

IBN ATA ALLAH

# HIKAM

WITH THE

COMMENTARY BY IBN 'AJIBA



SINNAI  
EDITO IN PROPRIO

1428

## I.

A feeling of discouragement when you slip up  
is a sure sign that you put your faith in deeds.

Your desire to withdraw from everything  
when Allah has involved you in the world of means  
is a hidden appetite.

Your desire for involvement with the world of means  
when Allah has withdrawn you from it  
is a fall from high aspiration.

Aspiration which rushes on ahead  
cannot break through the walls of destiny.

Give yourself a rest from managing!  
When Someone Else is doing it for you,  
don't you start doing it for yourself!

Your striving for what is absolutely guaranteed to you  
and your laxness in what is required of you  
are evidence that your inner eye is dull.

If you make intense supplication  
and the timing of the answer is delayed,  
do not despair of it.

His reply to you is guaranteed;  
but in the way He chooses,  
not the way you choose,  
and at the moment He desires,  
not the moment you desire.

If something that is promised does not happen  
even though the time for it is set,  
do not doubt the promise!

If you do, that will dim your inner eye  
and put out the light of your secret.

When He opens a way for you and makes Himself known to you,  
then do not worry about your lack of deeds.

He only opened the way for you  
because He desired to make Himself known to you.

Do you not see that while He grants gnosis of Himself to you,  
you have only deeds to offer Him?

What He brings you -  
What you bring Him -  
What a difference there is between them!

Different states have different outcomes.  
This accounts for the variety of types of action.

Actions are merely propped-up shapes.  
Their life-breath is the presence of the secret of sincerity in them.

Bury your existence in the earth of obscurity.  
If something sprouts before it is buried,  
its fruits will never ripen.

Withdraw the heart into the arena of reflection  
- nothing helps the heart more than that!

If the forms of phenomenal beings  
are embedded in the mirror of the heart,  
how can it be illuminated?  
If it is fettered by its appetites,  
how can it travel to Allah?  
If it is not purified of the great impurity of its heedlessness,  
how can it aspire to enter the presence of Allah?  
If it has not turned away in regret from its lapses,  
how can it hope to grasp the subtleties of secret knowledge?

Phenomenal being is utter and total darkness.  
It is only the manifestation of the Real in it that gives it light.

When you see phenomenal being and do not see Him  
in it, with it, before it or after it,  
then you are truly in need of light.

You are veiled from the suns of gnoses  
by the clouds of secondary traces.

One way He shows you the existence of His overwhelming power  
is by veiling you from Him  
by that which cannot exist alongside Him.

How can you imagine that something else veils Him  
when He is the One who is manifest by everything?  
How can you imagine that something else veils Him  
when He is the One who is made manifest in everything?  
How can you imagine that something else veils Him  
when He is the One who is manifest to everything?  
How can you imagine that something else veils Him  
when He was the One who was Manifest before there was anything?  
How can you imagine that something else veils Him  
when He is more manifest than anything?  
How can you imagine that something else veils Him  
when He is the One with whom there is nothing else?  
How can you imagine that something else veils Him  
when He is the One who is nearer to you than anything?  
How can you imagine that something else veils Him  
when if it had not been for Him, there would not have been anything?

A marvel!  
See how existence becomes manifest in non-existence!  
How the in-time holds firm alongside Him whose attribute is eternal!

## II.

You have not abandoned ignorance at all  
if you want something to take place in any moment  
other than what Allah has manifested in it.

You put off action until you have nothing else to do?  
That comes from the foolishness of the lower self.

Don't ask Him to remove you from one state  
in order to use you in another.  
If He wanted to,  
He could use you without removing you.

When the aspiration of the wayfarer desires to halt  
at what has been unveiled to him.  
then the invisible voices of the Reality call out to him.  
"What you're looking for is still in front of you!"

When the outward aspect of created things display their beauty to him,  
then their inner reality calls out to him,  
"We are a trial!  
We captivate and tempt you!  
Do not disbelieve!"

If you make demands on Him, you doubt Him.  
If you seek Him, you are absent from Him.  
If you seek other-than-Him, you are shameless before Him.  
If you make demands on other-than-Him, you are distant from Him.

Every breath you breathe emerges according to a preordained decree.

Don't look forward to being quit of others -  
that will cut you off from watchful awareness of Him  
in the place where He has put you.

Don't think that worry and sorrow are out of place  
as long as you are in this world.  
It only brings forth what its attribute and quality demand.

A goal you seek by your Lord:  
no delay here.  
A goal you seek by yourself:  
not easy.  
A sign of success in the end:  
turning to Allah in the beginning.  
A radiant beginning:  
a radiant ending.

Everything that is stored away in the warehouse of invisible secrets  
has to appear in the visible world of outward manifestation.

What a difference!  
This one is guided by Him.  
That one seeks information about Him.

The one guided by Him gains direct knowledge of the Real  
and verifies the matter from its actual Source.

Seeking information about Him comes from  
not having reached Him.

This must be the case because when was He absent  
so as to make it necessary for you to seek information about Him?  
When was He distant so that you would need tracks to lead you to Him?

As for those who have reached Him:  
*"He who has plenty should spend out from his plenty."*  
As for those who are travelling to Him:  
*"it is he whose provision is restricted."*

Those travelling to Him  
are guided by the light of turning their faces toward Him.  
Those who have arrived  
have the lights of face-to-face encounter.

The former belong to lights,  
but the lights belong to the latter  
because they belong to Allah, and are His alone.

*"Say: 'Allah'  
then leave them plunging in their games."*

### III.

Better to look at the defects hidden within you  
than to look for the unseen worlds that are veiled from you.

The Real is not veiled  
- it is you that are veiled from seeing Him.  
If there was anything veiling Him  
what veiled Him would cover Him.  
If he was covered,  
His existence would be contained.  
If something contains something else,  
it overpowers it.  
But He is the Conqueror, overcoming His slaves.

Among the qualities of humanness,  
get rid of every quality incompatible with your slavehood  
so you can answer when Allah calls and be near His presence.

The root of every act of rebellion, every appetite  
and every moment of heedlessness  
is satisfaction with one's self.

The root of every act of obedience, every restraint  
and every moment of wakefulness  
is lack of satisfaction with one's self.

Better to keep the company of an ignorant man  
who is not satisfied with himself  
than a man of knowledge who is satisfied with himself.

What knowledge does the self-satisfied scholar have?  
What ignorance does the ignorant man who is not self-satisfied have?

The light of the inner eye lets you see His nearness to you.  
The source of the inner eye lets you see your non-existence by your existence.  
The truth of the inner eye lets you see His existence,  
not your own non-existence or existence.

"Allah was and there was nothing with Him.  
He is now as He was."

IV.

Do not let the intention of your aspiration veer to other-than-Him.  
Hopes can go no further than the Ever-Generous.  
Do not ask other-than-Him for what you need  
since He is the One who will bring it to you.  
How can other than the One who put it there relieve it?  
How can someone who is unable to relieve his own need relieve someone else's?

If you do not think well of Him because His qualities are beautiful  
then think well of Him because of the way He treats you.  
Has He made you used to anything but good?  
Has He bestowed on you anything but favours?

How utterly amazing is someone who flees from something he cannot escape  
to seek something that will not last!

*"It is not the eyes that are blind,  
but the hearts in the breasts are blind."*

Do not travel from phenomenal being to phenomenal being.  
You will be like the donkey going around at the mill.  
It travels to what it set out from.

Travel from phenomenal beings  
to the Maker of Being.

*"And the final end is to your Lord."*

Look at the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:  
"Whoever emigrates to Allah and His Messenger,  
his emigration is to Allah and His Messenger.  
Whoever emigrates to something of this world or a woman to marry,  
his emigration is to what he emigrates to."

Understand his words, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:  
"His emigration is to what he emigrates to."

Reflect on this matter if you have any understanding at all!

Peace!

V.

If someone's state does not lift you up,  
and his words do not lead you to Allah  
- then do not keep his company!

It may well be that you are in a bad state -  
but to keep company with someone worse than you  
would allow you to see good in yourself.

No action from a heart without attachment is insignificant.  
No action from a heart full of desires is great.

Good actions are the results of good states.  
Good states come from grasping the reality  
of the stations where you alight.

Do not give up invocation of Allah  
because you are not present with Allah in it.  
It is worse to forget to invoke Him  
than to be inattentive while invoking Him.

He might raise you up from invocation with heedlessness  
to invocation with wakeful attention,  
and from invocation with wakeful attention  
to invocation with presence,  
and from invocation with presence  
to invocation with withdrawal from all that is other than the Invoked.  
That is not difficult for Allah.

## VI.

A sign of the death of the heart:  
lack of sadness about beneficial actions you have missed,  
and lack of regret about your mistakes.

Do not become so overwhelmed by your wrong action  
that it stops you thinking well of Allah.

Whoever has gnosis of his Lord,  
finds that his wrong action is insignificant  
beside His generosity.

There is no minor wrong action when you face His justice.  
There is no major wrong action when you experience His bounty.

No deed has more hope of being accepted  
than the one you do and forget about, thinking it insignificant.

He only sent a *warid*<sup>1</sup> to you  
so that it would bring you to Him.  
He sent a *warid* to you  
to deliver you from the control of otherness  
and to free you from being a slave to effects.  
He sent a *warid* to you  
to release you from the prison of your existence  
and to bring you to the open space of inner witnessing.

Lights are the mounts of the hearts and the secrets.

The army of the heart is light.  
The army of the lower self is darkness.

When Allah wishes to help His slave,  
He reinforces him with the armies of light  
and cuts off the reinforcements of darkness and otherness.

Light unveils.  
The inner eye judges.  
The heart both advances and retreats.

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<sup>1</sup> [*Warid*: "arriving thing"; an overflowing experience which overcomes a person's heart.]

Don't be overjoyed at obedience because it has issued from you.  
Rejoice in it because it has come from Allah to you.

*"Say: 'Let them rejoice in the bounty of Allah and His mercy.  
That is better than what they amass.'"*

He prevents those who are travelling to Him and those who have reached Him -  
from seeing their actions and witnessing their states.

The travellers -  
because they have not made sincerity with Allah in them a fact.  
Those who have arrived -  
because when they see Him,  
He makes them oblivious to seeing their actions.

## VII.

The branches of abasement only grow from the seeds of greed.

Nothing leads you on like illusion.  
You are free when you despair of it.  
You are a slave when you are eager for it.

Whoever does not advance to Allah by the tenderness of His goodness  
is chained to Him by the fetters of trial.

Whoever is not grateful for blessings is asking for them to vanish.  
Whoever is grateful for them ties them up with their own tether.

Fear that the fact that He is good to you when you are acting badly towards Him  
might be bait to draw you on.

*"We shall draw them on bit by bit, from where they do not know."*

It is ignorance on the part of the murid if he has bad *adab*  
to then say when the punishment is delayed,  
"If this were really bad *adab*,  
He would have cut off help or sent me into exile."

Help can be cut off while one is unaware of it  
- by stopping any increase  
- or by letting you do what you like.

When you see someone whom Allah has made persist in recitation of wirts  
and then continues to help him in that,  
do not despise what his Master has given him  
because you do not discern in him  
the mark of the gnostics or the radiance of the lovers.

No *warid*, no *wird*<sup>2</sup>.  
If a *warid* had not come, there would be no *wird*.

Allah makes some people serve Him  
while He singles out other people for His love.

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<sup>2</sup> *Wird*: a regular spiritual exercise involving recitation of a litany of dhikr.



*"Each We help, these and those,  
from the gift of your Lord  
and the gift of your Lord is not restricted."*

#### VIII.

It is very rare that divine *warids* come  
in other than a sudden flash.

That protects them -  
because the slaves cannot lay claim to them  
because they are ready for them.

When you see someone answering all he is asked,  
and remembering all he knows  
and interpreting all he sees  
- that proves that he is an ignorant man.

He made the Next World the place where He will reward His believing slaves  
because this world is not vast enough to hold what He wants to give them  
and because He thinks too much of them to reward them  
in a dimension which lacks any permanence.

If you find the fruit of your deeds quickly,  
that is a proof of your acceptance!

If you want to learn your value with Him  
look where He has put you.

When He provides you with obedience and having no need of other than Him,  
know that He has bestowed His outward and inward blessings on you.

#### IX.

The best you can seek from Him  
is what He seeks from you.

A sign of being deluded is:  
sorrow over loss of obedience while failing to get on with it.

# WAKENING ASPIRATION (*Iqâdh Al-Himam*): COMMENTARY ON THE HIKAM by Ibn 'Ajiba

## CHAPTER ONE

### A feeling of discouragement when you slip up

**is a sure sign that you put your faith in deeds.**

Reliance on a thing means to lean on it and to put one's trust in it. Deeds are the actions of either the heart or the body. If an action is in harmony with the Shari'a, it is called obedience. If it is contrary to the Shari'a, it is called disobedience.

The people of this science divide actions into three categories: actions of the Shari'a, actions of the Tariqa, and actions of Reality. This can be re-phrased as actions of Islam, actions of faith and actions of *ihsan*, or actions of worship, actions of slavery and actions of pure slavery, which is freedom. Or it can be referred to as the actions of the people of the beginning, the actions of the people in the middle and the actions of the people of the end. The Shari'a is that you worship Him; the Tariqa is that You aim for Him, and the reality is that you witness Him. You could also say that the Shari'a is putting the outward right, Tariqa is putting the conscience right, and the reality is putting the secret right.

Putting the limbs right is achieved by three matters: *tawba*, *taqwa* and rectitude. Putting hearts right is achieved by three matters: sincerity (*ikhlas*), truthfulness and being at peace. Putting the secrets right is achieved by three matters: watchful fear (*muraqaba*), witnessing and gnosis. You could also say that putting the outward right is by avoiding prohibitions and obeying commands; putting the secrets right is by freeing oneself of vices and taking on virtues; and putting the secrets, which are the *arwah* (spirits), right is achieved by making them give out, breaking them until they are disciplined and training them into having *adab*, humility and good character.

Know that we are speaking about the actions necessary for purifying the limbs, hearts or *arwah*. They have already been specified for each category. As for knowledge and gnosis, they are the fruits of purification and refinement. When the secret is pure, it is filled with knowledge, gnosis and lights.

Moving to a station is not valid until one has mastered what is before it. Whoever has a radiant beginning, has a radiant end. So a person does not move to the actions of the Tariqa until he has performed the actions of the Shari'a and trained his limbs to perform them so that he meets the preconditions for repentance, possesses the pillars of *taqwa* and puts in action the various types of rectitude. That consists of following the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in his words, deeds, and states.

Once the outward is pure and illuminated by the Shari'a, then he moves from the outward actions of Shari'a to the inward actions of the Tariqa, which is purifying oneself from the attributes of humanity as will be discussed. When he is free of the attributes of humanity, he is adorned with the attributes of spirituality, which is proper *adab* with Allah in His presencings (*tajalliyat*), which are His manifestations. Then the limbs have rest from toil and all that remains is good *adab*. One of those who are recognised said, "Whoever reaches the reality of Islam does not flag in action. Whoever reaches the reality of faith, cannot turn to acting by other than Allah. Whoever reaches the reality of *ihsan* cannot turn to anyone except Allah."

In travelling through these stations, the *murid* should not put his faith in himself nor on his actions, state, and strength. He must put his trust in the bounty of his Lord, His granting him success and His guidance. Allah says, "*Your Lord creates and chooses whatever He wishes. The choice is not theirs.*" (28:68) Allah says, "*If your Lord had wanted to, He would have made mankind into one community but they persist in their differences, except for those your Lord has mercy on.*" (11:118) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "None of you will enter the Garden by virtue of his actions." They asked, "Not even you, Messenger of Allah?" He said, "Not even me, unless Allah envelops me in his mercy."

Reliance on the lower selves is a sign of wretchedness and despair. Reliance on action comes from lack of being certain about things coming to an end. Reliance on generosity and states comes from lack of the company of the Men [of Sufism]. Reliance on Allah comes from realisation of gnosis of Allah. The sign of reliance on Allah is that your hopes are not lessened when you slip into disobedience nor are they increased when you do good. You can say that his fear is not great when needlessness issues from him, just as his hope is not removed when he is aware of it.

His fear and hope are always in equal balance because his fear is the result of witnessing majesty and his hope is the result of witnessing beauty. The majesty and beauty of the Real are not affected by increase or decrease. So what issues from them is not the same as what issues from someone who puts his trust in deeds since, when the deeds of such a person are few, his hope is little, and when his needs are numerous, he has great hope because of his *shirk* with his Lord and his realisation of his ignorance. If he were to be annihilated to himself and go on by his Lord, then he would have rest from his toil and achieve gnosis of his Lord.

He must have a perfect shaykh who will bring him out of the trouble of his self to his rest by witnessing his Lord. The perfect shaykh is the one who gives you rest from trouble, not the one who directs you to trouble. Whoever directs you to action, tires you. Whoever directs you to this world, cheats you. Whoever directs you to Allah has been faithful to you, as Shaykh Ibn Mashish, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Direction to Allah is direction to forgetting the self. When you forget yourself, you remember your Lord. Allah Almighty says, '*Remember your Lord when you forget.*' (18:24)" The reason for toil is remembering the self and being concerned with its affairs and portions. As for the one who is absent from them, he only has rest.

As for the words of Allah, "*We created man in trouble*" (90:4), they are specific to the people of the veil, Or you could say specific to the living selves. As for those who have died, the Almighty says, "*If he is one of Those Brought Near, there is solace and sweetness and a Garden of Delight*" (56:88), meaning he will have the solace of arrival and the sweetness of beauty and the garden of perfection. The Almighty says, "*They will not be affected by any tiredness there*" (15:48). Rest, however, is only obtained after toil, and victory is only obtained after seeking. "The Garden is surrounded by disliked things."

O you passionately in love with the meaning of Our beauty,

Our dowry is expensive for the one who proposes to Us:

An emaciated body and spirit full of care

and eyes which do not taste sleep,

And a heart which does not contain other than Us.

If you want to pay the price,

Then be annihilated if you wish for eternal annihilation.

Annihilation brings one near to that annihilation.

Remove the sandals when you come

to that quarter. He was radiant in it.

Cast off both beings and remove

what is between us from between Us.

When you are asked, "Who do you love?"

Say, "I am the One I love and the One I love is me."

We read in *Solving the Riddles*, "Know that you will not attain to the stages of nearness until you ascend six steep slopes. The first is the limbs abstaining from legal disobedience; the second is the self abstaining from normal familiar customs; the third is the heart abstaining from human flippancy; the fourth is the self abstaining from natural impurities; the fifth is the spirit abstaining from sensory favours; the sixth is the intellect abstaining from illusory imaginations. After the first slope you look down at the founts of wisdom. After the second you look at the secrets of divinely granted knowledge. After the third there appears to you the signs of the intimate conversations of the *malakut*. After the fourth, the lights of the stages of proximity shine to you. After the fifth, the lights of the manifestation of love appear to you. After the sixth slope, you descend to the meadows of the Holiest Presence and there you withdraw from what you

witnessed of the human subtle meanings of dense sensory things. When He desires to single you out and select you, He will give you a draught from the cup of His love. That drink will increase your thirst, as taste will increase your yearning, nearness will intensify your quest, and intoxication will increase your restlessness."

One of the excellent men was confused by the words of the Almighty, "*Enter the Garden for what you did*" (16:32) since the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "None of you will enter the Garden by his actions." The answer to that is that the Book and the Sunna go alternate between the Shari'a and the reality, or you could say prescription and realisation. They prescribe in some places and speak of the reality in others regarding the same thing. The Qur'an may legislate in one place while the Sunna gives the reality, and the reverse also occurs. The Messenger, peace be upon him, explained what Allah revealed. Allah says, "*We have sent down to the Reminder to you so that you can make clear to mankind what has been sent down to them..*" (16:44) His words, "*Enter the Garden for what you did*" is legislation for the people of wisdom, who are the people of the Shari'a, and the words of the Prophet are realisation for the people of power, who are the people of the reality. The words of the Almighty, "*But you will not will unless Allah wills.*" (81:29) is reality, while the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "When one of you has a good action, a good action is written for him" is Shari'a.

