith except in rare circumstances with notification of its weakness. Most of the time, I only quote the *sahih* ahadith from these books. For this reason, I hope that this book will be a dependable source. Finally, I do not mention any ahadith in a chapter except those that clearly shed light on the matter at hand.

I ask Allah, the Generous, for success, assistance, help, guidance, and safeguarding. I also ask Him to make the good I intend to do easy and to continue His varied grace on me. I also ask Him to gather my loved ones and me in the place of nobility and [to give us] all of the things that bring happiness.

Allah is sufficient for me and is a wonderful trustee. There is no force nor strength except with Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. [This is] what Allah has willed; there is no power except with Allah. I put my trust in Allah, cling to Him, ask Him for help, and entrust Him with my affair. I ask Him to safeguard my religion, my soul, my parents, my brothers, my loved ones, all those who have bestowed grace on me, all of the Muslims, and all that He favored them and me with from the matters of the Hereafter and this world. [I say this] because when He is given something for safeguarding, He protects it; He is the best of protectors.

[Necessary Things That the *Dhakhir* (One Who Practices *Dhikr*) Should Know]

Section 1

The Command to Practice Sincerity And Develop Good Intentions For All Actions Public And Private

Allah Most High has said, "And they were not commanded except to worship Allah sincerely while being upright." [98:5]

And He Most High has also said, "Neither the meat nor the blood (of the sacrificed animals) will reach Allah. Rather, it is your God consciousness that reaches Him." [22:37] Ibn `Abbas (May Allah be pleased with both of them) has said that the meaning of this verse is that rather your intentions reach Him.

Shaykh Hafiz Abu al-Baqa' has reported to us that `Umar ibn al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him) said that Rasulullah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Actions are but by intentions and every person shall have what he intends. So, whoever migrated intending Allah and His Messenger, his migration is for Allah and His Messenger. And whoever migrated intending worldly gain or marriage to a woman, his migration is for what he intended." This is a *sahih* hadith whose correctness is agreed upon. It

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collects together tremendous points of importance and is one of the ahadith on which the central pivot point of Islam is located. Those from the *salaf* and those who followed them (May Allah have mercy on them) liked to begin their books with this hadith. They did this to inform the reader of the importance of good intentions [in learning] so that he would take care and concern about this point.

We have been told by Imam Sa`id `Abd al-Rahman ibn Mahdi (May Allah have mercy on him) that whoever desires to write a book, let him begin with this hadith.

Imam Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi has said, "Our sheikhs of the early times used to like to introduce every affair of religion with the hadith, 'Actions are but by intentions...' because of its general applicability in many circumstances."

It has reached us that Ibn `Abbas (May Allah be pleased with both of them) said, "A man is only preserved according to the grade of his intention." Others have said, "Men are only given [rewards or punishments] according to the grade of their intentions."

We have been narrated by the great master Abu Ali al-Fadil ibn `Iyad (May Allah have mercy on him) that he said, "*Leaving* an action because of people is showing off (*riya`*), *doing* an action because of people is associating partners with Allah (*shirk*), and sincerity is that Allah saves you from both of them."

Imam al-Harith al-Muhasibi (May Allah have mercy on him) has said, "The truthful one is he who does not care if the esteem he has in people's hearts goes away in order to make his heart more sound. He does not love that people see his... good actions and he does not dislike that people see his bad actions."

Hudhayfah al-Mar`ashi (May Allah have mercy on him) has said, "Sincerity is that the actions of a servant become identical in both their external and internal dimensions."

Imam Abu Qasim al-Qushayri (May Allah have mercy on him) said, "Sincerity is to single out Allah (the Truth) Glorified be He in His obedience with an intention of doing so. It is that the servant desire from His obedience to come closer to Allah the Most High without wanting anything else such as dissimulating⁶ for the creation (other people). He should not desire commendation from people, love of praise from creation, or any other objective besides coming closer to Allah."

The great master Abu Muhammad Sahl ibn `Abdullah al-Tustari (May Allah have mercy on him) has said, "Many sagacious people have tried to explain sincerity, but they have not found anything other than this: that the movements and tranquillity of the servant be for Allah Most High in private and in public. In such a way that his *nafs*, fancies, and desires for the world do not play a part in them.

We have been narrated from Abu Ali al-Daqqaq (May Allah have mercy on him) that sincerity is disregarding the observation of people, and truthfulness is purifying oneself from the obedience of the lower self. So, the sincere one does not show off, and the truthful one is not conceited.