In short, the Sunna qualifies the Qur'an and the Qur'an qualifies the Sunna. So a person is obliged to have two eyes: one looks at the reality while the other looks at the Shari'a. If he finds that the Qur'an legislates in one place, there must be the reality in another, and the reverse is true. There is no contradiction between the *ayat* and the hadith nor any confusion.

There is another answer, which is that when Allah Almighty called people to *tawhid* and obedience, they would not enter it without desire and so He promised them a reward for actions. When their feet were firm in Islam, the Prophet, peace be upon them, brought them out from that and made them rise to sincere slavery and realisation of the station of sincerity. So he told them, "None of you will enter the Garden by his actions." Allah knows best. Here the answers of the people of the outward are of no use at all. When someone moves from outward actions to inward actions, the effect of that must appear on the limbs. The Almighty says, "*When kings enter a city, they lay waste to it.*" (27:34) The appearance of its effects is divestment or withdrawal (*tajrid*).

#### **Your desire to withdraw from everything**

**when Allah has involved you in the world of means**

**is a hidden appetite.**

#### **Your desire for involvement with the world of means**

**when Allah has withdrawn you from it**

**is a fall from high aspiration.**

*Tajrid* linguistically means "taking off and removing". One uses the term for things like removing a garment and shedding a skin. The Sufis fall into three categories: those who strip away only the outward, those who strip away only the inward, or those who strip away both. Outward divestment is to abandon worldly causes and break physical habits. Inward divestment is to abandon psychological and illusory attachments. To withdraw from both of them is to abandon both inward attachments and physical habits. You could say that outward *tajrid* is abandoning all that distracts the limbs from obeying Allah; inward *tajrid* is abandoning all that distracts the heart from presence with Allah, and doing both is the isolation of the heart and the vessel for Allah. Perfect *tajrid* outwardly to abandon causes and divest the body of normal clothes, and inwardly it is to divest the heart of every blameworthy quality and adorn it with every noble quality. That is the perfect *tajrid*.

When someone divests his outward and not his inward, he is a liar, like someone who calls copper silver. His inward is ugly and his outward pleasing. If someone divests his inward and not his outward, he is like someone who calls silver copper. That is rare since usually when someone is involved with his outward, he is also involved with his inward. If someone's outward is occupied with the physical, his inward is occupied with it, and strength cannot go in two directions. The one who divests both his inward his outward is the perfect truthful one. He is the pure gold which is proper for the treasuries of kings.

Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili said, "The *adab* of the divested faqir consists of four: respect for the old, mercy for the young, justice for yourself and not helping your self. The *adab* of the faqir using causes consists of four: befriending the pious, avoiding the impious, attending prayers in the group, and comforting the poor and wretched by what he one possesses. The faqir must also take on the *adab* of the divested since it is perfection for him. Part of the *adab* of someone employing causes is that he is established in what Allah establishes him of the use of causes until Allah Almighty is the One who moves him from that by the tongue of his shaykh or by a clear indication, like its impossibility in every aspect. Then he moves to *tajrid*."

His desire to withdraw when Allah has established means for him is a hidden appetite because the self desires rest by that and does not have enough certainty to endure the hardships of poverty. When poverty descends on him, he is shaken and upset and resorts to means, and so that is uglier than remaining with them. This is an aspect which is appetite, and it is hidden because inwardly he displays cutting off and asceticism, which is a noble state and sublime state, while inwardly he conceals his portion of rest, honour, wilaya or whatever. He did not intend to achieve slavery and certainty. He also lacks *adab* with Allah when he wants to leave without remaining patient until he is given permission. The sign of him remaining constantly in causes is that he has results, lack of attachments which cut him off from the deen and obtains sufficiency, but if he were to abandon that, he would look to people and be worried about provision. When these conditions cease to exist, then he moves to *tajrid*.

We read in *at-Tanwir*, "That which Allah demands of you is that you remain where He establishes you until Allah is the One to remove you as He brought you in. It is not your concern to abandon means. Your concern is that the means abandon you."

One of them said, "Once I abandoned a certain means and then I returned to it and then the means left me and I did not return to it. I went to Shaykh Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mursi when I had resolved to take on *tajrid*. I told myself, 'It is unlikely that I will reach Allah Almighty if the state I have which is occupation with outward knowledge and socialising with people.' Before I even spoke to him, he told me, 'A man who was occupied with outward knowledges and advanced in them kept my company and tasted something of this Path. He came to me and told me, "Sidi, I will leave what I am doing and devote myself to your company." I told him, "The business is not that. Rather remain in what you are in and what Allah has allotted you from us will reach you."' Then the shaykh looked at me and said, "That is how the true men (*siddiqun*) are. They do not leave anything until Allah is the One to remove them.' So I left him and Allah washed away those thoughts from my heart and I found rest in submission to Allah Almighty. Nonetheless they, as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, stated, 'are people whose companion is not wretched.'"

He said, "He forbade him *tajrid* because the greed of his *nafs* for it. When the self is greedy for something, it is easy for it, and that which is easy for it is not good. What is easy for it is only because it has a share in it."

And he also said, "The *murid* does not divest himself in a state of strength until it passes. If you want your self to benefit, if it is divested in a state of strength, then weakness will come to it which is followed by opponents who will unsettle it and tempt in a way which a master would not perceive because of his kindness and generosity in his company. Then he will revert to what he left and harbour a bad opinion of the people of divestment and say, 'They are based on nothing! We entered the land and did not see anything.'

The one who is for whom *tajrid* is heavy at first is the one who must divest himself because it is only heavy for him since he has realised that his neck is under the sword and if he moves his head at all, his vein will be severed.

As for the one who is divested, when he wants to return to using means without clear permission, that is a fall from high aspiration to low aspiration or a fall from great *wilaya* to lesser *wilaya*. The shaykh of our shaykh, Sidi 'Ali, said that his shaykh Sidi al-'Arabi said to him, "If I had seen anything higher, nearer and more beneficial than *tajrid*, I would have chosen it, but with the people of this Path it has in the position of the elixir: a qirat of it would fill what is between the east and west with gold. That is how *tajrid* is in this Path."

I heard the shaykh of our shaykh say, "The gnosis of the one divested is better and his thought clearer because purity comes from purity and turbidity comes from turbidity. The purity of the inward comes from the purity of the outward and the turbidity of the inward comes from the turbidity of the outward. Whenever you increase in the sensory, you decrease in the meaning."

In one report, "When a scholar takes something of this world, his rank is decreased with Allah, even if He is noble with Allah. As for the one who is permitted means, he is like the one who is divested since then his cause is actually slavery. So *tajrid* without permission is a means, and means with permission is *tajrid*. Success is by Allah."

**NOTE:** All this is about those who are travelling on the Path. As for those who have arrived and are firm, there is nothing to be said about them since they, may Allah be pleased with them, have been taken from themselves, seized by Allah and defended by Allah. Allah has taken charge of their affairs, preserved their secrets and guarded their hearts with armies of lights. The darkness of dust has no effect on them. That was the state of the Companions in means, may Allah be pleased with them and give us the benefit of their blessings! Amen.

Know that the one with the one involved with means and the one who is divested both work for Allah. Each of them obtains true turning to Allah. One of them said, "The example of the one who is divested and the one involved in causes resemble two slaves of a king. He tells one of them, "Work," and tells the other, "Stay in my presence. I will support you by my allotment." But the true turning in the divested person is stronger because of his lack of attachments and severing attachments, as it known.

The *himma* of the divested faqir is usually as the Prophet said, "Allah has men such that if they were to take an oath by Allah, Allah would fulfil their oath." Our shaykh said, "There are men such that they were when they aspire for a thing, it is by the permission of Allah." The Prophet also said, "Beware the insight of the believer. He sees by the light of Allah."

The shaykh feared that someone might imagine that *himma* can break through the walls of destiny and accomplish what the decree did not bring. This is why he said:

### **Aspiration which rushes on ahead**

**cannot break through the walls of destiny.**

Aspiration (*himma*) is the power the heart sends forth in seeking a thing and being concerned with it. If that matter is lofty, like gnosis of Allah and seeking His pleasure, it is called lofty *himma*. If it is a base matter, like seeking this world and its fortune, it is called base *himma*. Aspiration which rushes ahead cannot break through the walls of destiny, i.e. when the gnostic or *murid* aspires to something and his *himma* in that is strong, Allah Almighty will form that by His power in an instant so that his command is by Allah's command. The shaykh of our shaykh, Moulay al-'Arabi said, "When the truthful *murid* is annihilated in the Name, whenever he aspires to something, it is. If he is annihilated in the Essence, the thing which he needs is formed even before he aspires to it." That is true. In a report, Allah Almighty says, "I am Allah, When I say to a thing, 'Be!' it is. So obey Me and I will make you say to things 'Be!' and they will be." We also see in a sound hadith, "When I love him, I am his hearing, sight, and hand," and He affirms, "If he asks Me, I give to him."

Nonetheless, it does not have that alone. Nothing comes into being except what destiny and decree contains. So the *himma* of the gnostic is directed to the thing, and when it finds the decree, it rushes with it. That is by Allah's permission. If his *himma* finds the walls of destiny erected against it, it does not break through. Rather it shows *adab* and reverts to its attribute, which is slavery. It is not grieved or sad. It rejoices because it reverts to its proper place and true attribute.

Our shaykh's shaykh, Sidi 'Ali, said, "When we will something and it happens, we have one joy. When it does not happen, there are ten joys." That was due to his full gnosis of Allah. One of them was asked, "By what did you recognise your Lord?" He replied, "By the breaking of resolve."

This effect is obtained by strong *himma*. If the one with it is deficient, as occurs with someone with an evil eye and a sorcerer by virtue of their foulness, or a quality which Allah puts in them, when he looked at a thing with the intention of producing that by Allah's permission, none of this breaks through the walls of destiny. That is only what the One, the Conqueror wills. Allah Almighty says, "*They cannot harm anyone by it, except with Allah's permission,*" (2:102) and "*We have created all things in due measure,*" (54:49) and "*But you will not will unless Allah wills.*" (81:29) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Everything is by the decree and destiny," even incapacity and dexterity. Weak aspiration which rushes on ahead cannot accomplish anything. It is the same for good and evil.

His metaphor of breaking through walls has awareness of strength on both sides, but the barrier wins and the strength of the incapable slave is of no use. When *himma* does not break through the walls of destiny, there is no point in your reflecting and choosing, so he said:

**Give yourself a rest from managing!**

**When Someone Else is doing it for you,**

**don't you start doing it for yourself!**

Management (*tadbir*) linguistically means "to look into matters and their ends". The technical term, as Shaykh Zarruq says, means "the determination of matters which will occur in the future which are feared or hoped for, by judgement or entrustment. When that is accompanied by entrustment for the Next World, it is a good intention. When it is natural, it is for an appetite, or for this world, it is a wish."

There are three types of management: blameworthy, desirable, and permissible. The blameworthy is that which is accompanied by resolve and tenacity, whether it is for the *deen* or this world since it contains lack of *adab* and hastens fatigue when the Living, Self-Subsistent does not establish it. You will not achieve it by yourself.

Usually that which you start doing for yourself is not helped by the winds of destiny and is followed by cares and trouble. That is why Ahmad ibn Masruq said, "Whoever abandons management has rest." Sahl ibn 'Abdullah said, "Leave management and choice. They trouble people in their livelihood." The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Allah put ease and rest in pleasure and certainty."

Shaykh ash-Shadhili said, "Do not choose any of your affairs. Choose not to choose and flee from that choice, from your flight and from everything to Allah Almighty. '*Your Lord creates and chooses whatever He wills.*' (28:68)" He also said, "If you must manage, then manage to not manage." It is said that whoever does not manage is managed."

The shaykh of our shaykhs, Sidi 'Ali said, "One of the attributes of the perfect *wali* is that he only needs that which his Master has established him in the moment," i.e. what he wants only issues from the Decree.

As for the desirable part, it is to manage the obligations for which you are responsible and voluntary actions which are recommended while entrusting will and examination to destiny. This is called a righteous intention. The Prophet said, "The intention of the believer is better than his action." He also said, reporting from Allah, "When My slave desires to do good action and does not do it, I write a full good action for him."

This is understood from the words of the Shaykh, "When Someone Else is doing it for you, don't you start doing it for yourself." It is the act of obedience in which there is no harm in managing. That is why Ibrahim al-Khawwas said, "All knowledge is contained in two statements: 'Do not burden yourself with what you have enough of nor waste what you seek.'" "Do not burden yourself of what you have enough of" is the first blameworthy category and "do not waste" refers to the desirable part.

Shaykh ash-Shadhili said, "You have no say in all the choices and measures of the Shari'a. They are chosen by Allah and you simply hear and obey. This is the place of divine understanding and divine knowledge. It is the earth in which descends the knowledge of the reality from Allah for the one who is mature," meaning his intellect is mature, gnosis complete and his reality is in balance with his Shari'a. But he must not relax in that and become distracted from Allah.

The permissible part is management in worldly or natural matters while entrusting will and investigation to whatever destiny emerges without relying on any of that. That is what is understood of the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "Management is half of livelihood provided that it is not repeated time after time." The permitted amount is that it passes through the heart like the wind, entering one side and emerging from the other. This is management by Allah, and that is the business of the achieved gnostics. The sign of being by Allah is that when the opposite of what he manages issues from destiny, he is neither constricted nor upset.

Greet Salma and go where she goes.

Follow the winds of fate and turn where they turn.

We read in *at-Tanwir*, "Know that things are either censured or praised by what they lead you to. Blameworthy management is that which distracts you from Allah, makes you fail to rise to serve Allah and impairs your conduct with Allah. Praiseworthy management is that which leads you to nearness to Allah and connects you to His pleasure." The rest of his words deal with management and he also wrote a book on it called *Illumination of the Dropping of Management*. It is excellent. The perfect *wali*, Sidi Yaqut al-'Arishi said, "All of what I said is contained in two verses:

There is only what He wills.

So leave your cares and abandon them.

Leave your preoccupations

which distract you and you will have rest.

Complete involvement in management and choice indicates the dullness of the inner eye, and leaving that it or doing them by Allah indicates the opening of the inner eye. Then the author mentioned another clearer sign of the opening or dullness of the inner eye:

**Your striving for what is absolutely guaranteed to you**

**and your laxness in what is required of you**

**are evidence that your inner eye is dull.**

Striving for a thing is to devote one's effort and energy in seeking it. Laxness is negligence and wasting. The inner eye is the sight of the heart, as eyesight is the sight of the senses. The inner eye only sees meanings and the sight only sees sensory things. You could say that the inner eye only sees the subtle and the sight only sees the dense, or the inner eye only sees the timeless and sight only sees the temporal, or the inner eye only sees the Maker and sight only sees being.

When Allah desires to open the inner eye, He makes his outward occupation serving Him while his inward is occupied with love of Him. When inward love and outward service become great, the light of the inner eye grows strong until it overpowers sight, and the light of sight disappears in the light of the inner eye and so it only sees the subtle meanings and timeless lights which the inner eye sees. This is the meaning of the words of Shaykh al-Majdhub:

My sight vanished in sight,

and I was annihilated to everything ephemeral

I realised and did not find other

and remained delighted in the state.

When Allah wants to disappoint His slave, He makes his outward occupation serving phenomenal being while his inward is occupied with love of beings. Then he continues like that until the light of his inner eye is extinguished and the light of sight overcomes the light of the inner eye and he only sees the sensory and only serves the sensory. So he strives to obtain what is guaranteed for him of allotted provision and is lax in the obligations required of him. If he replaces striving with total absorption and laxness with abandonment, dullness becomes blindness, which is disbelief. We seek refuge with Allah! That is because this world is like the river of Goliath from which no one who drinks is saved except the one who scoops up a handful, not the one who slakes his thirst, so understand! Shaykh Zarruq said that.

Shaykh ash-Shadhili said, "The inner eye is like the eye. The least thing that falls in it prevents seeing, even if that does not lead to blindness. There is peril in something which spoils sight and renders thought turbid; and desire for it removes good altogether, and acting by it removes from the person a portion of his Islam and brings its opposite. When he continues in evil, Islam leaves him. When that reaches the level of attacking in the Community, continual injustice due to love for rank and position and love of this world rather than the Next World, then Islam completely leaves him. Do not be deluded by what you see in the outward. It has no spirit since Islam is love for Allah and love for His righteous slaves."

Striving for what is guaranteed is completely blameworthy, whether by action or word to hasten obtaining it by supplication or something else. He indicates that when he says:

**If you make intense supplication**

**and the timing of the answer is delayed,**



**do not despair of it.**

**His reply to you is guaranteed;**

**but in the way He chooses,**

**not the way you choose,**

**and at the moment He desires,**

**not the moment you desire.**

Intense supplication is to repeat a supplication for something needed in the same manner. Supplication is asking, which is accompanied by adab on the carpet of slavery in the presence of the Lord. That which demands the thing is intrinsic to its existence. Despair cuts off desires. Know that One of His names is *al-Qayyum*. It is an intensive form derived from establishment (*qiyam*). Allah undertook the creation of all, from His Throne to His earth. The source of every manifestation has a limited time and known term. Each has a known form and allotted provision. *"When their time comes, they cannot delay it a single hour nor bring it forward."* (7:34) When your heart is attached to one of the needs of this world and the Next, then return to the promise of Allah and be content with the knowledge of Allah and do not be greedy. There is fatigue and abasement in avarice. Our shaykh's shaykh, Moulay al-'Arabi, said, "People settle their needs with greed for them in them and yielding to them. We settle our needs by asceticism in them and being distracted by Allah from them, thinking them to be of little importance."

If you must make supplication, let your supplication be for slavery, not to seek your portion. If you leave portions, they will come to you. If seeking overwhelms you, and you seek something and then the time of giving is delayed for you, do not suspect Allah's promise when He says, *"Call on me and I will answer you."* (40:60) Do not despair of obtaining it. Allah has guaranteed to you that He will grant what He wishes of the good of this world and the good of the Next. His kindness to you may prevent that request since it is not right for you. Shaykh ash-Shadhili says, "O Allah, we are unable to avert harm from ourselves when we know what we know, so how can we not be incapable of that when we do not know what we do not know?"

One of the commentators said that *"Your Lord creates and chooses whatever He wills. The choice is not theirs"* (28:68) means that He chooses the matter in which they have choice and He answers you at that time when it is best and most beneficial for you, and then He gives that at the time in which He wishes, not at the time when you want. He may delay that until the Abode of Generosity and Abiding, and it is *"better and longer lasting."* (87:17)

In a hadith, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Someone who makes supplication must be one of three: either his request will be hastened to him, or its reward will be delayed for him or a like evil will be repelled from him." Shaykh Abu Muhammad 'Abdu'l-'Aziz al-Mahdawi said, "The one who does not leave his supplication by his choice with pleasure in the choice of Allah for him is drawn on bit by bit. He is one of those about whom it is said, 'Fulfill his need, I dislike to hear his voice.' It is by the choice of Allah, not by his choice for himself that he is answered, even if he is not given to. Actions are according to their seals."

So what is said about fulfilling the promise and carrying out what is promised is clear to you, but in the manner in which He wills and at the time He wills. In that He commands you to truthfulness and affirmation and forbids you doubt and hesitation to thereby complete the opening of your inner eye and the delight of the lights of your secret. Then he says:

**If something that is promised does not happen**

**even though the time for it is set,**

**do not doubt the promise!**

**If you do, that will dim your inner eye**

**and put out the light of your secret.**

Doubting about a thing is to vacillate between occurrence and non-occurrence. Dimming the inner eyes means to cover its rank. The inner eye is the faculty which perceives meaning and the secret is the faculty prepared for the firmness of knowledge and gnosis. Know that the *nafs*, intellect, *ruh* and secret are all the same thing, but they differ in what they perceive. That which perceives appetites is the *nafs*. That which perceives legal judgements is the intellect. That which perceives *tajalliyat* and *waridat* is the *ruh*. That which perceives realisations and fixed states is the secret. The place is the same.