Dhul Nun al-Misri (May Allah have mercy on him) has said, "Three of the characteristics of sincerity are: treating praise and blame from the masses of people equally, forgetting that actions can be seen by others while performing them, and expecting the reward of actions in the Hereafter."

Sahl al-Tustari has said, "The person who misrepresents himself or another does not smell the fragrance of truthfulness."

The statements of the scholars on this subject can not be enumerated. However, what I have just mentioned is enough for him whom Allah grants success.

Section 2

[Acting on Supererogatory Knowledge]

⁶ [Dissimulate: to disguise one's intentions under a feigned appearance]

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It is befitting for him who finds out about some supererogatory action that he perform it even if only once , so that he will be counted among those who practiced it.

Section 3

[Acting on The Basis of a Weak Hadith]

The scholars of Sacred Law and Hadith have said that it is permissible and meritorious to perform a supererogatory action... on the basis of a weak hadith as long as it is not forged.⁷

However as for the laws concerning *halal*, *haram*, trade, marriage, divorce, and other such matters, one does not act except by a *sahih* or *hasan* hadith unless it is to take a precaution in the above mentioned affairs. For example, when some weak ahadith are related concerning the dislike of some types of trade or marriage, it is recommended that one avoids these types. However, this is still not obligatory. I have only included this section because I note down in this book whether a hadith is *sahih*, *hasan*, or *da`if*. Sometimes, I do not mention this either out of forgetfulness, or for some other reason. [In any case], I wanted this principle be established with the reader of this book.

Section 4

[The Excellence of Group *Dhikr*]

Just as *dhikr* is meritorious, it is also meritorious to sit in the circles of people who perform *dhikr*. The proofs of this are manifest and shall be mentioned in the appropriate sections, *insha'allah*. However, the hadith of Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with both of them) is enough [of a proof]. He said that Rasulullah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "When you pass by the meadows of Paradise, graze therein. The companions asked, "And what are the meadows of Paradise, O Rasulullah?" He (May Allah bless him and give him peace) replied, "The circles of *dhikr*. For indeed Allah has traveling groups of angels who seek out the circles of *dhikr*, and when they find them, they fully encompass them [those sitting in the circle of *dhikr*].

We have been narrated in Sahih al-Muslim that Mu`awiya (May Allah be pleased with him) said, "Rasulullah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) went out to a circle of his companions and asked, "What makes you sit here?" His companions replied, "We have sat here to remember Allah and praise Him for guiding us to Islam and bestowing upon us favors. He (May Allah bless him and give him peace) then said, "Do you swear by Allah that nothing has made you sit here except that? As for me, I do not ask you to swear out of suspicion for you. Rather, Gabriel came to me and informed me that Allah the Most High is boasting about you over His angels."

We have been narrated in Sahih al-Muslim that Sa`id al-Khudri and Abu Hurayra (May Allah be pleased with both of them) witnessed that Rasulullah said, "No people sit together to remember Allah Most High except that the angels encompass them, mercy covers them, peace descends over them, and Allah mentions them to whomever is with Him.

Section 5

⁷ His statement: as long as it is not forged means that the hadith has severe weakness in it. So, it is not permissible to act by a narration which has been transmitted by a known or suspected liar. There are two other conditions for acting by such a hadith: (1) that there is some authentic source testifying to the acceptability of it such as a general embodiment in the teachings or a fundamental principle and (2) that the person acting by it does not believe that it is solid law, rather he adopts it as a way of being cautious. [This footnote exists in the Arabic copy of this book printed by Daar ul-Fikr.]

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[Performing *Dhikr* Audibly With The Tongue And Silently With The Heart]

Dhikr can be performed by the heart and by the tongue. However, the best *dhikr* is that performed by both the heart and the tongue working together. If for some reason a person has to limit himself to one of the above, then it is better to perform it using the heart. Also, it is not befitting that one leaves *dhikr* with the tongue because he is afraid that people will think he is trying to show off. Rather, he should remember Allah with both of them and at the same time intend Allah's pleasure. We have already mentioned that Fadil ibn `Iyad (May Allah have mercy on him) said, "Leaving an action because of people is showing off..." If the human being opens the door to regarding people's observations and being cautious about their useless suspicions, verily most of the doors of goodness would be closed to him. He would also lose out on a tremendous thing from the important things of religion. This is not by any means the path of the *`arifin*.

We have been narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim that `A'isha (May Allah be pleased with her) said that the verse, "Do not make a clamor with your *salat*, nor be completely silent with it." [17:110] was revealed concerning supplication (*du`a`*).