Putting out the light of a thing is to conceal it after it has appeared. When Allah promises things on the tongue of Revelation or inspiration by a Prophet, *wali* or strong *tajalli*, do not doubt that promise, *murid*, if you are true. If the time is not specified, the matter has wide scope and the time may be long or short. So do not doubt that it will occur, even if it takes a long time. It took forty years for the realisation of the supplication of Musa and Harun against Pharaoh when he said, "*Our Lord, obliterate their wealth.*" (10:88) If the time is specified and that does not occur at its time, do not doubt the truth of that promise. That may be connected to reasons and unseen preconditions which Allah has concealed from that Prophet or *wali* to manifest His force, might and judgement. Reflect on the case of Yunus when he informed his people of the punishment as he had been told and then fled from them. That was connected to their lack of Islam. When they became Muslim, the punishment was deferred for them. The same is true of the case of Nuh when he said, "*My son is one of my family and Your promise is surely the truth.*" (11:45) So that coincided with the literal general meaning. Then Allah said to him, "*He is definitely not one of your family. He is someone whose action was not righteous.*" (11:46) "We promised you that your righteous family would be saved, even if you understood it to be general. Our knowledge is vast."

This is a hidden secret. The Prophets and great true men do not stop at the literal promise and so their agitation continues and they are not settled with other than Allah. Rather they look at the vastness of His knowledge and the effect of His force. Part of that is found in the words of Ibrahim the Friend, "*I have no fear of any partner you ascribe to Him unless My Lord should will such a thing to happen. My Lord encompasses all things in knowledge,*" (6:80) and the words of Shu'ayb, "We would never return it," i.e. to the religion of disbelief, "*unless Allah our Lord so willed. Our Lord encompasses everything in His knowledge.*" (7:89) There is also the case of our Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, on the Day of Badr when he prayed until his mantle fell off, saying, "O Allah, Your covenant and promise! O Allah, if this group is destroyed, there will be none left to worship you after today." The Siddiq said to him, "Enough, Messenger of Allah. Allah will fulfil His promise to you." So the Chosen looked further than its lack of occurrence in spite of the outward promise while the Siddiq remained with the literal. Each was correct. The Prophet had a wider view and more perfect knowledge.

As for the case of al-Hudaybiyya, the time of the promise was not clear in it since Allah says, "*He knew what you did not know.*" (48:27) When 'Umar said, "Did you not tell us that we would enter Makka?" he answered, "Did I tell you it would be this year?" "No," he replied. He said, "You will enter it and do *tawaf* in it."

My brother, clasp my hand on the basis of affirming what Allah has promised you and a good opinion of Him and His friends, especially our shaykh. Beware of concealing denial or doubt, so that that dims your inner eye and is a reason for its dulling and also for extinguishing the light of the secret. You might return back the way you came and destroy all that you have built, Look for the best interpretation and cling to the best conclusion. We already mentioned the words of the shaykh of our shaykh, Sidi 'Ali, "When we will something and it happens, we have one joy. When it does not happen, there are ten joys." That was only due to the vastness of his investigation and firm gnosis of his Lord.

Allah may acquaint His friends with the descent of the decree but not acquaint them with the descent of kindness. When the decree arrives accompanied by kindness, it is light and easy so that he thinks that it has not happened. We have witnessed both this and what we said before in ourselves and our shaykhs, It did not decrease our truthfulness nor extinguish the light of our secret. Praise be to our Lord.

**NOTE.** Sidi at-Tawudi ibn Sawda said, "This wisdom is obscure. Someone asks, 'How can it be imagined that the time is specified? If it is by Revelation, it has stopped, and if it is by inspiration, then doubt in it does not oblige dimming of the inner eye since belief in it is not mandatory.' We reply, 'Our words are concern the true *murids* who are travelling or those who have arrived. They are asked to affirm the shaykhs in all that they say since they are the heirs of the Prophets and so they follow in their footsteps. The Prophets had judgements revealed to them and the *awliya'* have inspiration because when the hearts are purified of impurities and other-than-Allah and filled with lights and secrets, only the Truth is manifest in them. When they make a promise or threat, the *murid* must believe it. If he has some doubt or hesitation about what Allah has promised by the tongue of his Prophet or shaykh, that dims the light of his inner eye and extinguishes his secret. If the time is not specified, wait for it to occur, even if it takes a long time. If the time is specified and it does not occur, interpret it as is done with the Messengers when it was dependant on hidden reasons and preconditions. That is the difference between the *siddiq* and *sadiq* because the *siddiq* has no hesitation or astonishment

while the *sadiq* hesitates and then resolves. If he sees a breaking of norms, he is astonished and finds that strange. Allah knows best."

Recognitions of force are the outwardly majesty and inwardly beauty which is followed by the attributes of perfection. The *murid* may doubt what Allah promises of blessing and the openings which result from it. That is why the shaykh says:

**When He opens a way for you and makes Himself known to you,**

**then do not worry about your lack of deeds.**

**He only opened the way for you**

**because He desired to make Himself known to you.**

**Do you not see that while He grants gnosis of Himself to you,**

**you have only deeds to offer Him?**

**What He brings you -**

**What you bring Him -**

**What a difference there is between them!**

"Opening" here means preparation and ease. It is usually used for good. Here it is followed by recognition of beautiful things and the manner in which they come. What is meant is the door and the entrance, and "making known" means to want for recognition to occur. You say, "Someone made himself known to me," when he sought to make himself known to you. Gnosis makes the reality of knowledge of what is known firm in the heart so that it cannot leave it.

When Allah grants you a manifestation by His Name, the Majestic, or His Name, the Conqueror, and by it opens to you a door and a way so that you recognise Him by it, then know that Allah was concerned with you, wanted to select you for His nearness, and choose you for His presence. So cling to *adab* with satisfaction and submission. Receive it with joy and happiness. Do not be concerned about physical actions you missed because of it. It is a means to actions of the heart. He only opened this door since He wanted to lift a veil between Him and you. Do you not know that the recognitions of majesty are those which He brings you so that you come to Him. You are guided to physical actions so that you arrive by them. There is a great difference between disordered actions and diseased states to which you are guided and what Allah grants you of gifts of divine gnoses and divinely granted knowledge.

So, *murid*, be happy about what comes to you of these recognitions of majesty, blows of force and things like that, like illnesses, pains, hardships, terrors and all that burdens and pains the *nafs*, like poverty, abasement, harm to creatures and other things which selves dislike. All that befalls you of these matters are, in fact, great blessings and ample gifts which indicate the strength of your truthfulness since the greatness of recognition is according to the extent of your truthfulness. Those with the greatest affliction are the Prophets, and then the next best and the next best. Truthfulness is followed. When Allah wants to shorten the distance between Him and His slave, He grants affliction power over him so that when he is purified and cleansed, he is sound for Presence, just as silver and gold are purified by fire so that they are fit for the king's treasury.

Shaykhs and gnostics continue to delight in these blows and to consider them to be gifts. Shaykh 'Ali al-'Imrani called them "the Night of Power" and said, "Confinement is the Night of Power which is better than a thousand months." That is because of the actions of hearts which the slave harvests from that. An atom of them are like mountains of the actions of limbs. I wrote two lines of poetry on that:

When a time of need knocks at my door,

I open to it the door of joy and happiness.

I tell it, "Welcome and welcome again!"

Your time with me is more beneficial than the Night of Power!

Know that these recognitions of majesty are a test from Allah and a gauge of people and that by which silver and gold are distinguished from copper. There are many pretenders who make a display of gnosis and certainty with their tongues. Then when the tempestuous winds of decrees strike them and cast them into the deserts of despair and denial. If someone claims what he does not have, his disgrace will be attested to by being tested.

Shaykh Moulay al-'Arabi used to say, "The greatest wonder of all is someone who seeks gnosis of Allah and is eager for it, but then when Allah gives him knowledge, he flees from it and denies it. Shaykh al-Buzidi said, "These recognitions of majesty fall into three categories. One is punishment and expulsion; one for discipline and admonition, and the third if for increase and ascension."

As for the category which is punishment and expulsion, it is for someone who has bad *adab* and so Allah Almighty punishes him. He is ignorant in that and becomes angry, despairs and denies and so that increases him in expulsion and distance from Allah. As for that which is discipline, it is for someone who has bad *adab* so Allah Almighty disciplines him and He teaches him through it and alerts him to his bad *adab* and he ceases his negligence. It is therefore a blessing for him in the form of retribution. As for that which is increase and ascension, it is for someone on whom these recognitions descend without reason and so he has gnosis through them and disciplines himself in them and rises to the station of firmness and stability. That is why one of them said, "It is by the amount of the testing that there is firmness."

**LESSON.** If you want for majesty to ease in respect of you, then meet it with its opposite, which is beauty. It will be transformed into beauty immediately, The method in that is that when He is manifest by His Name, the Constricter, outwardly, you should meet Him with expansion inwardly. Then it will become expansion. When He is manifest to you in His Name, the Strong, then meet Him with weakness. When He is manifest to you in His Name, the Mighty, meet Him with inward humility. That is how the thing is met with its opposite.

Shaykh Moulay al-'Arabi says, "This is all the same reality. If you drink it as honey, you find it to be honey. If you drink it as milk, you find it to be milk. If you drink it as colocynth, you will find it to be bitter colocynth. Therefore, my brother, drink what is pleasant and do not drink what is ugly."

Then he speaks about actions and their fruits, which are *adab*, being at peace under the passage of decrees without management, choice, hastening what is delayed or delaying what is hastened. That is the gauge of how to see what emerges from the element of power which you receive with gnosis. He speaks about their types of actions and the discipline of the one who does them.

**Different states have different outcomes.**

**This accounts for the variety of types of action.**

Actions here mean to physical movements while outcomes (*waridat*) refer to the movement of the heart. The passing thought, the *warid* and the state have the same locus: the heart. As long as the heart has both dark and light thoughts occur in it, what occurs is called a passing thought (*khâtir*). When dark thoughts leave it, what occurs to it is called a *wârid* or a state. Their relation to something is rhetorical. They both can change. When that state continues and lasts, it is called a station (*maqam*).

Outward actions vary according to inward states, or you could say that the actions of the limbs follow the actions of the hearts. When contraction comes to the heart, its effect appears on the limbs as stillness. When expansion comes to it, its effect appears on the limbs as lightness and movement. When asceticism and scrupulousness come to the heart, their effect appears on the limbs, which is abandonment and abstention. If desire and greed come to the heart, then their effect appears on the limbs, which is fatigue and exhaustion. If love and yearning come to the heart, their effect appears on the limbs as ecstasy and dancing. If gnosis and witnessing come to the heart, the effect which appears on the limbs is rest and stillness. The same applies to other states and the actions which result from them.

These states vary in the same heart, and so the outward actions vary. A heart may be dominated by one state and only one effect results from it. Contraction may dominate a person and he will usually be dispirited. Or he may be dominated by expansion or another state. Allah knows best.

The hadith states, "There is lump of flesh in the body, the nature of which is that when it is sound, the entire body is sound, and when it is corrupt, the entire body is corrupt - it is the heart." It is because of this that the states of the Sufis vary. Some of them are worshippers, some are ascetics, some are scrupulous, and some are murids and gnostics.

Shaykh Zarruq said in his *Qawa'id*, "Rule: Piety (*nask*) is adopting every way of virtue without paying attention to other than it. If someone desires realisation of that (*nask*), he is a worshipper. If he inclines to taking states, he is scrupulous. If he prefers to abandon seeking so as to be safe, he is an ascetic. If he releases himself in what Allah desires, he is a gnostic. If he adopts character and attachment, he is a *murid*."

He said in another rule: "Different paths do not remain different goals. In spite of the different methods, like worship, asceticism and gnosis, the unifier pursues the ways which lead to nearness to Allah on the Path of Nobility. All of them interpenetrate. So the gnostic must have worship or there is no point to his gnosis since he does not worship the One he recognises. He must have asceticism or there is no reality to him if he does not turn from what is other than Him. The worshipper must have both since there is no worship without recognition and there is no devotion to worship except with asceticism. The same is true for the ascetic, since there is no asceticism without recognition and no asceticism without worship. Otherwise the blessings are fruitless. The one who is dominated by action is a worshipper, the one dominated by abandonment is an ascetic, and the one dominated by looking at how Allah disposes of things is a gnostic. All is Sufism, and Allah knows best.

Since sincerity is a precondition for every action, he mentioned its effect:

**Actions are merely propped-up shapes.**

**Their life-breath is the presence of the secret of sincerity in them.**

Actions refer to physical movements or movements of the heart. The shapes are the qualities which the mind fixes. The life-breath (*ruh*) and the secret are lodged in living creatures. Here it refers to that by which perfection is achieved in actions. Sincerity is when the heart is devoted to the worship of the Lord as well as its secret and core. That is the truthfulness designated by being free of strength and might since it is only complete by it, even if it is sound without it since sincerity negates showing-off and hidden *shirk*. Its secret negates pride. Self-regard and showing off detract from the soundness of the action, while pride detracts only from its perfection.

All actions are forms and bodies. Their life-breath is the existence of sincerity in them. As forms can only abide with spirits since otherwise they are dead and fallen-down, so actions of the body and heart only abide by the existence of sincerity in them. Otherwise they are propped-up shapes and empty forms of no consideration Allah Almighty says, "*They were only ordered to worship Allah, making their deen sincerely His, as people of pure natural faith,*" (98:5) and "*Worship Allah, making your deen sincerely His.*" (39:2) The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, reported that Allah says, "I am the furthest removed from what is associated with Me." The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "That which I most fear for my community is hidden *shirk*. It is showing off." In one version, "Fear this hidden *shirk*, It creeps like an ant." They asked, "What is hidden *shirk*?" "Showing off," he replied.

In a hadith, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was asked about sincerity and said, "Not until I ask Jibril." When he asked him, he said, "Not until I ask the Lord of Might." When he asked Him, he told him, "It is one of My secrets which I have entrusted in the hearts of those of My slaves who loves Me. No angel sees it so that he records it and no shaytan sees it so that he can corrupt it" One of them said, "This is station of *ihsan*: that you worship Allah as if you were seeing Him."

Sincerity has three levels: the level of the common, the level of the elite, and the level of the elite of the elite. The sincerity of the common is to remove creation from dealings with Allah while seeking the portions of this world and the Next, like preservation of the body, money, expanded provision, castles and hours. The sincerity of the elite is to seek the portions of the Next world rather than this world. The sincerity of the elite of the elite to seek to remove all portions. So their worship is to fully realise slavedom and to undertake the requirements of the Lord, or love and yearning for His vision, as Ibn al-Farid said:

My request is not for bliss of the Garden.

I only desire to see You.

Another said:

All of them worship out of fear of the Fire

and see salvation as a generous portion,

Or seek to dwell in the Garden

and to relax in meadows and drink of Salsabil.

I have no opinion of Gardens or Fire.

I do not seek any recompense for my love.

Shaykh Abu Talib said, "Sincerity with the sincere is to remove creatures from one's dealings with the Real. The first of creatures is the self. Sincerity among the lovers is not to do an action for the sake of the self. Otherwise it is affected by looking for recompense or inclining to the portion of the self. For the unifiers, sincerity is to remove creatures from dealings with of the Real by not seeing them in actions and not relying and relaxing with them in states."

One of the shaykhs said, "Make your actions sound with sincerity and make your sincerity sound by being free from strength and power." One of the gnostics said, "Sincerity is not achieved until people do not see and until he fails to think of people." That is why another said, "Whenever you fall in people's eyes, you become great in Allah's eyes. Whenever you become great in the eyes of people, you fall in Allah's eye." This is when you take note of them and are watchful of them.

I heard our shaykh say, "As long as the slave continues to watch people and have awe of them, his sincerity will never be fully realised." He also said, "Your watching Allah will never be combined with watching creation because it is impossible that you see Him and see other-than-Him with Him." The upshot is that it is not possible to ever leave the self and to be purified of subtle showing-off without a Shaykh. Allah knows best.

So obscurity is part of sincerity. Indeed, it is usually only achieved by it since the self has no portion in it. That is why he said:

**Bury your existence in the earth of obscurity.**

**If something sprouts before it is buried,**

**its fruits will never ripen.**

Burying is to cover up and conceal. Obscurity is loss of position with people. "Fruits" is a metaphor for wisdoms, gifts and knowledge which the slave harvests from gnosis of Allah. That is when his *nafs* dies and his *ruh* lives.

*Murid*, conceal your *nafs* and bury it in obscurity so that it is intimate with it, happy with it and finds it sweeter than honey, and to display itself becomes more bitter than colocynth. When you bury it in the land of obscurity and its roots stretch out in it, then you will pluck its fruits and obtain its yield: the secret of sincerity and realisation of the station of the elite of elite. If you do not bury it in the earth of obscurity and allow it to make itself famous, its tree dies or its fruits drop off. The when the gnostics harvest from what they have planted of the gardens of their gnosis and what they buried of the treasures of wisdoms and storehouses of understanding remain, you will be poor, begging or trying to steal.

Sayyiduna 'Isa, peace be upon him, asked his companions, "Where does grain grow?" They replied, "In the earth." He said, "It is the same for wisdom. It only grows in the heart which is like the earth." One of the gnostics said, "Whenever you bury your *nafs* in earth after earth, your heart rises heaven after heaven."

Once Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was sitting with al-Aqra' ibn Habis, a great man of the Banu Tamim, when one of the poor Muslims passed by. He asked al-Aqra', "What do you say about this one?" He replied, "Messenger of Allah, this is just one of the poor Muslims. If he were to propose marriage, his proposal would not be worth accepting, and if he were to intercede, his intercession would not be granted, and if he were to speak, his words would not be listened to," Then a wealthy man passed by them and the Messenger of Allah asked him, "And

what do you say about this one?" He replied, "If he proposes marriage, his proposal is accepted, if he intercedes his intercession would be granted, and if he were to speak, his words would be listened to." The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "This (poor man) is better than what the earth contains and better than this one."

There are many hadiths and sayings which praise obscurity. If it contained nothing but rest and freeing the heart, that would be enough. Al-Hadrami wrote:

Live obscure among people and be pleased with that.

That is sounder for this world and the *deen*.

If someone associates with people, his *deen* is not safe

and he vacillates between being moved and being still.

One of the wise said, "Obscurity is a blessing but the *nafs* rejects it. Display is revenge while the *nafs* desires it." He said, "The end of this Path of ours is only proper for people who sweep rubbish heaps with their spirits."

Someone who is tested by rank and leadership must make use of ruin in which a way that it will lower his rank, provided it is disliked rather than that which agreed to be unlawful, with the aim of treating that, like begging in shops or houses, eating in markets and where people will see him, sleeping in them, drinking with a waterskin, carrying rubbish on his head, walking barefooted, making a display of greed, miserliness and avarice, wearing the *muraqqa'a* (patched robe) and large prayer beads, and all that burdens the *nafs* which is permitted or disliked, but not unlawful.

Shaykh Zarruq said, "As it is not proper to bury crops in foul earth, it is not permitted to be obscure with a state which is not pleasing to Allah. Taking that to be analogous with choking is not sound because loss of physical life prevents every good, whether mandatory or recommended, the consensus is that is forbidden to lose it when it is possible to survive by the words of Allah, '*Do not cast yourselves into destruction.*' (2:195) That is not the case with obscurity. Nothing of that misses him. Instead perfection is obtained by it, which is denial of rank and position, when its basis is permissibility." Some of them reply that loss of ephemeral life is more fitting than loss of abiding life, which is gnosis, so reflect. The story of the thief in the bath house attests to this, and Allah knows best.