Section 6

[Generality of The Word *Dhikr*]

The virtue of *dhikr* is not confined to saying *la ilaha illallah*, *al hamdu lillah*, *allahu akbar*, or other similar words. Rather, every servant who acts according to the obedience of Allah Most High is a rememberer (*dhakir*) of Allah. This is what Sa`id ibn Jubayr (May Allah be pleased with him) and other scholars have said.

`Ata' (May Allah have mercy on him) said, "The assemblies of *dhikr* are the assemblies of *halal* and *haram* (those that teach how to buy, sell, pray, fast, marry, perform pilgrimage, and the like)."

Section 7

[Tafsir of the Ayah, "Indeed, the Muslim Men and Muslim Women... The Male Rememberers of Allah And The Female Rememberers of Allah..."]

Allah Most High has said, "Indeed the Muslim men and Muslim women...", until His statement, "and the male rememberers of Allah and the female rememberers of Allah much, He has prepared for them a great reward." [33:35]

We have been narrated in Sahih al-Muslim that Abu Hurayra (May Allah be pleased with him) said that Rasulullah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "The *mufarridun* have outstripped [and gone far ahead]." The companions asked, "And who are the *mufarridun* O Rasulullah?" He replied, "The male and female rememberers of Allah much."

This is one of the ayahs which the reader of this book should take care to learn. There have been various interpretations of this ayah. Imam Abul Hasan al-Wahidi has related that Ibn `Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) said, "The meaning is that they remember Allah after the end of each prayer, by the morning and evening, in their beds, whenever they wake up, and whenever they leave or enter their homes." Mujahid has said, "A person is not among the rememberers of Allah much until he or she remembers Allah while standing, sitting, and lying down." `Ata' has said, "Whoever prays the five prayers fulfilling their rights is among those mentioned in Allah Most High's statement, "...and the male rememberers of Allah and female rememberers of Allah much..." This is what Wahidi has transmitted.

Abu Sa`id al-Khudri (May Allah be pleased with him) has related, "Rasulullah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, 'When a man wakes up his wife in the night and they both pray - or he prays - two

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rak`a together. They are written among the male and female rememberers of Allah much. This hadith is *mashur*; Abu Dawud, Nisaa'i, and Ibn Majah have related it in their compilations.

Imam Abu `Umar ibn al-Salih (May Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the measure by which a person becomes a male or female rememberer of Allah much. So, he answered, "When one persists in practicing the remembrances (*adhkar*) related soundly [from the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace)] in the morning, in the evening and in various times and conditions by night and day..., he becomes among the male and female rememberers of Allah much. And Allah knows best.

Section 8

[Conditions in Which It is Permissible to Practice *Dhikr*]

The scholars have come to a consensus on the permissibility of *dhikr* using the heart and the tongue for the person with minor ritual impurity (*hadth*), the person with major ritual impurity (*junub*), the woman undergoing menstruation, and women experiencing post-child-delivery discharge. This ruling applies to saying *subhan`allah* (glorifying Allah), *al hamdu lillah* (praising Allah), *la ilaha illallah* (declaring Allah's oneness), *allahu akbar* (extolling Allah), supplication, and the like. However, recitation of the Qur'an is unlawful for the person with major ritual impurity, the woman undergoing menstruation, and the woman experiencing post-child-delivery discharge. The ruling of unlawfulness is the same whether one recites a little bit or a lot. It is not permissible to recite even part of an ayah. However, it is permissible for the above mentioned persons to recite the Qur'an in their heart without pronouncing any words... Our companions (the scholars) have said that it is permissible for both the person with major ritual impurity and the woman undergoing menstruation to say over the affliction of a calamity: *inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji`un* (Indeed, we are from Allah and to Him we will return). [These words are from the Qur'an, 2:156]. It is also permissible for both of them while riding an animal to say: *subhana ladhi sakh-khara lana hadha wa ma kunna lahu muqrinin wa inna ila rabbina la munqalibun* (Glory be to the One who has made this subservient to us. We were not able to do it [ourselves]. Indeed, to our Lord will we return [43:13-14]). It is also permissible for them while supplicating to say: *rabbana atina fid dunya hasanatan wa fil akhirati hasanatan waqina `adhaban nar* (Our Lord give us good in this world and good in the hereafter, and save us from the Hellfire [2:201]). [The above] are permissible for the person experiencing major ritual impurity and the woman undergoing menstruation as long as they are not intending to recite the Qur'an. Both of them can also say *bismillah* and *al hamdu lillah* as long as they are not intending to recite the Qur'an. This permissibility is the same whether they are intending to perform *dhikr* or not. They only commit a sin when they intentionally recite the Qur'an. It is also permissible for them to recite verses whose recitation has been abrogated such as: The old man and the old woman, when they commit fornication, stone both of them. [This verse is not included in the Qur'an]. When both of these people do not find water [As for the menstruating woman, this applies only upon completing her menstrual cycle.], they can perform *tayyammum* (dry ablution) and then recite Qur'an. If he experiences minor ritual impurity after performing dry ablution, he can still recite the Qur'an [from memory] just as if he had taken a bath and then experienced minor ritual impurity. Also, it does not matter whether he performed dry ablution due to a lack of water while at home or while traveling... This is because dry ablution can take the place of a purificatory bath (*ghusl*). If the person experiencing major ritual impurity finds water after performing dry ablution, it is obligatory on him to use the water. This is because recitation of the Qur'an and all the other things that are not permissible during major ritual impurity become unlawful for him until he takes a purificatory bath. Recitation of the Qur'an is permissible for a person who performs dry ablution and prays, then again performs dry ablution for either experiencing minor ritual impurity or for another obligatory prayer and the like. [The reader should note at this point that Imam an-Nawawi is a scholar of the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence. At such a deep level in the branches of Sacred Law, one usually finds some difference of opinion.]

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This is the correct school of thought... As for the person with major ritual impurity who does not find water nor anything to perform dry ablution with, he prays in his [impure] condition because of the sacredness of the time [in which the prayer must be offered]. But, recitation of the Qur'an would not be permissible for him outside of prayer. Also, it is unlawful for him to recite more than *Surat al-Fatihah*... These branches of Sacred Law have been mentioned because they are related (to the subject matter at hand). I have mentioned them in short form, but there are complete proofs in the books of Fiqh for these. And Allah knows best.

Section 9

[The Befitting State of the *Dhakhir*]

It is befitting that the *dhakhir* be described by the best of attributes. So if he is sitting somewhere, he should face the *qiblah* with a feeling of lowliness, humbleness, peace of mind, seriousness, and with his head bowed down. However, it is permissible to practice *dhikr* in other than these conditions and there is no aversion in it. Rather, if a person without any excuses leaves the above-mentioned conditions, he is leaving a more meritorious act. The proof for there being no aversion in practicing *dhikr* in other than the above mentioned conditions is Allah Most High's statement: Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and day are signs for those of intellect. Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying down on their side. And they ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth. [3:189-190]

It is also recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih al-Muslim that `A'isha (May Allah be pleased with her) said, "The Messenger of Allah used to recite the Qur'an reclining on my lap while I was undergoing my menstrual cycle." In another account, she has been reported to say, "...his head was resting on my lap while I was undergoing my menstrual cycle." It is also related that `A'isha (May Allah be pleased with her) said, "Indeed, I recite my portion of the Qur'an while I am lying down in bed."

Section 10

[Attributes of the Place One Performs *Dhikr* in]

It is befitting that the place where one performs *dhikr* be empty (of everything that preoccupies one and causes evil thoughts) and be clean. It is important to respect the *dhikr* and the One being remembered. For this reason, *dhikr* in the masjid and other noble places is commendable. Imam Jalil Abu Maysara (May Allah be pleased with him) said, "Allah is not remembered except in fine places." Also, It is befitting that the mouth (of the *dhakhir*) be clean. If there is some distaste or odor in it, one removes it with a tooth stick. If there is some impurity in it, one removes it by washing with water. It is disliked (*makruh*) to perform *dhikr* without washing the impurity, but it is not unlawful (*haram*). The same rule applies to recitation of the Qur'an...

Section 11

[Recommendability of *Dhikr* in All But a Few Conditions]

Dhikr is liked in all conditions except a few exceptional cases noted in Sacred Law. We shall allude to some of these cases and leave the rest for another section, *insha'allah*.

From among the exceptions when *dhikr* is offensive (*makruh*) are while one is seated to perform nature's call, during sexual intercourse, while listening to a sermon, while standing for prayer (Rather, one should be

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busy with reciting the Qur'an), and while dozing off. Note that *dhikr* is not offensive in the street nor in the bath house. And Allah knows best.

Section 12

[The Importance of Being Attentive to What One Says]

The main objective of *dhikr* is presence of heart. So, it is befitting that this be the desired goal of the *dhakir*, and he endeavor to achieve it. He should also ponder over what he says and try to understand its meaning. Pondering over *dhikr* is desired as it is desired with recitation of the Qur'an because the significance of both of them is intertwined with their meaning. This is why the choice correct position is for the *dhakir* to lengthen the statement, *la ilaha illallah*, so that he can ponder over it. The sayings of the *salaf* and those who followed subsequently about this subject are many. And Allah knows best.