I heard our Shaykh say "The truthful *faqir* kills his *nafs* with the least of the permitted and the lying *faqir* falls into the forbidden and does not kill it." He often forbade dark states. He said, "We have enough of the permissible to spare us from the unlawful and disliked."

Begging is disliked or forbidden by the aim of obtaining food for bodies when you have enough. If it is with the aim of sustaining life, it is not unlawful. In his commentary on al-Bukhari, al-Qastallani mentioned from Ibn al-'Arabi that it is mandatory for the *faqir* in his beginning. Look at what he says there. He mentions enough about it in the *Basic Research*. Look there. It will be discussed later.

This ruin which I mentioned can also entail fame since obscurity is being hidden from people's eyes. This may entail has great exposure.

Obscurity is the lowering of position in the eyes of people, concealing the secret of *wilaya*, and all that will lower one's position with them and negate the suspicion of *wilaya* is obscurity, even if there is some display outwardly. That is why our shaykh said, "This Path of ours is obscurity outwardly and appearance in obscurity."

An-Najibi said in *al-Inala*, "As for those among the Sufis who say that the *muraqqa'a* is fame, the response is found in the fact that Salman al-Farisi from Iraq to Syria travelled to visit Abu'd-Darda' on foot wearing a coarse mantle. He was told, "You have made yourself famous." He said, "Good is the good of the Next World. I am a slave who dresses as a slave. When I am free, then I will wear a robe of honour and not worry about its borders."

Part of that is the story of al-Ghazali carrying ox-hides on his back when he met his shaykh, al-Kharraz, sweeping market and using a waterskin to give people water. That is what I heard many times from the Shaykh but I did find it anyone else who knew it.

There is also the story of ash-Shushtari with his shaykh who was 70. Ash-Shushtari was a government minister and scholar and his father was an amir. When he wanted to embark on the Path of the People (of Sufism), his shaykh told him, "You will not obtain any of it until you sell your goods, wear tattered garments, take a banner and enter the market. He did all that and said to him, "What should we say in the market?" He said, "Say, 'I begin by mentioning the Beloved.'" So he entered the market, waving his banner and said, "I begin by mentioning the Beloved." He kept it up for three days and the veils were rent. He began to sing about the knowledge of tastes in the market.

There is a similar story about a man who was with Abu Yazid al-Bistami. For thirty years the man did not leave his gathering nor part from him. He said one day, "Master, for thirty years I have fasted in the day and prayed at night, and I left appetites and I did not find anything at all of what you mentioned in my heart. I believe and affirm all you say." Abu Yazid said to him, "If you were to pray for 30 years while you are as I see you, you will still never find a single atom of it." He asked, "Why, master?" He replied, "Because you are veiled by your *nafs*." He asked, "Does this have a remedy so that this veil can be removed?" "Yes," he replied, "but you will not accept or do it." "Yes," he insisted, "I will do what you say." Abu Yazid told him, "Go immediately to the barber and shave your head and beard. Remove these clothes and put on a woollen wrap. Suspend a nosebag from your neck and fill it with walnuts. Gather children around you and say in your loudest voice, 'Children! I will give a nut to whoever gives me a slap!' Then enter the market in which you are respected in this state until everyone who knows you looks at you." He exclaimed, "Abu Yazid, glory be to Allah! Do you say this to someone like me and think that I will do it!" He told him, "Your words, 'Glory be to Allah' are *shirk*." He asked him, "How?" Abu Yazid said, "Because you esteem your *nafs* and so you glorify it." He said, "Abu Yazid, I cannot do this and I will not do this, but direct me to something than this that I can do." Abu Yazid told him, "Begin with this before everything until your rank falls from you and you humble your *nafs*, and then after that I will tell you what is proper for you." He said, "I cannot do this." He said, "And you said that you would accept and do it. I know that a person will have no desire for the secrets of the unseen which are veiled from the common people until he makes his *nafs* die and breaks the customs of the common people. Then normal patterns will be broken for him and benefits will appear to him."

There is also the story of Abu 'Imran al-Barda'i with his shaykh Abu 'Abdullah at-Taudi in Fes. He shaved his head, put on a gallabiya and took a loaf of bread, calling out for someone to save him from it. He did all that. There is the story of Shaykh 'Abdu'r-Rahman al-Majdhub, who ate figs from people's trees, sang in the markets. We also have the story of Sidi 'Ali al-Imrani and his ruining his reputation in Fes which is famous. There is also the story of Shaykh Moulay al-'Arabi who wore a sack and gave people water from a waterskin. Other things which are well known.

These stories indicate that obscurity is not what the common people understand it to be: staying inside houses and fleeing to mountains. For those with realisation, that is tantamount to ostentation itself. Obscurity, as Shaykh Zarruq said, "is for the *nafs* to fully realise its lowest description and be constantly aware of it. Its lowest description is abasement and all that burdensome for it. So he resorts to realising the attribute of humility and its fruit in order to obtain action and the perfection of the reality."

If you said that doing things like this will entail exposing oneself to people's words and making them fall into slander, I reply that it depends on the aim and intention. If someone does any of that with the aim of killing his *nafs*, achieving sincerity and to heal his heart, he forgives and excuses those who talk about him. In his book, Sidi 'Ali said, "We excuse those who excuse us and excuse those who do not excuse us."

In the *Qawa'id*, Shaykh Zarruq said, "The legal ruling is general for the common people because its aim to establish the outward Shari'a, raise its minaret and make its words victorious while the ruling of *tasawwuf* is for the elite because it is the relationship of the slave with his Lord and no more. So it is valid for a *faqih* to object to a Sufi, but not valid for a Sufi to obey to a *faqih*. One must return from *tasawwuf* to *fiqh* in judgements, but not in realities.

**NOTE:** These remedies which we mentioned are for the state of illness. As for the one who has achieved its cure and perfected his annihilation, he is the slave of Allah whether he shows it or hides it. Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mursi said, "If someone desires to make a display, he is the slave of display, and if someone desires concealment, he is the slave of concealment. The slave of Allah is the same whether he is public or concealed."

Since purification of the finer points of ostentation and self-deception is only achieved by reflection, and reflection is only completed by retreat, he said:

**Withdraw the heart into the arena of reflection**

**- nothing helps the heart more than that!**



Helping is to make the benefit arrive. The heart is the faculty which is ready to accept knowledge. Withdrawal means to isolate the heart with Allah, and he means *khalwa* (retreat) by it, which is isolating the vessel from people, and it is what is meant here. The heart is usually only isolated when the vessel is isolated. The arena is used for thoughts since they recur as horses so when running a circuit. Reflection is when the heart travels to the Presence of the Lord. There are two categories of thought: reflection which is affirmation and faith, and reflection which is witnessing and eye-witnessing, as will come.

I say that there is nothing more beneficial to the heart than withdrawal accompanied by reflection because withdrawal is like the fever and reflection is the remedy. The remedy is of no use without the fever and there is no benefit in the fever without the remedy. So there is no good in retreat without reflection nor activation of reflection without withdrawal since what is desired of withdrawal is to free the heart, and what is desired in freeing the heart is to let the heart move around and we occupied with thought. What is desired by the act of thought is to obtain knowledge and for it to be firm in the heart. When the knowledge of Allah is firm in the heart, that is its remedy and the goal of his health. It is what Allah calls "the sound heart". Allah Almighty says about the Rising, "*The Day when neither wealth nor sons will be of any use – except to those who come to Allah with sound and flawless hearts.*" (26:89) They said that the heart is like the stomach. When the humours dominate it, it becomes ill, and only the fever will help it. It reduces its matter and prevents a lot of humours.

In hadith, "The stomach is the house of the illness, and fever is the head of the healing." It is like that for the heart. When thoughts gain control over it and the senses overpower it, it becomes ill and it may die without the fever helping it and fleeing from its places, which is socialising. When he withdraws from people and reflects, then its remedy succeeds and his heart is straight. Otherwise, it remains ill until he meets Allah with a heart ill with doubt and ruinous thoughts. We ask Allah for well-being.

Al-Junayd said, "The noblest of gatherings is sitting with reflection in the arenas of *tawhid*." Shaykh ash-Shadhili said, "The fruits of retreat is obtaining the gifts of grace. They are four in number: the removal of the covering, the descent of mercy, the realisation of love and a truthful tongue in speech. Allah Almighty says, '*When he had separated himself from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We gave to him.*' (19:49)"

Know that there are ten benefits in *khalwa*.

1. The first is security from the disasters of the tongue. If someone is alone, he does not find anyone to talk to. The Prophet, peace be upon, said, "May Allah show mercy to a person who is silent and is safe, or speaks and gives good." In general one is not safe from its banes except for someone who prefers retreat to meeting with people. Shaykh Sidi 'Ali said, "When I see a *faqir* preferring retreat to meeting, silence to speech, and fasting to being full, I know that his melon is sweet. When I see him preferring socialising, speech and fullness over their opposites, I know that his melon is hollow."

We read in *al-Qut*, "A lot of speech shows lack of scrupulousness, lack of *taqwa*, a lengthy calling to account, the unrolling of the scroll, a great number of claimants, connecting the wronged to the wronger, a great deal of testimony from the noble scribes, and constant turning away from the Noble King because words are a key to the major sins of the tongue: lying, slander, backbiting, and false testimony, It says in tradition, "Most of the sins of the sons of Adam will be by the tongue," and "the people with the greatest number of wrong actions on the Day of Rising will be those who most delve into what does not concern them."

2. The second benefit is preserving the eye and being safe from the banes of looking. Whoever withdraws from people is *safe from looking at them and at what they possess of the flower of this world and its adornments*. Allah Almighty says, "*Do not direct your eyes longingly to what We have given certain of them to enjoy, the flower of the life of this world, so that We can test them by it.*" (20:130) So He forbids the *nafs* to look at that and to compete with its people. Muhammad ibn Sirin said, "Beware of looking too much. It leads to excess appetite." One of the writers said, "Anyone who looks a lot, has constant regrets." They said, "The eye is a reason for destruction." If someone gives his eye free rein, he seeks his own destruction. Looking with the eye at things renders the heart dispersed.

3. The third is preserving and protecting the heart from showing off, flattery and other illnesses. One of sages said, "Anyone who socialises with people flatters them. Whoever flatters them shows off to them. Whoever shows off to them, falls into what they fall into and so he is destroyed as they are destroyed."

One of the Sufis said, "I asked one of the Abdal devoted to Allah, 'What is the route to realisation?' He replied, 'Do not look at creatures. Looking at them is darkness.' I replied, 'I must.' He said, 'Then do not listen to their words. Their words are hardness.' I replied, 'I must.' He said, 'Do not deal with them. Dealing with them is loss, regret and alienation.'

I replied, 'I am among them and so I must deal with them.' He said, 'Then do not rely on them. Relying on them is destruction.' I said, 'This might be possible.' He said, 'You look at those who play, listen to the words of the ignorant, deal with the falsifiers, rely on those who are destroyed, and you want to experience the sweetness of obedience when your heart is with other than Allah! Unlikely! This will never be!' Then he left me."

Al-Qushayri said, "When the masters of striving want to protect their hearts from ruinous thoughts, they do not look at the pleasant things, i.e. of this world." He said, "This is a major basis for them in striving in the states of discipline."

4. Obtaining asceticism in this world and being satisfied with it. That contains the honour and perfection of a slave and is a reason for being loved by his Master since the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Do with little of this world and Allah will love you, and do with little of what belongs to other people and people will love you." There is no doubt that someone who isolates himself from people and does not look at what he has of desire for this world and pursuit of it is safe from following them in that and is safe from following ruinous natures and base qualities. Few of those who mix with them are safe from what they are doing. It is reported that the Prophet 'Isa said, "Do not sit with the dead so that your hearts die." They asked, "Who are the dead, Spirit of Allah?" He replied, "Those who love this world and desire it,"

5. Safety from the company of the evil and mixing with the base. Mixing with them contains immense corruption and terrible danger. One tradition reads, "The metaphor of the bad companion is that of the bellows. If it does not burn you with its sparks, its foul smell clings to you." Sidi 'Abdu'r-Rahman al-Majdhub said, "Sitting with other than the good is ruinous, even if you are pure."

Allah Almighty revealed to Da'ud, "Da'ud, why do I see you alone and withdrawn?" He said, "My God, I turned to creation for Your sake." He said, "Da'ud, be wakeful and return to brothers. Do not accompany any brother who does not keep you with My happiness. He is your enemy and your heart will become hard and put you far from me." If you desire company, then you must have the company of the Sufis. Their company is a treasure which does not run out." Al-Junayd said, "When Allah desires good for a person, He puts him with the Sufis and denies him the company of the reciters." He said, "By Allah, someone who has success only achieves it except through keeping company with the one who has achieved success."

6. Devotion to worship and *dhikr* and resolve to have *taqwa* and good action. There is no doubt that when a person is alone, he devotes himself to the worship of his Lord and concentrates his limbs and heart on it since there is nothing to distract him from that. We read in *al-Qut*, "As for *khalwa*, it frees the heart from people and concentrates *himma* on the Creator and strengthens the resolve to be firm."

7. Experiencing the sweetness of acts of obedience and firm pleasure in permitted things which fill his secret. This is well tested and sound. Abu Talib said, "The *murid* is not truthful until he experiences sweetness, energy and strength in *khalwa* which he does not find when in the public, and until his intimacy is in being alone, his solace is in retreat and the best of his actions are done in secret."

8. Rest for the heart and body. Mixing with people results in the fatigue of the heart due to concern with their business and the fatigue of the body due to striving for their desires and doing what they want. Even if there is a reward in that, he misses what is greater and more important, which is the concentration of the heart in the presence of the Lord.

9. Protection of the self and *deen* from being exposed to the evils and quarrels which mixing obliges. The *nafs* is eager to rush to involve itself in such things when it is joined to the masters of this world and to content with them for it. Ash-Shafi'i said:

For anyone who tastes this world, I have eaten it,

and its sweetness and punishment were driven to me,

And I only found that it was nothing but delusion and falsehood

like a mirage appearing in the desert.

It is nothing but a transformed corpse,

which the dogs of concern are attracted.

If you avoid it, you will live in safety from its people.

If you are attracted to it, its dogs will snap at you.

10. Firmness in the worship of reflection and contemplation, and it is the greatest goal of *khalwa*. A tradition says, "Reflection for an hour is better than seventy years of worship." 'Isa used to say, "Bliss for someone whose words are *dhikr*, whose silence is reflection, and whose glance is a lesson." The cleverest of people is the one who humbles his *nafs* and works for what is after death." Ka'b said, "Anyone who desires the honour of the Next World should reflect a lot." The best worship of Abu'd-Darda' was reflection. That is because by it one reaches the realities of things, makes the truth clear from falsehood, is aware of the hidden banes and ruses of the *nafs* and the delusion of this world, and by it he recognises the devices to use to protect oneself from them and be purified of them.

Al-Hasan said, "Reflection is a mirror which shows you your good and bad. It also acquaints you with the immensity and majesty of Allah when you reflect on His signs and works. It also acquaints you with His blessings and gifts, majesty and hidden. By that it gives you radiant states which remove the illness of your heart and make you go straight in obeying your Lord." Shaykh Ibn 'Abbad said, "These are the fruits of the retreat of the people of the beginning. As for the people of the end, their retreat is always with them, even if they are in the midst of people, because they are strong and veiled by gatheredness from separation and by meaning from the sensory." Retreat and mixing are the same for them because they take their share from each but none takes a share from them. Shaykh al-Majdhub said on this:

Creation is lights and I graze among them.

They are the greatest veils for the one among them.

If the *murid* is ascribed to withdrawal, silence, hunger and wakefulness, his *wilaya* is complete, divine concern appears to him, lights shine on him and the forms of others are effaced from the mirror of his heart. The shaykh indicated that when he was amazed at its opposite:

### **If the forms of phenomenal beings**

**are embedded in the mirror of the heart,**

**how can it be illuminated?**

The forms of beings are the individuals and their representations in the senses and ideas. Beings are types of creatures, small or large. "Embedded" means firm, since when something is embedded and stamped on something, its effect appears on it. Mirror is a metaphor for the insight which is the eye of the heart in which things, good and ugly, are manifested.

Allah made the heart of the human being like a polished mirror in which is embedded what is in front of it. It has only one direction. When Allah desires concern for His slaves, He occupies his reflection with the lights of His Malakut and the secrets of His Jabarut and the heart is not attached to the love of any of dark beings and false illusions. So the lights of faith and *ihsan* are embedded in the mirror of his heart and the moons of *tawhid* and suns of gnosis shine in it. That was indicated by ash-Shushtari when he said, "Lower the eye and you will see and your reports will appear. Be annihilated to mankind and your secrets will appear to you. By polishing the mirror, your denial is removed." Then he said, "The sphere revolves in you, gives light and shines, and the suns and the moons disappear and rise in you. Polishing the mirror of your heart removes your denial of the Truth so that you recognise it in everything and your heart becomes the axis of the sphere of lights. In it the moons of *tawhid* and suns of gnosis appear."

When Allah wants to disappoint a slave by His justice and wisdom, he occupies himself with dark beings and physical appetites, and those beings become embedded in the mirror of his heart and so by their phenomenal darkness and imaginary forms, he is veiled from the rising of the suns of gnosis and the lights of faith. Whenever the forms of things pile up in him, their light is extinguished and their veil reinforced. So you only see the sensory and only reflect on the sensory. Part of that is the reinforcement of their veil and total extinguishing of its light and so it does not acknowledge the existence of light in its source. That is the station of disbelief - we seek refuge with Allah!

Part of that is when the rust is less and the veil is thinner and so they affirm the light even though they do not witness it. This is the station of the common Muslims. They vary in nearness and distance, and strength and weakness of evidence, each according to his certainty and lack of ties to this world and attachments of appetites and illusion.

In a hadith it says that the hearts rust as iron rusts and that faith wears out as a new garment wears out. In another hadith it says that everything has a polisher, and that which polishes the hearts is *dhikru'llah*. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, also said, "When someone commits a wrong action, a black spot forms in his heart. If he refrains and asks forgiveness, it is polished. If he repeats it, it grows in the heart until it overwhelms his heart. That is the rust which Allah mentions: '*No indeed! Rather what they earned has rusted up their hearts.*' (83:14)"

Since you know that the heart only has one direction, when it faces light, it shines and when it faces darkness, it is darkened. Darkness and light are never combined. So you then know the reason for the wonder of the shaykh when he said, "How can a heart shine with the light of faith and *ihsan* when the dark forms of beings are embedded in the mirror of his heart? Two opposites are not combined. Allah Almighty says, "*Allah has not allotted a man two hearts in his breast.*" (33:4) So, *faqir*, you only have one heart. When you turn to creatures, you turn away from the Real. When you turn to the Real, you turn away from creatures and travel from the world of the Mulk to the Malakut and from the Malakut to the Jabarut. As long as you remain shackled in this world by your appetites and you cannot travel to your Lord. He indicated that when he said:

**If it is fettered by its appetites,**

**how can it travel to Allah?**

Travel is rising and moving from land to another land. Here it is moving from looking at being to witnessing the Maker of Being, or from the Mulk to the Malakut, or from stopping at secondary causes to seeing the Causer of causes, or from the abode of negligence to the abode of wakefulness, or from the portions of the *nafs* to the rights of Allah, or from the world of impurities to the world of purity, or from seeing the sensory to witnessing the meaning, or from ignorance to gnosis, or from the knowledge of certainty to the source of certainty, or from the source of certainty to the truth of certainty, or from watchfulness to witnessing, or from the station of the wayfarers to the abode of those who are firm. Fetters are shackles, and what is meant by the appetites is all that the *nafs* desires and to which it inclines.