Section 13

[The Importance of Constancy in *Dhikr*]

It is befitting for the person who misses his regular portion of *dhikr* (in an appointed time of the day or night, after prayer, or during some other condition) to make it up when he is able to. He should not forget about it and neglect it. Rather when he becomes used to adhering to it, he will not let it be missed. Conversely, if he is careless about performing it, it will be easier for him to miss it during its time.

It is recorded in Sahih al-Muslim on the authority of `Umar ibn al-Khattaab (May Allah be pleased with him) that Rasulallah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Whoever overslept and missed his portion of the Qur'an at night, but then recited it between *Fajr* and *dhuhr* will get the same amount of reward as reciting it at night."

Section 14

The Events During Which it is Better to Leave *Dhikr* and Return to it After the Event Has Passed

When someone greets the *dhakir*, he should pause to return the greeting and then continue his *dhikr*. When someone sneezes in his presence, he should say (*yarhamuk'allah*) and continue his *dhikr*. The same is true when one hears someone making a sermon, hears someone making the call to prayer, or the call to commence (Instead, he should repeat the words of the caller)... Additionally, when the *dhakir* sees a wrong, he should pause to correct it. When he sees a good, he should pause to guide to it. If someone asks the *dhakir* for something, he should pause to answer him. [In all cases], he returns to his *dhikr* [after the event has passed]. If someone is dozing off... he should stop practicing his *dhikr*.

Section 15

[Faint Audibility is a Minimum Prerequisite for Legislated *Dhikr* to be Accepted]

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Know that legislated (by *Shari`a*) remembrances; either in prayer or outside of it, either obligatory or just meritorious; are not accounted for until one pronounces them. What pronouncing them means is that one [at least] hears oneself given that he is sound of hearing⁸.

[The information after this section pertains to the rest of Imam an-Nawawi's book which is indispensable to the serious rememberer of Allah and His Messenger much.

I shall, *insha'allah*, mention just one more point that Imam an-Nawawi states before starting his book. He says that he has with the grace of Allah heard most of the ahadith he writes in this book (with connected chains back to the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace)) from the scholars he has learned from. This would further prove his worthiness of writing a book that relies heavily on the sayings of our Prophet on whom may Allah send peace and greetings.]

⁸ This is the Shafi'i view. The Maliki scholars state that the minimum is the movement of the tongue even if one is not able to hear oneself. See Notes of Sources for Guiding Helper verse 12:412.

Appendix II - Names of Allah Explained by Ibn Juzayy al-Kalbi

Chapter 3

Concerning the Beautiful Names of Allah the Most High

By, Ibn Juzayy al-Kalbi

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "Indeed Allah has ninety-nine names. Whoever encompasses them enters Paradise." These names have been mentioned specifically and in their number in a hadith narrated by Tirmidhi from Abu Hurayra (May Allah be pleased with him). The scholars have disagreed about whether these particular names were narrated directly from the Prophet (PBUH) as in the hadith or whether the narration of these names is arrested with Abu Hurayra. This disagreement arises because Allah has names other than the particular ones mentioned. Among them are the ones narrated in the Quran and Hadith. Other names are derived from His Actions.

Allah's names and attributes in simple terms can be divided into three types: (1) those about His Being, (2) those about the attributes of His Being, and (3) those about the attributes of His Actions.

Allah's names and attributes in more detailed terms can be divided into ten categories: (1) the name that points to His Being (e.g. "Allah", it is said that this is Allah's Greatest Name.), (2) names that point to His Oneness (e.g. The One, The Self-Subsistent, The Single) (3) names that point to His State of being alive (e.g. The Living, The First, The Last), (4) names that point to His originating creation and this is a more specialized attribute of Lordship (e.g. The Creator, the Shaper, the Originator), (5) names that point to His Power (e.g. the Able, the Avenger, the Overpower), (6) names that point to His Will Power (e.g. the One Who wills, the Doer of what He wills, the One Who Holds Back, the One Who Spreads), (7) names that point to His Consciousness (e.g. The All-Knowing, the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing), (8) names that point to His Greatness (e.g. the Lofty, the Tremendous, the Great, the High), (9) names that point to His Kingdom (e.g. the King, the Owner, the Independent), and (10) names that point to His Mercy (e.g. the Merciful, the Mercy-Giving, the Forgiving, the One Who accepts repentance, the Giver)