Travel is not combined with fetters. As long as the heart feels an inclination to something of these ephemeral goods, even if it is permitted in the Shari'a, he is shackled and fettered in its abode and does not travel to the Malakut nor do the lights of the Jabarut shine on him. So the heart's attachment to its appetites prevents it from rising to Allah since it is busy turning to them. If it moves swiftly, it is not safe from stumbling with them because of the fondness the *nafs* has for them. That is why the great men abandoned its pleasures so that Shaykh Zarruq said, "Hornets' stings on a wounded body is easier than the sting of appetites in hearts,"

This is when the heart is attached to seeking them before obtaining them. Otherwise, the heart is not attached to them. It was already said that the reality of *tasawwuf* is that you should be with Allah without attachment. Our shaykh used to say, "If you want to be given a share, no one with an attachment in his heart enters the world of the Malakut." So, my brother, eradicate the roots of attachments in yourself and flee from the land of attachments and the lights of the realities will shine to you. This is why travelling and *hijra* are confirmed matters for the *murid* since remaining in this sensory land is not free of sensory attachments.

They said, "The *faqir* is like water. When it remains for a long time in the same place, it changes, If it flows, it is sweet." According to how much it travels in the senses, it travels in the meaning. According to how much the vessel travels, the heart travels. *Hijra* is a sunna of the Prophet. Since the time the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, emigrated, he had no rest except in journeying for jihad until Allah opened the lands. It was the same for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Only a few of them were remained in his homeland until the time when Allah conquered all the lands at their hands and guided people by them. May Allah give us the benefit of their blessings. Amen.

When the heart travels from the abode of its appetites and is purified of the filth of its negligence, it reaches the presence of its Lord and is granted contemplation of His nearness. This why he says:

**If it is not purified of the great impurity of its heedlessness,**

**how can it aspire to enter the presence of Allah?**

This is the presence of the heart with the Lord. There are three categories: the presence of the hearts, the presence of the spirits, and the presence of the secrets. The presence of the hearts is for the travellers, the presence of the spirits for those who are looking upwards, and the presence of the secrets for those who are firm. Or you can say, the presence of

the hearts is for the people of watchfulness, the presence of the spirits for the people of contemplation, and the presence of secrets for the people who speak directly.

The secret of that is that while the *ruh* continues to vacillate between heedlessness and presence, it is in the presence of the hearts. When it has rest by arrival, it is called a *ruh* and is in the presence of the spirits. When it is firm and purified and becomes one of the secrets of Allah, it is called a secret and it is in the presence of the secrets. Allah knows best.

The presence is pure, purified, and lofty. None but the purified enter it. So it is forbidden for the impure heart to enter the mosque of the Presence. The great impurity of the heart is its heedlessness of Allah. The Almighty says, "*O you who believe! Do not approach the prayer when you are drunk, so that you will know what you are saying, nor in a state of janaba – unless you are travelling – until you have washed yourselves completely.*" (4:43) This means do not come near the prayer of presence when you are drunk with the love of this world and the witnessing of others until you are alert and can reflect on what you say in the presence of the King, nor in a state of *janaba* from the intercourse of heedlessness witnessing others until you are purified with the water of the unseen. This is indicated by al-Hatimi in the biography of Abu'l-Mawahib:

Do *wudu'* with the water of the unseen if you have a secret.

Otherwise do *tayammum* with good earth or stone.

Go forward if you are an imam

and pray the *Dhuhr* prayer at the beginning of *'Asr*

This is the prayer of those with gnosis of their Lord.

If you are one of them, then sprinkle the land with the sea.

It means you purify your *nafs* with the water of the unseen by witnessing your Lord, or you are purified of witnessing of the sensory by witnessing the meaning, or you are purified of witnessing the visible world by witnessing the Unseen world, or you are purified of witnessing others by the water of knowledge on Allah. Then what is other than Him withdraws from you. When you are purified of witnessing others, you are purified of all faults. Ash-Shushtari indicated that:

Purify the eye with shed tears for the witnessing of others

and every fault will be removed.

This water, which is the water of the unseen, which descends from the purity of the seas of the Jabarut to the basins of the meadows of the Malakut and waters the clouds of mercy which are moved by the winds of guidance which drives them to the earth of the good selves. Then the valleys of illuminated hearts and gulfs of the purified spirits are filled by it. Allah indicates that when He says, "*He sends down water from the sky and river-beds fill up and flow according to their size, and the floodwater carries with it an increasing layer of scum.*" (13:17) Allah compared useful knowledge to the rain descending from heaven. As the rain fills river-beds, creeks, springs and rivers which flow according to their size and extent, so useful knowledge descends from the heaven of the world of the unseen to the earth of the visible world, and the river-beds of the hearts flow with it, each according to its capacity and predisposition. As rain purifies the earth of filth, which is the meaning of the words of the Almighty, "*the floodwater carries with it an increasing layer of scum,*" i.e. high on the surface of the water, so useful knowledge purifies the selves of impurities, the hearts of others, the spirits of impurities, and the secrets of tarnished lights. This is what he meant by "Do *wudu'* with the water of the unseen if you have a secret," i.e. if you have a secret and witnessing. Witnessing oneness negates multiplicity or the witnessing of immensity by immensity.

Anyone who does not realise this cannot be completely purified with the water of the unseen since he lacks that water or lacks the ability to use it. So he moves to *tayammum* which is a dispensation for weakness and the purification of those who are ill. That is indicated by his words, "do *tayammum* with good earth or stone," i.e. if the basic purification, which is withdrawing from others, is impossible for you due to the sickness of your heart and lack of your truthfulness, then move to the secondary purification which is outward worship. Or you could say, if you cannot have the real purification which is inward purification, then move to the metaphorical purification which is outward purification. If you are incapable of the purification of those brought near, then move to the purification of the people of the right hand. Or if

you are incapable of the purification of the people of love, then move to the purification of the people of service whom Allah has set up for His service and people He has singled out for His love. "*We sustain each one, the former and the latter, through the generous giving of your Lord; and the giving of your Lord is not restricted.*" (17:20)

So the purification of the people of love is by reflection and contemplation. The purification of the people of service is by striving and endurance in outward worship, like prayer, fasting, *dhikr*, recitation, study and other things, and inward worship like fear, hope, asceticism, steadfastness, scrupulousness, satisfaction, submission, mercy, compassion and other things which purify them for eye-witnessing.

This is the *tasawwuf* of the people of outward. The *tasawwuf* of the people of the inward is withdrawing from beings by witnessing the Maker of Being, or withdrawal from creation by witnessing the True King. It is that which the poet called "water of the unseen." Anyone who does not reach the *tasawwuf* of the people of the inward is one of the people of *tayammum*.. If he is occupied with outward actions like prayer, fasting and the like, he is like someone doing *tayammum* with earth since it is apparent, like the appearance of the effect of the dust on the limbs. If he is busy with inward worship, like asceticism, scrupulousness and the like, he is like someone doing *tayammum* with stone since it is not generally apparent, just as the effect of stone does not appear.

When He commanded to withdraw from others, He feared that you would deny the instrument and lack wisdom and thereby fall into *zandaqa*, so he said, "Go forward if you are an imam." By imam, he meant the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and whoever follows in his footsteps by combining the reality and the Shari'a. So he commanded you to follow the Shari'a of Muhammad when you have withdrawn from other. Then your outward will be wayfaring (*suluk*) and your inward attraction (*jadhb*), so your outward will be with wisdom and your inward with the power.

You must follow a perfect imam and travel on the Path directed by a perfect shaykh who will teach you how to act by the Shari'a and guide you to the Reality. Otherwise you will remain ill forever, having to use the purification of the sick forever. Look at what al-Qarafi said when he found a shaykh of instruction. He said, "I did *tayammum* with earth for a time, and now I have found water." This is because you do not find the water of the unseen nor are you able to use it except in the company of the people of its water who have drunk it and been intoxicated by it and then recovered from their intoxication and travelled from their *jadhb*. Hand them the reins of your business and submit your whole being to them after Allah has acquainted you with their eliteness and unveiled their secrets to you so that your *ruh* attests to their advancement, and your secret to their esteem.

So "Go forward if you are an imam" and they ask you to attend. That was the case with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He used to call people to Allah and they fled before him. When they recognised the truth, they put him forward as their imam. This is the meaning of "If you are an imam."

His words, "pray the *Fajr* prayer at the beginning of 'Asr" and in one variants, "*Dhuhr* prayer," i.e. combine the outward of the Shari'a with the 'Asr of the reality. In most texts, "*Fajr* at the beginning of 'Asr," meaning return to going-on after annihilation, or *suluk* (wayfaring) after attraction since usually the *murid* puts *suluk* first and then comes attraction. So his beginning is *suluk* and his end attraction, as the beginning of the day is the *Fajr* prayer and the end of it is the 'Asr prayer, i.e. return to the *Fajr* prayer at the beginning of your day and pray it at the end of your day. So return to the *suluk* which is at the beginning of your affair and put it in at the end of your affair. That is the meaning of their words, "The end of the perfect is the beginning of the Shari'a. They also said, "The end of the travellers is the beginning of the attraction and the end of the attracted is the beginning of the travellers." They also said, "The sign of the end is to return to the beginning." This is will be discussed in its place, Allah willing.

His words, "This is the prayer of those with gnosis of their Lord" are because they are pure by basic purification and pray a constant prayer. Allah Almighty says, "*Those who pray and are constant in it.*" (70:22-23) The common people limit prayers to their times while the gnostics are always in prayer. One of them was asked, "Does the heart pray?" He replied, "Yes, and when it prostrates, it never raises its head," which means that when the *ruh* prostrates out of awe of beauty and majesty, it will never lift its head again. That was indicated by the words of ash-Shushtari, "Prostrate to awe of majesty when drawing near and recite the *Ayat* of the Perfect, the Seven *Mathani*."

His words, "If you are one of them, then sprinkle the land with the sea" mean: if you are one of the realised gnostics, then sprinkle your Shari'a with the sea of your reality. When you sprinkle your Shari'a with the sea of your reality until you immerse it and cover it, then the Shari'a becomes the same as the reality and the reality the same as the Shari'a until all your actions are by Allah. Allah knows best and success is by Allah and there is no power nor strength except by Allah, the High, the Immense.

When the heart enters the presence of purity and the place of intimacy, they are fine secrets and filled with gifts and lights. He indicated that by saying:

**If it has not turned away in regret from its lapses,**

**how can it hope to grasp the subtleties of secret knowledge?**

Hope is to desire something while striving to obtain the means to it. Otherwise it is wishful thinking. Grasping (*fahm*) is to obtain knowledge of what is desired. The subtleties of secrets are the inscrutable parts of *tawhid*. *Tawba* is to turn away from every blameworthy attribute. This is the *tawba* of the elite. Lapses are slips and errors.

Grasping the subtleties of secrets only occurs when there is persistence, or you could say that the inscrutable parts of *tawhid* are only understood by an isolated heart. If someone does not turn from his lapses and free himself from the bondage of his appetites, he will not aspire to grasp the inscrutable parts of *tawhid* nor taste the secrets of the people of isolation.

Ahmad ibn Abi'l-Hawari said, "I heard my Shaykh, Abu Sulayman ad-Darani say, 'When the selves are accustomed to abandoning wrong actions, they travel in the Malakut and return to their owner bringing exquisite wisdoms without a scholar bringing about their knowledge.' Ahmad ibn Hanbal said, 'You spoke the truth, Ahmad, and your shaykh spoke the truth! I have not heard in Islam any wisdom I like better than this. If anyone acts by what he knows will be given knowledge which he did not know by Allah.'"

Al-Junayd was asked, "What is the path to realisation?" He replied, "*Tawhid* which removes persistence, fear which cuts off procrastination, hope which goes forth on the paths of action, abasement of the *nafs* by bringing the final term close to it and putting it far from hope." He was asked, "By what will one attain to this?" He replied, "By a heart isolated in which there is divested *tawhid*. When the heart is isolated with Allah and purified of what is other than Him, it grasps the subtleties of *tawhid* and its inscrutable concepts which cannot be expressed. They are allusions and indications which are only understood by their people and only disclosed to them, Few they are!" If anyone divulges something of their secrets to other than its people, his blood is allowed and he has exposed himself to killing, as Abu Madyan said:

There are fine subtle secrets in the secret

If we were to divulge them openly, our blood would be shed.

Another said:

I have a dear Beloved whom I do not disclose.

I fear my disgrace on the day I meet Him.

These secrets are the secrets of the Essence and the secrets which Allah manifests in the field of phenomenal beings. That is what he indicated when he said:

**Phenomenal being is utter and total darkness.**

**It is only the manifestation of the Real in it that gives it light.**

Phenomenal being is what is formed by power and manifested to eye-witnessing. Darkness is the opposite of light and is not in existence. The light of existence is illuminated i.e. becomes light, and the manifestation of the Real is His *tajalli*.

I said that phenomenal being, inasmuch as it is being, and the manifestation of all that is sensory is darkness because it is a veil for the one who stops at its outward and thus does not witness his Lord, and because it is a cloud which obscures the sun of meanings for the one who stops at the outward sensory vessels. That is indicated by ash-Shushtari when he said, "Do not look at the vessels. Dive into the sea of the meaning and perhaps you will see Me." Thus, by that consideration phenomenal being is all darkness. The manifestation and *tajalli* of the Real in it is what illuminates it.

If anyone looks at the outward of his senses, he sees it as dark sensory. Whoever penetrates to its inward sees it as a light of Malakut. Allah Almighty says, "*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.*" (24:35) Thus the words of the Shaykh, "Phenomenal being is utter and total darkness" is about the people of the veil since of the outward of the forms of beings is embedded in the mirror of their hearts. As for the people of gnosis, their insight penetrates to witnessing the Real and so they see phenomenal being as a light emanating from the Sea of the Jabarut, and thus for them Being is all light. Allah Almighty says, "*Say: 'Look at what is in the heavens and the earth,'*" (10:101) i.e. at the light of His Malakut and the secrets of His Jabarut, or at the secrets of the meanings set up in vessels.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Allah is veiled from the people of heaven as He is veiled from the people of the earth, and the people of the Highest Assembly seek Him as you seek Him. He is not inside anything nor absent from anything."

Their meanings are tastes which are not perceived by the intellect nor transmitted by pages. They are perceived by the company of the people of tastes. So be submit and do not criticise if you do not see the new moon. Submit to people who have seen it with eyes.

Then people are divided into three categories in respect of witnessing the Real: the common, the elite and the elite of the elite. So he said:

**When you see phenomenal being and do not see Him**

**in it, with it, before it or after it,**

**then you are truly in need of light.**

**You are veiled from the suns of gnoses**

**by the clouds of secondary traces.**

The people of the station of *baqa'* (going-on) witness the Real simply by their sight alighting on phenomenal being. They confirm the effect by Allah and do not witness other than Him. By their perfection they affirm the medium and the means. So they witness the Real by simply witnessing the means or at the means or with it before it or after it.

Since I recognised Allah, I do not see others.

So other with forbidden with us.

Shaykh 'Abdu's-Salam ibn Mashish said to Abu'l-Hasan. "Abu'l-Hasan! Sharpen the sight of faith and you will find Allah in everything, with everything, at everything, before everything, after everything, above everything, under everything, near everything and encompassing everything with nearness. It is His quality, and by encompassment it is His quality and free of conditions and limits, from places and directions, from company and nearness by distances, and from moving by creatures. Efface all by His attribute of 'the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward'. He is He is He. 'Allah was and nothing was with Him, and He is now as He was.'"

One of them said, "I have not seen anything but that I saw Allah in it, and I did not see Him in temporality." That is what one of the gnostics said. So the people of travel among the *murids* witness phenomenal being and then they witness the Maker of Being there and by His effect. Then being is effaced from their sight by their looking at Him. This is the state of those who are looking upwards. The people of annihilation witness Allah before witnessing creation, meaning they did not see creation at all since it has no fixity with them because, by their intoxication, they are absent from the means, annihilated to the wisdom, drowned in the sea of lights. Effects are obliterated for them.

One of them said about this station, "I have not seen anything but that I saw Allah before it." The people of the veil among the people of evidence and demonstrable proof witness being, but do not witness the Maker of Being before or after it. They use proofs to deduce His existence through the existence of being. This refers to the common Muslims among the People of the Right Hand. They miss the existence to lights and are denied them and the suns of gnoses are veiled from them by the clouds of secondary traces after they have risen and their light shines, but the sun must have a cloud and the beauty must have a veil. How excellent in the speaker who said:



She is only veiled by lifting her veil

It is a marvel that manifestation veils!

And another said:

She appeared and was not hidden from anyone

except the blind who does not see the moon.

But she was concealed by what appeared veiled.

How will the One veiled by might be recognised?

Then His being veiled when He is manifest shows you to the existence of His overwhelming force, as the author says:

**One way He shows you the existence of His overwhelming power**

**is by veiling you from Him**

**by that which cannot exist alongside Him.**

The Subduer (*al-Qahhar*) is one of His Names, and one of the manifestations of His force is His being veiled when He is manifest, manifest when He is hidden, and hidden when He is manifest. One way He shows you the existence of His overwhelming force is when He is veiled without a veil, near without drawing near, far in His nearness, and near in His distance. He is veiled from His creatures in the state of His manifestation to them and manifest to them in the state of His being veiled from them. So He was veiled from them by something which does not exist: illusion (*wahm*). Illusion is a non-existent matter. So He is only veiled by the intensity of His manifestation and eyes are only prevented from seeing Him by His overwhelming force.

So giving the Real sole existence results. There is no existent along with Allah. The Almighty says, "*All things are passing except His face.*" (28:88) "Passing" (*hâlik*) is an active participle, which is real in the state. The Almighty says, "*He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward.*" (57:3) He says, "*So wherever you turn, the Face of Allah is there.*" (2:115) He says, "*He is with you wherever you are.*" (57:4) He says, "*When We said to you, 'Surely your Lord encompasses the people.'*" (17:60) He says, "*You did not throw, when you threw; it was Allah who threw.*" (8:7) He says, "*Those who pledge you their allegiance pledge allegiance to Allah.*" (48:10)

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The best words which a poet has uttered is what Labid said, "Everything except Allah is false and every bliss must pass." He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, reported that Allah Almighty said, "My slave, I was ill and you did not visit Me." He will say, "O Lord, how could I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds?" Allah will say, "My slave so-and-so was ill and you did not visit him. If had visited him, you would have found Me with him." Then He will say, "My slave, I asked you for food and you did not feed Me." Then He will say, "I asked you for water and you did not give it to Me." The hadith indicates that these shapes and persons are illusions without any reality. The thing they most resemble is the shadow. Ash-Shustari said:

Creation is your creation and the command is Your command.

So what am I but one of the shadows?

The veil has no place in Your existence,

except by the secrets of the letters. Look at the mountain.

You indicated You from You and You have eternity

which is designated by the depths of pre-time.

By you, you recognise this one who is All-Aware of you.

You are them by giving life to the heart, O my hope!

"Creation is your creationÉ" By creation he means the forms of the shapes while the command is the secret of the spirits, i.e, the shapes are Your wisdom and the spirits are one of Your secrets. I have no existence at all, so what can my self do when You brought it into existence for You and it is one of Your manifestations, I am merely one of the shadows of Your existence.

"The veil has no place in Your existence," i.e. there is no place for the sensory veil in Your existence. If the veil had had a place in Your existence, it would be nearer to us than You and that is impossible because You said, *"We created man and We know what his own self whispers to him. We are nearer to Him than his jugular vein."* (50:16) "Except by the secrets of the lettersÉ" is an complete separate exclusion, i.e. there is no place for the sensory veil between Us and you, but the veil of overwhelming force and the cloak of might and pride is that which prevents the eyes from seeing Your basic Jabaruti light since if that light had been manifested, it would beings would have vanished and been consumed by the light of the glories. This is the secret of the command which Allah gave to Sayyiduna Musa, peace be upon him, when he asked for the vision and He commanded him to look at the mountain when Allah desired to manifest some of that light. Since the mountain was not firm at just a little of it, we know that there is no way for the weak slave in this abode to see the One, the Subduer, except by means of dense beings after He unfolded the cloaks of meaning over them.

This is the meaning of His words, "except by the secrets of the letters. Look at the mountain," i.e. except by the veiling of overwhelming power understood from the secrets of His words, *"Look at the mountain,"* (7:143) or except through a veil connected to the secret of the wisdom understood from the words of the Almighty, *"Look of the mountain."* It is as if Allah were saying, "Musa, you will not be able to see Me except through the veil of wisdom. But look at the mountain. If it is able to endure that, then you will see Me." When Allah Almighty manifested Himself without the means of the sensory, He made it dust. Allah knows best. He also said in this sense:

I am a wonder for the one who sees Me.

I am the Lover and the Beloved and there is no second.

O you who aim for the source of the report, your where covers it.

The wine is from you and the report and the secret are with you.

Return to your essence and reflect. There is not other than you.

"You who aim for the source of the report" means the source of the report of realisation. "Your where covers it" means the locus of your illusory existence since, if you were to withdraw from your existence, you would discover the source of realisation. "The wine is from you," means a drink of the wine of love is from you. This is as He said, "From Me My cup revolves around Me." "The report" is the report about the source of realisation comes also from you. The secret of lordship is with you, because you are a sealed treasure. When you desire to recognise it, return to your essence and reflect: you will find all existence to be one. Then you are that one. The poet said:

Even if this existence is multiple outwardly,

your life only contains you.

He also said, "My secret was disclosed without words and appeared from Me in that model (*mithâl*) and so we see that the existence of other than Me is impossible. All that other less than Me is imagination in Me, unified in everything. I am the Lover and I am the Beloved. Love for Me from Me is a marvel. I am alone, so understand. My secret is rare. Anyone who looks at My Essence sees Me as something. I am concealed in the folds of the sweetness of the Essence. My attributes are not hidden from the one who looks. My Essence is known from those forms. Annihilate yourself to the sensory and you will see lessons in the secret. The meaning is concealed because it is a veil from Me over Me."

There are many statements made by the gnostics and ecstatic expressions and poems of the lovers on this meaning, which is the secret of unity. Each is according to his taste and drink. May Allah repay them in good for us and the Muslims. These expressions are only understood by the people of tastes and indications. It is enough for the one who does not attain its understanding and does not encompass it in knowledge that he submit and entrust its understanding to

its masters and believe in perfect *tanzih* and deny *tashbih* because these meanings are tastes which are only obtained through the company of the people of tastes.

Then he deduces evidence for the falsity of the existence of a veil over Allah Almighty by ten matters, marvelling at the manifestation of each of them while He is concealed, i.e. at the intensity of His manifestation with the gnostics and the intensity of his being hidden with those who ignorant and heedless. So he indicated that:

**How can you imagine that something veils Him**

**when He is the One who has manifested everything?**

The Outward is the Hidden. What He conceals in the world of the Unseen He manifests in the visible world, so the basins of the Jabarut gush with the lights of the Malakut. Look at My beauty visible in every human being. The water which flows penetrates the roots of the branches: you find it to be one water while there are a multitude of flowers. What a wonder! How can the One by whom you recognise gnoses be recognised by gnoses? I wonder at the one who seeks witnessing from You when You are the one who makes every witness witness it.

Then he mentioned a second matter:

**How can you imagine that something else veils Him**

**when He is the One who is manifest by everything?**

He is manifest by everything and so nothing has existence alongside His existence, so how can anything veil Him? It means that there is nothing. The author of *al- 'Ayniyya* said:

You were manifest in things when You created them.

They withdraw from you and are in veils.

Then he mentioned a third:

**How can you imagine that something else veils Him**

**when He is the One who is made manifest in everything?**

That is by His power and His wisdom. Power is hidden and wisdom is manifest. All existence is between power and wisdom, and between gathering and separation. We already mentioned what one of them said, "I have not seen anything but I saw Allah in it," i.e. by His power and wisdom. If the lights of the Attributes had been manifested, the Essence would not be recognised nor the senses of held the meaning. If it were not for the dense, the subtle would not be recognised. Ash-Shushtari said, "My Beloved embraces all existence and is manifest in black and white, in the Christians and the Jews, in the pigs and the apes, in the letters and the dots. Did He ever let me understand? Did He ever let me understand?" Then he said, "I recognised Him throughout time. He is manifest in every time, in the waters, in the buckets, in the rising and in the descending. Did He ever let me understand? Did He ever let me understand?":

Then he mentioned a fourth:

**How can you imagine that something else veils Him**

**when He is the One who is manifest to everything?**

He is manifest to everything by the secrets of His Essence and the lights of His Essence. So He is manifest to everything and everything recognises Him inwardly and everything glorifies His praise. Allah Almighty says, "*There is nothing which does not glorify Him with praise.*" (17:44) It expresses this in its state, saying, "Glory be to the One who is manifest to everything, manifest by everything. The gnostics grasp it and the heedless are ignorant of it.

Then he mentioned a fifth:

## **How can you imagine that something else veils Him**

### **when He was the One who was Manifest before there was anything?**

So all that is manifest is from Him and to Him. So He was manifest before time by Himself and then manifest to Himself by Himself. He is Rich Beyond Need in His Essence from being manifest by another or needing other-than-Him to recognise Him. So all phenomenal being is gathered and "other" is forbidden is our view. Then he mentioned a sixth:

## **How can you imagine that something else veils Him**

### **when He is more manifest than anything?**

Since things have no existence with His existence and they have no manifestation with His manifestation, so according to their manifestation, they have no essential existence. If it were not for His manifestation in things, eyes would not discover them.

If one has no existence by his essence from his essence,

were it not for Him, his existence would be impossible.

In the state of the veil, the slave considers the existence of his *nafs* to be necessary and the existence of Allah Almighty to be theoretical. When He recognises the Truth, is annihilated to himself and achieves its disappearance, he then considers the existence of Allah to be necessary and the existence of his self to be theoretical, indeed necessarily impossible.

Ash-Shadhili said, "We look at Allah with the eye of faith and certainty and that spares us evidence and proofs. We do not see any of Allah's creation. Is there in existence other than the King, the Real? If there is and must be, then it is dust in the air. If you scatter it, you will not find anything."

He added in *Lata'if al-Minan*, "It is one of the greatest marvels that beings reach Allah. Would that I knew whether their existence with Him so that they reach Him or whether they are clear that it is not until they are manifested. If beings are connected to Him, they do not have that from their essences, but He is the one who granted them the rank of connection and so they are connected. Only His divinity is connected to Him, but the All-Wise is the One who sets in place secondary causes, and they belong to the one who stops with them while not perceiving that His power is the source of the veil. The manifestation of the Real is more manifest than all which is manifest since it He is the reason for the manifestation of all that is manifested and not hidden except from the intensity of what is manifest and from the intensity of manifestation and concealment." Ar-Rifa'i indicated this idea:

O You who is exalted whose meaning is subtle

and none but You wear the cloak of pride!

i.e. He who is exalted in His manifestation until Your meaning is hidden.

Then he mentioned the seventh:

## **How can you imagine that something else veils Him**

### **when He is the One with whom there is nothing else?**

By the realisation of His Oneness before and after time. "Allah was and nothing was with Him and He is now as He was." "Is there a god with Allah?" "Allah is exalted about what they associate." Allah "Is there any doubt in Allah?" So all that appears to the eye is one of the manifestations of the All-Merciful. The author of *al-'Ayniyya* said:

My Beloved manifested His beauty in my mirror,

and there are signs of the Beloved in every mirror.

When His beauty manifested in manifold forms,

it has names and they rise into view.

Allah Almighty is one in His Essence, His Attributes and His Actions. There is nothing before Him and nothing after Him and nothing with Him.

Then he mentioned the eighth:

### **How can you imagine that something else veils Him**

**when He is the One who is nearer to you than anything?**

The Almighty said, *"We created man and We know what his own self whispers to him. We are nearer to him than his jugular vein."* (50:16) He said, *"We are nearer him than you, but you cannot see."* (56:86) He also says, *"Allah is watchful over all things."* (33:52) and *"Though you speak out loud, He knows your secrets and what is even more concealed."* (20:7) So the nearness of Allah is the nearness of knowledge, encompassment and witnessing, not the nearness of distance since there is no distance between you and Him. The hadith was already quoted which states that Allah is not located in anything nor absent from anything.

Sayyiduna 'Ali said, "Allah Almighty is not from anything nor in anything nor above anything nor below anything since if He had been from anything, He would be created. If He had been above anything, He would be carried. If He had been in anything, He would be contained. If he had been under anything, He would have been overcome." He was asked, "Cousin of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, where was your Lord or does He have a place?" His face grew pale and he was silent for a time. Then he said, "Your words, 'Where was Allah?' is a question of place and Allah had no place. Then He created time and place and He is now as He was, without place or time."

Ash-Shadhili said, "I was asked, 'Ali, speak by Me and direct to Me. I am all.' This is as is found in the hadith of al-Bukhari: 'Allah Almighty says, 'The son of Adam curses time. I am Time. Night and day are in My hand.' The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, also said, 'Do not curse time. Allah is Time.' It is explained in the hadith before it, and Allah knows best.

Then he mentioned a ninth:

### **How can you imagine that something else veils Him**

**when if it had not been for Him, there would not have been anything?**

Allah says, *"He created everything and determined it most precisely"* (25:2) and He said, *"We have created all things in due measure."* (54:49) So all that appears in the visible world emanates from the world of the Unseen and all that emerges in the world of the Malakut is an emanation from the sea of the Jabarut. There is no existence for things except from Him and there is no abiding for them except by Him and there is no ascription to them with Him since they are pure non-existence. Based on their illusory existence, they are in-time and ephemeral. There is no ascription of non-existence with existence, not for the in-time with that timeless. That is why the Shaykh was amazed that they could be joined together. He said:

**A marvel!**

**See how existence becomes manifest in non-existence!**

**How the in-time holds firm alongside Him whose attribute is eternal!**

This is the tenth. Existence and non-existence are opposites which are not joined together. The in-time and timeless are contradictory and not combined. It is confirmed that Allah's existence is mandatory and all that is other than Him is actually non-existence. When existence appears, it negates its opposite, which is non-existence. So how can it be

imagined that it veils Him, when it is non-existent? Falsehood does not veil the truth. Allah says, "*That is Allah, your Lord, the Truth, and what is there after truth except misguidance?*" (10:32) Things have no existence with His existence. That negates the idea of *hulul* (incarnation) since *hulul* demands the existence of other so that the idea of lordship can descend into it. It is necessary that the other is pure non-existence and thus *hulul* is inconceivable. This is indicated in *al-'Ayniyya*:

Disconnect him from the judgement of *hulul*. There is no other.

So the matter reverts to His *tawhid*.

The timeless and in-time are not combined. When the in-time is combined with the timeless, the in-time vanishes and the timeless remains. A man said in the presence of al-Junayd, "Praise be to Allah," and he did not say, "The Lord of the worlds." Al-Junayd said to him, "Complete it, my brother." The man asked, "What is the worth of the worlds so that they are mentioned with Him?" Al-Junayd replied, "My brother, when the in-time is joined to the timeless, the in-time vanishes and the Timeless remains."

He affirmed that all things are in non-existence since the in-time is not firm with the One who has timelessness. So he negates the position of *ittihad* since the meaning of *ittihad* is the Timeless being joined to the in-time so that they are unified and become one thing. That is impossible since it is also based on otherness. They apply *ittihad* to oneness, as Ibn al-Farid said:

My *ruh* wandered with Me wherever they mixed in unity,

and there must be a body to be penetrated.

So he applied unity to the *ruh* reaching its source after it is purified. That is why he said after it, "It must penetrate it." So the Real is One in His kingdom, Timeless, pre-eternal, eternal, post-eternal, disconnected from *hulul* and *ittihad*, purified of partners and peers. He was when there was no "where" or "place" and He is now as He was. Part of what is ascribed to Sayyiduna 'Ali is:

I saw my Lord with the eye of my heart

and I said: "There is no doubt that You are You."

You are the One who encompasses every where

so that there is no where and then You are!

There is no where for You

so that where knows where You are.

Illusion has no illusion in You

so that illusion knows how You are.

You encompass everything in knowledge.

So all that I see is You.

In my annihilation is annihilation of my annihilation,

and I find You in my annihilation.

Abu'l-Hasan an-Nuri was asked, "Where is Allah in relation to His creatures?" He replied "Allah was when there was no where and creatures were in non-existence. So He is where He was and He is now where He was since there is no where and no place."

In the story of the inquisition of the Sufis, Qadi 'Ali ibn Thawr asked him, "What are these places and manifest creatures?" He replied, "Might made manifest and an overwhelming kingdom by which creatures are made manifest and which issue from Him, but are not connected to Him nor separate from Him. He is free of things but they are not free of Him because He has no need of them." He said to him, "You spoke the truth. Now tell me what Allah meant by creating them." He replied, "To manifest His might, kingdom and power." He said, "You spoke the truth. So tell me what He desires of His creation." He replied, "What they have." He asked, "Did He desire disbelief in the unbelievers?" He replied, "Would they disbelieve in Him while He disliked it?" Then he said, "So tell me what Allah desires by the difference of sects and divided religions?" He replied, "He desires to convey His power, clarify His wisdom, oblige His kindness, and manifest His justice and kindness."

What he meant contains an indication that the manifestations of the Real fall into three categories: a category in which He shows them His generosity and kindness, and they are the people of obedience and *ihsan*; a category in which He shows them His pardon and forbearance, and they are the people of disobedience among the people of faith; and a category in which He manifest to them His vengeance and anger, and they are the people of disbelief and transgression. This is the secret of the *tajalli* of the Real in general, and Allah knows best.

That is the sum of what this first chapter of the book contains. There are three matters: the actions of the Shari'a, the *Tariqa* and the Reality, or you could say, the actions of Islam, faith and *ihsan*. It is the beginning, the middle and the end. One of the signs of success in the end is to return to Allah in the beginning. He commanded you to return to Him and rely on Him without relying on action, even though action exists.

Then He directed you to *adab* in the state of *tajrid* and in secondary means. Then when you are in the state of travelling, He forbade you to be occupied with your inward because of the fatigue caused by management, which is a cause of turbidity. Then He made you rise to striving in the actions desired of you while neglecting that which is guaranteed for you so that it is a reason for the opening of your inner eye. Part of what is guaranteed for you is what you ask for by your supplication. Do not seek to hasten that whose time is delayed and do not despair of His mercy. When He promises you something, do not doubt His promise nor suspect Him in what will descend to you of His recognitions and His force.

These actions of the people of the beginning fall into different types according to their different states. His words, "A sure sign that you put your faith in needs" to "actions are merely propped up shapes" is all part of the actions of the Shari'a, which is the station of Islam.

His words, "actions are merely propped up shapes" to "Phenomenal being is total darkness" is part of the action of the *Tariqa*, which is the station of faith, and its fulcrum is purification and discipline of the inward. He commanded you to have sincerity and truthfulness. It is the secret of sincerity and obscurity because its place and where it is manifest. He commanded withdrawal so that you are firm in reflection and purify the mirror of the heart of the forms of beings so that it is ready for the shining of the suns of gnosis.

Then the door will be opened for you and the veil removed from you and you will be told, "Here you are with your Lord." That is his words, "Phenomenal being is total darkness" to the end of the chapter. He has cut through the veil of illusion for you from all aspects.

May Allah repay him with the best of His reward and grant him His pleasure along with His Prophets, and those He loves. May He make us follow their path with all those He loves. Amen.

When he has you enter the presence, he directs you to its *adab*, and he begins the second chapter, transmitting things about that from some of the teachers.

## CHAPTER TWO

**You have not abandoned ignorance at all**

**if you want something to take place in any moment**

**other than what Allah has manifested in it.**

Ignorance is the opposite of knowledge, and it is said that it is lack of knowledge of the Goal. There are two categories of it: simple and complex. The simple is that someone is ignorant and knows that he is ignorant. The complex is that he

is ignorant of his ignorance. The ugliest type of ignorance is ignorance and denial of Allah after seeking to recognise Him.

Part of the *adab* of the true gnostic to affirm things where they are and to go with them as they go. Whenever power brings him forth to eye-witnessing, he is in extreme perfection and flawlessness. The author of *al-'Ayniyya* said about that:

If you ascribe its beauty to everything which is ugly,  
the meanings of beauty in it will come to you swiftly.

Its beauty completes the imperfection of the ugly.  
So then there is no imperfection and there is nothing ugly.

An-Nuri said, "What Allah desires of His creatures is what they have." When Allah establishes a person in one of the stations, then it is obligatory for the gnostic to remain in it with his heart, whatever it is, even if the Shari'a does not protect him out of the desire to leave it by policy, and he looks to see what Allah will do. One of them said, "Anyone who deals with creatures by the Shari'a has lengthy disputation with them. Anyone who deals with them by the reality, excuses them." It is mandatory to deal with them by the Shari'a outwardly and to remind them, and by the reality in the inward and so he excuses them. If anyone wants for there to appear in a moment other than what Allah makes appear in himself or in someone else has amassed all ignorance and has not abandoned any of it since He opposes the Decree and contends with the All-Powerful. Allah Almighty says, "*Your Lord is the Doer of what He wills.*" (11:107) If your Lord had willed, they would have done it. If Your Lord had willed, everyone in the earth would have believed. Can you force people to be believers?

In one report, Allah Almighty says, "Whoever is not pleased with My decree and is not patient in My affliction should leave My heaven and take a Lord other than Me." 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud and Ibn 'Abbas said, "I prefer to hold a coal which burns what it burns and leaves what it leaves to saying about anything, 'Would that it were not!' or about something which is not, 'Would that it were!'" Abu 'Uthman said, 'For forty years Allah has not established me in a state which I disliked not moved to another which angered me.'

Shaykh 'Ali said in his book, "Whoever recognises the people of the realities of the outward and does not deny them any of their states will obtain what is in their hands and will not be denied any of their good. Whoever recognises the people of the realities of the inward and does not deny them any of their states, will obtain what is in their hands in every case and will not be denied any of their good. The gnostic of Allah combines the good of both groups and keeps company with both of them. Every group takes on its own colour, like the shaykh of our shaykh, Sidi Ahmad al-Yamani. He did not deny any of the states of creation. He studied with people of the outward in their outward matters and handed them over to them and affirmed them in them, and he studied with the people of the inward in their inward matters and handed them over to them and affirmed them in them. So he got the best of both groups by the gnosis and wisdom which Allah had given them. It is said that the perfect wali changes with all levels and fulfils all desires.

If anyone reflects on the hadiths of the Prophet, he will find them to be of this sort because the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was the master of the gnostics and the model of the murids. He affirmed people in the wisdom with which Allah had established them and encouraged them in it. That is why we find that there were contradictory hadiths while there is no contraction in reality. If you examine the hadiths about dhikr, you would say there is nothing better than it. If you examine the hadiths about jihad, you would say there is nothing better than it. If you examine the hadiths about the excellence of knowledge, you would say there is nothing better than it. If you examine the hadiths about asceticism, and stripping away the means of this world, you would say there is nothing better than it. If you examine the hadiths about earning and serving the family, the same is true. So the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, encouraged the wisdom in each so that you would say that there is nothing better than it. That was because so that the people of each category would be at rest and so that they would have a clear sign from their Lord in that. He did not command them to move from that since Allah desired that wisdom for them. So he affirmed them in it and encouraged them in it so that someone who listens to the hadiths about it would think that there was nothing better than it. Indeed, there is nothing better than it for its people.

In short, the gnostic does not deny anything and is not ignorant of anything. One of the gnostics said, "There is nothing possible more splendid than what is." Its interpretation is that in the prior knowledge of Allah there is nothing else possible and so there is nothing more splendid than it. That will be discussed, Allah willing and Allah knows best.

Then he mentioned the second *adab* of the Holy Presence which is abandoning human foolishness and said:



## **You put off action until you have nothing else to do?**

**That comes from the foolishness of the lower self.**

"Putting off" something is to pass it over. What is meant is that you delay the business so that you do not turn to it until it is easy. Having nothing else to do is to be finished with things. The heart is free when it has nothing to distract it. The limbs are free when they have no work. "Foolishness" is a sort of stupidity.

Part of the *adab* of the gnostic is that he has full intellect and a penetrating mind. One of the signs of intelligence is to take the opportunity to act and hurry to act without procrastination or wishful thinking since if he misses it, there is no replacement for it, and what is obtained has no value. In a hadith, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "One of the hallmarks of intelligence is to be averse to the abode of delusion and to turn to the abode of eternity, to take provision for dwelling in the grave and to prepare for the Day of Gathering." He also said, "The clever person is one takes account of himself and works for what comes after death. The foolish one is the one who follows his nafs and his passion and has wishful hopes of Allah."

In the Scrolls of Ibrahim, peace be upon him, "The intelligent person, as long as intellect is not overpowered, must have certain hours: one hour in which he converses with his Lord, one hour in which he takes account of himself, one hour in which he reflects about Allah's handiwork, one hour in which he is free of his need for food and drink. The intelligent person should not act except for three things: taking provision for the Hereafter, repairing his livelihood or pleasure which is not forbidden. The intelligent person must have insight in his time, busy himself with its business and guard his tongue. Anyone who considers his words to be part of his actions speaks little except in what concerns him."

So putting off actions and delaying them to another time in which the heart or vessel is unoccupied is a sign of foolishness and stupidity. It is delusion. How will you reach that time since death may attack you from where you do not expect? You assume you will reach that moment, but you are not safe from another business presenting itself to you. Being free of occupation is rare by the words of the Prophet, "There are two blessings in which many people are deceived: health and free time." i.e. many people lack them and desire them since many of them are only busy with this world, or deceived by passion, or ill and afflicted. By this we understand that few people have been provided with health and free time by Allah. When they fill them up with obeying their Lord, they are thankful and obtain great profit. If they lack them, they have suffered a clear loss and they are ungrateful for both blessings and so they should be taken from them. It is also one of the hallmarks of disappointment.

The words of the shaykh regarding disappointment are still to come. The ultimate disappointment is that you have few attachments but still do not advance to Him. The human being must sever his connections and attachments, oppose his passion, set out to serve his Master and not wait for another moment because the faqir is the child of the moment. You only find him occupied with thought, investigation, *dhikr*, discussion or service of the shaykh which will take him to his Master. I told one of the brothers, "The truthful faqir has no thought or descent except in the Presence or what will bring him to the Presence. Allah knows best.

Then he mentioned the third *adab*, which is to abide where Allah has made him abide:

**Do not ask Him to remove you from one state**

**in order to use you in another.**

**If He wanted to,**

**He could use you without removing you.**

Part of the *adab* of the gnostic is be satisfied with the knowledge of Allah so that he can dispense with other than Him. When Allah establishes him in a state, he does not disdain it and seek to leave it for another state. If Allah had wanted to remove him from that state and to use him in another, He would use him without being asked to remove him. He should remain where the Real has established him until He is the One to remove him as He brought him into it. "Say: 'My Lord, make my entry sincere and make my leaving sincere.'" (17:80)

The sincere entry is that you enter it by Allah and the sincere exit is that you leave it by Allah. This is understanding from Allah, and it is a sign of realisation of gnosis of Allah. When the gnostic of Allah is a bachelor, he does not wish to marry. If he is married, he does not wish for divorce. If he is poor, he does not wish for wealth. If he is wealthy, he

does not wish for poverty. If he is healthy, he does not wish for illness. If he is ill, he does not wish for health. If he is mighty, he does not wish for abasement and if he is abased, he does not wish for might. If he is constricted, he does not wish for expansion, and if he is expanded, he does not wish for contraction. If he is strong, he does not wish for weakness, and if he is weak, he does not wish for strength. If he is resident, he does not wish to travel, and if he travelling, he does not wish to settle. It is the same for the rest of the states. He waits to see what Allah will do and does not look for what he will do by himself to achieve its removal. He is like the corpse in the hands of the washer or like a pen in the fingers, as the author of *al-'Ayniyya* said:

I see myself as a tool and He moves me.

I am a pen and the decrees are the fingers.

The Almighty says, "*Your Lord creates and chooses whatever He wills. The choice is not theirs.*" (28:68) He says, "*But you will not will unless Allah wills.*" (76:30) Allah revealed to Da'ud, "Da'ud, you will and I will and it is only what I will. If you surrender to Me what I will, I will bring you what you will. If you do not surrender to Me what I will, I will tire you in what you will and it will only be what I will."

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said to Abu Hurayra, "The pen is dry about what you will meet." In another hadith, "The pens are dry and the scrolls are rolled up." The shaykh of our shaykhs, Sidi Ahmad al-Yamani said when he and his companions were asked about the reality of wilaya: "The reality of wilaya is that when a person sits in the shade, he does not desire to sit in the sun, and when he sits in the sun, he does not desire to sit in the shade."

All of this is with choice rather than the necessary matter. We already mentioned what Shaykh Sidi 'Ali said: "One of the attributes of the perfect wali is that he only needs the state in which his Master has established him in the moment," i.e. he has no will except what issued from the element of the power and he does not desire other than it.

When the gnostic receives a *tajalli* in any of these matters, i.e. moving from one state to another, he should be cautious and patient until he sees that it is from Allah by an outward or inward sign or a physical or spiritual voice. He should attend to voices. Allah addresses him by whatever He will. This is a valid and tried business with the gnostics, so that they only move by permission from Allah and His Messenger since there is no separation for the people of gatheredness. May Allah make us among them. Amen. All of this is when the state in which you are is in keeping with the Shari'a. Otherwise, seek to leave it however possible.

Then he mentioned the fourth *adab*, which is elevating the *himma* above being and constant rising through the stations of gnosis:

**When the aspiration of the wayfarer desires to halt at what has been unveiled to him,**

**then the invisible voices of the Reality call out to him.**

**"What you're looking for is still in front of you!"**

**When the outward aspect of created things display their beauty to him,**

**then their inner reality calls out to him,**

**"We are a trial!**

**We captivate and tempt you!**

**Do not disbelieve!"**

The *himma* of the wayfarer is the force which impels him to travel. Halting at a thing is the belief that he has reached is the goal or that it is enough. The invisible voices of the unseen refer to the articulation of the state of unveiling of the source of realisation. The thing displaying itself is its manifestation in a state of adornment with the intention of making one incline to them. The outward aspect of beings is the beauty and wisdom which covers them and their adornment is

breaking their normal patterns and obeying His judgement. Their realities are their inward light and it is the manifestation of the meaning in them.

The wayfarer is the one who witnesses the effect. If he witnesses it in himself he is only a wayfarer and is travelling. If he witnesses it by Allah, he is a *majdhub* wayfarer.

There are three stations which he passes through: annihilation in the Actions, annihilation in the Attributes, and Annihilation in the Essence. You could say, annihilation in the Name, annihilation in the Essence, and annihilation in annihilation, which is the station of *baqa'*. Then there is rising which has no end.

When the secret of the *tawhid* of that actions is unveiled to the wayfarer and he tastes its sweetness and his *himma* wants to stop with that station, the invisible voices of the reality of annihilation in the Attributes call to him, "That which you seek is still ahead of you!" When he rises to the station of annihilation in the Attributes and the secret of the *tawhid* of the Attributes is unveiled to him, he looks towards the annihilation in the Essence and his *himma* wants to stop at that station, the invisible voices of the reality of annihilation in the Essence call out to him, "That which you seek is still ahead of you!" When he rises to annihilation in the Essence and the secret of the *tawhid* of the Essence is unveiled to him and his *himma* wants to stop at that station, the invisible voices of the reality of annihilation or the reality of *baqa'* call out to him, "That which you seek is still ahead of you!" When he reaches *baqa'*, the invisible voices of unseen knowledges call to him: "*Say: My Lord, increase me in knowledge.*" (20:114) The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "I cannot count Your praises as You praise Yourself."

Or you could say: when the *murid* is given unveiling of annihilation in the Name, tastes the sweetness of action and dhikr and his *himma* wants to stop with that, the invisible voices of annihilation in the Essence call out to him, "That which you seek is still ahead of you." When he rises to the station of annihilation in the Essence and tastes its sweetness, but is not firmly fixed and satisfied and his *himma* wants to stop with that, the invisible voices of the reality of fixity calls out, "That which you seek is still ahead of you!" When he is firm and does not seek further rising, the invisible voices of ascent call to him, "That which you seek is still ahead of you!" It is like that with every station. The one before him calls out to him. "*O people of Yathrib, you have no abiding!*" (33:13)

When the outward aspects of beings display their beauty to the wayfarer or the gnostic by the breaking of normal patterns, obeying him and allowing him to dispose of them by his *himma*, like walking on water, flying in the air, water springing up, producing food and the like of physical miracles and the *himma* of the wayfarer wants to stop with their outward aspects and enjoy their physical sweetness, the invisible voices of the inner meanings call out to him, "We are a trial to test you and see whether you are content with them rather than recognition of their Master and the One who manifested them, or if you will turn from them and pass to the light of their meanings and witness their Master and the One who makes them occur. Do not disbelieve and deny the One who manifested them so that you deny and are among the ignorant."

In al-Bughya, as-Sahili provided a metaphor for these stations and travelling through them. He said, "It is like is like a king who appears at sunrise and sends us messengers with a letter from Him. They read the letter of the King to us and make us yearn intensely for Him by mentioning His generosity and good qualities. Some people turn away from obeying Him and submitting to Him. They are the unbelievers. Some people accept and believe but cannot rise to the presence of the King. They are the common Muslims who have weak love and certainty. Some people yearn for the King and rise to his presence and the messengers tell him, 'We will travel with you and acquaint you with the Path,' and so they go in front of them and travel with them. "The King builds houses and stations where they can stop. Each station is greater than the one before it, and that continues until they arrive at His Presence. When they stop in the first station and see its beauty and splendour, they want to remain there. The Messengers who came from the King tell them, 'What you seek is still ahead of you.' So they get up and leave that station. When they alight at the second, they find it to be greater than the first and so they want to remain there. The Messengers make them travel on to what is beyond it. In this way they pass through the stations one after another until they bring them to the King. They tell them: 'Here you are with your Lord.' So they are relieved of fatigue and enjoy sitting and looking. What is meant by the Messengers are the Prophets whom Allah sent and their khalifs from those who follow in their footsteps among those who combine the reality and the Shari'a. These stages are the stations through which the murid passes."

Ash-Shustari pointed out that one should not stop at these stations and miracles. He said:

When travelling, do not turn to other, and all that is other than Allah

is other. Take His *dhikr* as a protection.

Do not remain in any station – it is a veil.

Strive in travelling and seek help.

Whenever you see of all the ranks which are displayed to you,

leave them. We left their like.

Say: "I have no goal other than Your Essence."

There is no form manifested nor choice item plucked.

Know that these *adâb* which the shaykh mentioned in this chapter are particular to the gnostic while others may share with him in them. That is because it can be considered in a wide manner so that it is general because the murid may rise to a station, and there remains before him what he needs to complete, and Allah Almighty knows best.

Then he mentioned the fifth *adab* which is abandoning seeking and making demands inasmuch as he says in what will come which indicates *that* the adab is to abandon seeking.

**If you make demands on Him, you doubt Him.**

**If you seek Him, you are absent from Him.**

**If you seek other-than-Him, you are shameless before Him.**

**If you make demands on other-than-Him, you are distant from Him.**

Your making demands on Him is by entreaty and humble prayer; your seeking Him is by investigation and deduction; your seeking other than Him is by disclosing yourself and presentation; and your making demands on other than Him is by flattery and asking. The end result is that there is four: seeking the Real and making demands on Him, and seeking the false and making demands on it. All of them are included according to those with accurate knowledge.

As for making demands on Him, it is by the existence of your doubts of Him because when you ask of Him, it is out of fear that He will neglect you or be ignore you. One wakes up someone for whom dozing in possible and one reminds someone for whom overlooking is possible. "*Allah is not unaware of what you do.*" (2:74) "*Is Allah not enough for His slave?*" (39:36) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If anyone is distracted by My dhikr from asking Me, I will give him more than I give to those who ask."

So remaining silent under the passage of the decrees is better for the gnostic than entreaty and humble supplication. The shaykh of our shaykhs, Moulay al-'Arabi said, "The true faqir does not have remain a state in which he seeks. If he must seek, then he should seek gnosis."

When they make supplication, it is pure slaveness and wisdom, not a request for one's allotted portion. That is because what He has allotted you must reach you. If you were to ask Him to deny it to you, He would not answer you. There is disagreement between the Sufis on the issue and whether silence or supplication is more fitting. The fact is that one must look at what is manifested to him and that to which his breast is expanded. That is what is desired of him.

Your seeking Him is evidence of your absence from Him by the existence of Your self. If your heart had been present and you were absent to yourself and illusion, you would not find other than Him.

I see you asking about Najd when you are there,

and about Tihama. This is the action of one with doubts.

Ibn al-Marhal as-Sibtî said:

It is extraordinary that I yearn for them

and ask about them out of yearning when they are with me!

My eye weeps and yet they are its eyeball.

My heart complains of distance while they are between my ribs!

Ar-Rifa'i said:

They said, "Do you forget the One you love?"

I told them, "O people, how can I forget He who is my ruh?"

How can I forget Him when things derive their beauty from Him?"

It is a marvel that the slave can forget His Master.

He is not absent from me, but I do not see Him."

I said aloud, "Say: 'He is Allah.'"

As for your seeking other than Him, i.e. recognition of other than Him, it is by your lack of shame before Him and lack of your intimacy with Him. The manner of your lack of shame before Him is that He summons you to the Presence while you flee from Him to heedlessness. The metaphor of that is like a person who is in the presence of the King when the King is coming to him, and then he wants to leave and turn to someone else. This indicates his shamelessness and lack of concern for the King. He deserves to be driven to the door or treated like an animal. They said, "Deny the one you know and do not seek to know the one you do not know."

Your lack of intimacy with Him is because if you had been intimate with Him, you would be estranged from His creation and it would then be inconceivable for you to seek to know them and you would flee from them. When you are intimate with Him, He makes you estranged from His creation and the reverse holds true. Intimacy with people is a sign of bankruptcy. Your turning to the Real is turning away from creation, and your turning to creation is your turning from the Real. And they consider one of the principles of the Path to be turning from creation in advancing and retreating.

As for making demands on other than Him, it is by the existence of your distance from Him. If you had realised His nearness to you – and He is Generous – you would not need to ask anyone who is blameworthy. The *Munajat* will describe how to ask for others when you do not have the habit of asking favours.

In one of the revealed books, Allah Almighty says, "When My slave has a need and he presents it to Me, I know that is his intention. If the seven heavens and the seven earths were to conspire against him, I would appoint ease and a way out of his business. When My slave has a need and he presents it to other than Me, the earth sinks under him, the heaven falls above him, and the means between him and Me are cut off," or words to that effect.

So *adab* is being content with Allah's knowledge, full realisation of gnosis of Allah, and being satisfied with Him so that you have no need of other than Him. Allah knows best.

Then he mentioned the sixth *adab*, which is submission and contentment in what the decree brings. He said:

**Every breath you breathe emerges according to a preordained decree.**

Breath means a moment of time, the amount of which is the time it takes to exhale and inhale. It is longer than the twinkling of an eye which is longer than an instant, which is the glance of the eye. The decree is the prior knowledge of things before they appear. He knows best their times, loci, amounts, and the number of individuals and their circumstances and the afflictions which befall them.

Human being, when you realise that your breaths are contained by the decree and nothing emerges from you or anyone else except that He knew it before and it proceeds accordingly, then you must be pleased with all that the Decree brings. Your breaths are numbered as are your glances and instants. When the last of your breaths ends, you will travel to the Next World. If the breaths are numbered, then why are you concerned with steps and thoughts and other movements?

The reality of *rida* (contentment) is to meet destructive matters with a smiling face. The reality of submission is that vengeance and blessing are the same: there is no choice in either of them. This is the station of the people of perfection who have realised vanishing. May Allah give us the benefit of their dhikr and join us to them. Amen.

Then he mentioned the seventh *adab* which is constant watchfulness and continuous witnessing:

**Don't look forward to being quit of others -**

**that will cut you off from watchful awareness of Him**

**in the place where He has put you.**

Watchfulness is waiting. "Others" designates what changes the heart from its state. It is usually used for changing from the state of perfection to a state of imperfection. The Sufis consider that all that distracts one from the Presence and alters the heart is 'other'. Watchfulness is guarding the heart so that it does not leave the presence of the Lord. What is meant by it in the words of the Shaykh is general guarding, which is watching over the heart, as was already stated. The watchfulness over the ruh is keeping it in constant witnessing and watchfulness over the secret is keeping it in constant rising and *adab*.

When Allah puts you in a state in which the existence of others dominates you by the dominance of the sensory in that state, as when He puts you outwardly in worldly work which you must have, then strive to keep your heart in the Presence so that heedlessness does not rob you, or strive to keep your ruh in constant witnessing so that the sensory does not rob you, or strive so that your secret seeks gifts and knowledges so that does not bring about laxness. Do not watch, i.e. wait to be free of your work with those others so that the presence of your heart is put off until your work is finished. Thereby you will miss watchfulness in that state in which Allah has put you. That would be bad *adab* on your part. That would also involve wasting that moment and not dealing with Allah in it. Not making use of moments cannot be made up.

I heard that when Shaykh Moulay al-'Arabi saw his companions working and feared that the sensory would rob them, he called to them in his loudest voice, "You! You!" to alert them and wake up from witnessing the sensory. Ash-Sha'rani mentioned in al-'Uhud that one of the shaykhs was never absent from Allah, even during sexual intercourse. This is the business of the people of divine concern among the gnostics. This is gatheredness of gatheredness. Allah knows best.

**Note.** This is not repetition in spite of what we said before about "putting off action until you have nothing else to do" because that is about the actions of the limbs and this is about the action of the hearts. That is shown here by his use of "watchful awareness" and its consideration and then referring to actions. The benefit is better than repetition. Success is by Allah.

When you obtain watchfulness or witnessing in the state of others, do not find it strange that you see impurities and you should not deny that. He indicated this:

**Don't think that worry and sorrow are out of place**

**as long as you are in this world.**

**It only brings forth what its attribute and quality demand.**

Thinking something out of place refers to when a thing becomes strange so that it seems extraordinary. Impurities are what affects the self and pains it. What its attribute demands is that with which it should be described and its necessary quality is that with which it must be described. One of them said that the attribute describes intrinsic matters and the quality describes non-essentials which are temporary. Intrinsic matters are like whiteness, blackness, height, and shortness, and the non-essentials are like illness and health, joy and sorrow and the like of that. What is meant here by attributes are things which re-occur, like death and illness and what occurs often. Qualities are those which rarely occur normally, like civil war, bloodshed and earthquakes because they said that attributes are intrinsic and attributes are non-essential. It is said that they are the same thing, and that is valid.

Part of the *adâb* of the gnostic is not to think that any of the *tajalliyat* of the Real are out of place and not to be surprised at any of them, whatever they are, majestic or beautiful. If overwhelming events, sorrows or majestic others occur in

this abode, do not find that out of place because the *tajalliyat* of this abode are mostly majestic because it is the abode of terrors and the state of separation and departure.

In a hadith the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said in one of his speeches, "People! This abode is the abode of destruction, not the abode of stability, and the station of sorrow, not the station of joy. Whoever knows that does not rejoice in its ease nor is he is saddened at its misery. Allah created this world as the abode of affliction and the Next World as the Abode of the end." So He made this world a reason for the reward of the Next World, and the reward of the Next World as recompense for the afflictions of this world. So He takes to give and afflicts to repay. This world passes away quickly and will soon be upended. So beware of the sweetness of its suckling because of the bitterness of its weaning. Shun its immediate pleasure because of its hateful end. Do not strive to cultivate this abode which Allah will ruin nor strive to obtain it when Allah desires that you avoid it. Then you would expose yourselves to His anger and merit His punishment.

Al-Junayd said, "I do not regard what comes to me of the world as ugly because I have a principle: it is that this abode is the abode of worry, sorrow, affliction and trial. All the world is evil. Part of its judgement is that it brings me all I dislike. If it brings me with what I love, it is bounty. Otherwise, the basis is the first one." It is said about that:

In his intellect, the intelligent person makes a visual image

of his hardships before they occur.

Even if they arrive unexpectedly, they do not alarm him

because of the image in himself.

He sees that the business will lead to another,

and so its end becomes a beginning.

The ignorant person feels that his days are safe

and forgets previous misfortunes.

If the vicissitudes of time surprise him

with some afflictions, he is distressed.

If he has prior resolve, it is by his knowledge

of steadfastness in the face of affliction.

Abu Sulayman ad-Darani said to Ahmad ibn Abi'l-Hawari, "Ahmad, a little hunger, a little nakedness, a little abasement, and a little steadfastness. The days of this world will come to an end for you."

Gnostic, therefore do think that the sorrows which occurs to you and others are out of place as long as you are residing in this abode? What issues in it of the majestic *tajalliyat* is only what it should be described with and what its quality must be. So do not think anything out of place and do not marvel at anything. Your duty is to recognise Allah in both majesty and beauty, sweetness and bitterness. As for the one who does recognise Him in beauty, that is the action of the common. Recognition in majesty is stillness, *adab*, pleasure, and submission. So the *faqir* must be like the rush plant. When the attack of the flash flood comes, it bows its head, and when it goes, it lifts its head.

As you should not find the occurrence of impurities to be out of place, you should not be sad, nor fear, and nor be alarmed. Similarly, do not wonder at the occurrence of joys, which is beauty, so you should not be joyful nor reckless. Majesty is bound to beauty and beauty is bound to majesty and they alternate just as day and night alternate. The gnostic takes on the colour of each of them. He does not find anything out of place nor marvel at anything since all that issues from the element of power is one.

This is the source of the distinction between the *sadiq* and the *siddiq* because the *siddiq* is not amazed at anything and does not hesitate about anything he is promised, which differs from the *sadiq*. Whenever he sees something unusual, he marvels at it. When he is promised something, he hesitates to obey it.

Allah Almighty described Maryam as *siddiqa* but did not describe Sarah as that because when Sarah was given the good news of the child as a miracle, she thought it odd and said, "This is something extraordinary!" That is why the angels said to her, 'Do you marvel at the command of Allah?' That was not the case with Maryam. She did not think it strange. She only asked a question for information, or ask about the time of that, or how it would be and whether it was a marriage or something else, and Allah knows best.

Then he mentioned the eighth *adab*, and it is that he spends it by Allah, for Allah, from Allah and to Allah. This is the station of truthfulness which is the core of sincerity and sincerity is the elite of the elite. He said:

**A goal you seek by your Lord:**

**no delay here.**

**A goal you seek by yourself:**

**not easy.**

Delay is being held back and difficulty. The goal is what one seeks to achieve.

When you have a need related to this world or the Next and want for it to be satisfied quickly for you, then seek it by Allah and do not seek it by yourself. If you seek it by Allah, it will be easy for you and it will be satisfied quickly. If you seek it by yourself, it will be hard to satisfy it and it will be difficult. That which you seek by your Lord is not delayed or withheld, and that which you seek by yourself is not easy or simple. Allah Almighty says, relating from Musa, peace be upon him: "*Musa said to his people, 'Seek help in Allah and be steadfast. The earth belongs to Allah. He bequeaths it to any of His slaves He wills. The successful outcome is for the godfearing.'*" (7:128) Whoever seeks help by Allah and is steadfast in seeking his need, the successful outcome will be his, and he is one of the godfearing.

Allah Almighty says, "*Whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will be enough for him,*" (65:3) i.e. take care of all that worries him. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, told one of his companions, Suwayd ibn Ghafala, "Do not seek the amirate. If you seek it, you will be entrusted to it. If it comes to you without asking, then you will be helped in it."

The sign of seeking by Allah is asceticism in that matter and being distracted from it by Allah. When its time comes, it is by the permission of Allah. The sign of seeking by the self is avarice and striving for it. When it is hard for him, he is constricted and upset. This is the criterion of the one who seeks by Allah and the one who seeks by himself. If someone seeks his needs by Allah, it is fulfilled in meaning, even if it is not satisfied physically. If someone seeks his needs by himself, his efforts are disappointed and his moment wasted, even if his desire and need are satisfied.

Here is a rule which the people of concern among the people of disappointment and the people of *wilaya* recognise. Shaykh ash-Shadhili said, "When Allah honours a slave in his movements and stillness, He sets up for him slavery to Allah and the portions of his *nafs* are veiled from him in whatever is decreed for him and he does not turn to them. It is as if he were cut off from them. When Allah abases a slave in his movements and stillness, He sets up for him the portions of his *nafs* and veils him from his slavery, and so he is tossed about in his appetites. Slavery to Allah is cut off from him. If any of it occurs for him outwardly, he says, 'This is a door of *wilaya* and abasement.' As for the greatest *siddiqiyya* and greatest *wilaya*, all portions and rights are the same for the one with insight because he is by Allah in whatever he takes or leaves." Shaykh Zarruq quoted this in one of his commentaries.

To conclude, all the actions of the gnostic are by Allah and all the actions of others are by the self. If they had been by Allah, then action by Allah obliges nearness, action for Allah obliges a reward. The one who acts by Allah enters the veil in the witnessing of the lovers. Action for Allah obliges the reward beyond the Door. Action by Allah comes from the people of realisation, and action for Allah comes from the people of legality. Action for Allah comes from the people of the words of Allah, "*You alone we worship.*" Action by Allah comes from the people of His words, "*You alone we ask for help.*"



Shaykh Sidi 'Ali said, "The difference between action by Allah and action for Allah is the difference between the dinar and the dirham." Success is by Allah. Whoever knows by Allah, returns to Him in everything and relies on Him in every state. He indicated this when he said:

**A sign of success in the end:**

**Turning to Allah in the beginning.**

Success in a matter is reaching the goal and goals are achieved when they are settled and he obtains what he desires of them. The end of the matter is its achievement and its beginning is the first of it.

*Murid*, when you direct your *himmah* to seeking something, whatever it is, and want to be successful in it, obtain what you desire, and for its end to be good and outcome praiseworthy, then return to Allah in the beginning of seeking it and strip away your strength and power. Say, as the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "If it is from Allah, He will perform it." So do not be avaricious for it and do not be concerned with it. Whatever Allah wills will be and whatever our Lord does not will not be. "If men and jinn were to join together to help you with something which Allah had not decreed for you, they would not be able to do that. If they had joined to harm you by anything which Allah had not decreed for you, they would not be able to do that. The pens are dry and the scrolls rolled up."

When you seek something and in it you depend on Allah and entrust the matter to Allah, you will see what was in the prior knowledge of Allah. The sign of that is success in the your end and the achieving of your goal, whether or not it is settled in the sensory, because what you desire is what Allah desires, not what your *nafs* desires. Your portions have been transformed into rights and you only desire what Allah has decided. Only look at what emerges from Allah and you will be annihilated to your portions and appetites.

If you seek something by yourself, relying on your own strength and power, eager to achieve it and striving to obtain it, that is a sign of lack of achieving it and the disappointment of hope in that whose end is unsuccessful, even if it is achieved in the sensory. You entrusted yourself to that and are fatigued because of it and are not helped in its affairs and goal. All of this is sound and tested by both the common and elite. This is a wisdom which completes what is before it and expands it. Allah knows best.

Then he completes this question by a comprehensive principle which affirms what is before it.

**A radiant beginning:**

**a radiant ending.**

The radiance of the beginning is entering into it by Allah, seeking it by Allah and relying on Allah while striving in its means and being concerned with establishing the right of wisdom and showing *adab* with the Decree. Striving in the means is immense according to the immensity of the goal. The witnessing afterward is according to the striving. "*As for those who do jihad in Our Way, We will guide them to Our Paths. Truly Allah is with the good-doers.*" (29:69) "*Allah's mercy is close to the good-doers.*" (7:56)

Shaykh Sidi 'Abdu'r-Rahman said, "Do not reckon it cheap. He sees it. The food of the object of desire is dear. What you harvest in the summer is only by the coolness of the nights. If we see someone diligent in the beginning about seeking Allah and turning away from intimacy with creation, absorbed in the service of his Lord and forgetting his own portions and passion, we know that his end will be radiant, his outcome praiseworthy and his goal obtained. If we see someone negligent in seeking his Lord and not leaving his *nafs* and passion, then we know that his claim is a lie and his end will be deprivation and his outcome will be disappointment, even if the Generous Giver will tend to him. This is the in the path to reaching the presence of the Real.

As for the radiance of the beginning in seeking the needs of this world, stations, stages or eliteness, for example, it is by asceticism in that, turning away from it and being preoccupied with Allah. One of them said, "The stages are only obtained by asceticism in them." Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan said, "I and a friend of mine were worshipping Allah in a cave. We used to say, 'This month Allah will give us an opening. This week Allah will give us an opening.' A man stopped at the mouth of the cave and said, 'Peace be upon you.' We returned the greeting to him and asked, 'How are you?' He climbed up to us and said, 'What is the state of someone who says, "'This month Allah will give an opening. This week Allah will give an opening"'? There is no opening and no success. Did we not worship Allah as He commanded to us?"

Then He was absent from us.' We understood how we had taken. So we criticised ourselves and Allah gave us an opening." Something similar is mentioned in *at-Tanwir*.

So anyone who seeks elitedom is the slave of elitedom and misses his portion from Allah until he turns in repentance. Anyone who worships Allah will obtain his portion of slavedom and will obtain elitedom without him turning to it or seeking it. Allah knows best.

Then these matters are radiant at the beginning, and the sign of the radiance of the beginning is that they are inward matters, like reliance on Allah and returning to Him, or great yearning and longing. Their effect, however, must appear in the outward. He indicates this and says:

**Everything that is stored away in the warehouse of invisible secrets**

**has to appear in the visible world of outward manifestation.**

Storing away is to put something in a place in order to preserve it. The invisible secrets are the inward, and what is meant by "secrets" are the hearts and spirits. The visible world of outward manifestation is the outward limbs.

Whatever Allah has stored and placed in the hearts of good or evil, light or darkness, knowledge or ignorance, mercy or harshness, miserliness or avarice, generosity and open-handedness, constriction and expansion, wakefulness or negligence, recognition or lack of recognition, or other praiseworthy or blameworthy qualities, the effect of that must appear on the limbs in adab, discipline, stillness, tranquillity, gravity, spending, pardon, levity, anxiety, anger and others states of the hearts and actions of the vessel. Allah Almighty says, "*You will know them by their mark,*" (2:273) and He says, "*Their mark is on their faces.*" (48:29) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If someone conceals a secret, Allah will clothe him in its cloak."

The actions of the limbs follow the states of the hearts. Whoever stores recognition of his Master in the secret of his unseen does not seek from anyone else. Whoever stores ignorance of his Lord in the secret of his unseen is connected to what is other than Him. That is how it is with the states of the outward. They follow the states of the inward, as he already said, "Different states have different outcomes. This accounts for the variety of types of action." So the features (*asirra*) indicate the secret (*sarira*) and the words describe the speaker. Whatever is in you appears on your mouth. Every vessel leaks that which is in it. What occurs to the heart has its effect on the faces. Allah knows best.

The greatest thing that can be stored in the invisible secrets is gnosis of Allah. It is of two kinds: gnosis of the proof and gnosis of eye-witnessing. He indicated the difference between them and said:

**What a difference!**

**This one is guided by Him.**

**That one seeks information about Him.**

**The one guided by Him gains direct knowledge of the Real**

**and verifies the matter from its actual Source.**

**Seeking information about Him comes from**

**not having reached Him.**

**This must be the case because when was He absent**

**so as to make it necessary for you to seek information about Him?**

**When was He distant so that you would need tracks to lead you to Him?**

In "what a difference", this form is only used for ideas, not for physical things.

Know that when Allah wanted to manifest the secrets of His Essence and the lights of His Attributes, by His power he manifested a handful of His pre-eternal light. Power demanded the manifestation of its effect and the witnessing of its lights while wisdom demanded the lowering of their veil and manifestation of its curtains. When power completed its light in the places of manifestation in phenomenal being, then wisdom lowered the cloak of protection on them, and all phenomenal being became lights in a concealing veil.

Then Allah divided creation into two categories and separated them into two groups. One group is singled out for His power: He made them the people of His *wilaya*, opened the door for them and removed the veil for them. So He let them witness the secrets of His Essence and did not veil them from it by the effects of His power. Another group he allotted for His service and He made them the people of His wisdom. He lowered the veil of illusion on them and withdrew from them the light of wisdom and understanding. So they stopped with the outward of shells and did not witness the inward light due to the intensity of the manifestation. Glory be to the One who concealed His secret by His wisdom and manifested His light by His power!

The people of love, who are the people of *wilaya* and *gnosis* among the people of witnessing and eye-witnessing, are guided by light to the existence of veils and so they only see light, and they are guided by the Real to the existence of creation and they only find the Real. They are guided by His power to His wisdom, and they find His power to be the source of His wisdom and wisdom the source of His power. So by witnessing the Real, they withdraw from seeing creation since it is impossible to witness Him and witness something else with Him. As for the people of service among the people of wisdom, they seek information by the manifestation of the veils to the existence of light and by creation to the existence of the Real. They are withdrawn from Him in the state of His Presence and they are veiled from Him by the intensity of His manifestation. One of the gnostics said, "Allah Almighty affirmed the creature for common people and so by it they affirmed the Creator. He affirmed Himself to the elite and by Him they affirmed creation."

What a great difference there is between the one who is guided by Him to the manifestation of His effect and the one who seeks information about His existence by the manifestation of His effect! That is because the one who is guided by Him recognises the Real, and it is the real existence which belongs to the One worthy of it, i.e. the One who is worthy of it and deserves it. That is Allah, the Necessary of Existence, the Worshipped King. He affirms the business, which is the timelessness of real existence from the existence of its source, which is the basic timeless pre-eternal *Jabarut*, i.e. the one who recognises Allah until He becomes necessary in his view, then recognises that existence belongs to Allah and negates the existence of other than Him. He affirms His timelessness first and last. You could say that he recognises the Real, and it is basic existence of the One who deserves it, who is Allah, and affirms the business, which is secondary existence, from the existence of its source, i.e. connects it to its source. Then the branch is connected to the root and all becomes basic *Jabarut*. It is possible that it means the same, or implies that he recognises real existence for the One who deserves it and to affirms that matter from its source, as when you say, "I recognise this judgement and affirm by it the One who is its source, and Allah knows best."

As for one who seeks information about him, it is because he is far from Him in the state of his nearness to Him and absent from Him in the state of his presence with Him. Illusion had distanced him. His absence is lack of understanding. When was He absent from him so that he would need to seek information about Him, since "*He is nearer to you than your jugular vein*" (50:16) When was He distant so that illusory tracks are that which lead to Him when "*He is with you wherever you are*" (57:4) since the effect of power is its source. So the attribute is not separate from the described since it only has substance by it and no manifestation except from it.

It will come later in the *Munajat*: "My God! How can one seek information about You through something which is in need of You for its own existence? Does other-than-You manifest what You do not have so that it could manifest You? When were You absent so that You would need a proof to indicate You? When were you distant so that traces would lead to You?" Allah knows best.

Then for those who by guided by Allah, Allah expands for them the arena of knowledges and opens for them the storehouses of understanding as opposed to those who seek information about Him. Allah stunted them in the provision of knowledge by the existence of the veil of illusion. He indicated that when he said:

**As for those who have reached Him:**

*"He who has plenty should spend out from his plenty."*

**As for those who are travelling to Him:**

***"it is he whose provision is restricted."***

As for those who have reached Him, because when their spirits escape from the constriction of phenomenal beings to the space of witnessing and eye-witnessing, or you could say, when their spirits rise from the world of forms to the world of spirits, or from the world to the Mulk to the world of the Malakut, then the arena of the provision of knowledge is expanded for them and the storehouses of understanding are opened to them. They expend jewels of hidden knowledge from the vastness of their wealth and rubies of the protected secret from the storehouses of their treasures. So they have an expanded sphere and ride the steeds of rhetoric and eloquent speech. How swift is wealth comes to the one at whom concern is directed! How immense is the opening of the who attended to! Allah has men such that anyone who looks at them achieves a happiness after which he will never be wretched. They are the people of the secret and the state.

As for those who are travelling to Allah, it is because they remain in the constriction of phenomenal beings and are imprisoned in the world of forms in the prison of the illusion. None of the storehouses of understanding are opened to them. They are busy in the jihad of themselves and the toil of purifying their hearts, constricted in knowledges and restricted in all forms of understanding. If they find in the journey, they arrive and move from the constriction of beings and travel and prance in the meadows of knowledges and they win what they hope for and are enriched after they were weary. They return from the path. Or else they fall short and are ruined and lost.

**Note:** If you want for the knowledge of tastes to be expanded to you, then disconnect yourself from the business of provisions. As long as you work for the treasure of others, you will never excavate your treasure. So disconnect yourself from the material and be in need of Allah and gifts will overflow on you from Allah. *"Sadaqat is for the poor and very poor."* (9:60) If you want expansion of gifts to you, then have sound poverty and need.

When opening was delayed for his student Ibn Maymuna, Shaykh ad-Dabbas waited for him and found him reading the *Risala* of al-Qushayri. He told him, "Cast aside your book and dig in the land of your self and a spring will arise for you. Otherwise leave me." Success is by Allah.

Then he mentioned the reason for the expansion of knowledges for those who arrive rather than the travellers. It is that the travellers have not stopped at the witnessing of lights. They have passed through to the light of lights and that is not the case of the travellers. They stop with the lights and are in need of them and owned by them. He said:

**Those travelling to Him**

**are guided by the light of turning their faces toward Him.**

**Those who have arrived**

**have the lights of face-to-face encounter.**

**The former belong to lights,**

**but the lights belong to the latter**

**because they belong to Allah, and are His alone.**

**Say: 'Allah'**

***then leave them plunging in their games."***

The lights of turning the faces are the lights of Islam and faith, and the lights of face-to-face encounter are the lights of *ihsan*. You could say the lights of turning the faces are the lights of outward and inward obedience and the lights of face-to-face encounter are the lights of reflection and looking. Or the lights of turning are the lights of the Shari'a and Tariqa and the lights of face-to-face encounter are the lights of the Reality. Or you could say that the lights of turning are the lights of striving and endurance and the lights of face-to-face encounter are the lights of witnessing and direct speech.

The clarification of that is that Allah Almighty wants to connect His slave to Him first by the light of the sweetness of outward action, which is the station of Islam so that he is guided to action and annihilated in it and tastes its sweetness. Then he turns to Him by the light of the sweetness of inward action, which is the station of faith with sincerity, truthfulness, tranquillity, intimacy with Allah and being alienated from other than Him, and so he is guided to it and annihilated and tastes its sweetness and is firm in watchfulness. This light is greater than the first and more perfect.

Then he turns to Him with the light of the sweetness of witnessing and it is the action of the *ruh*, and it is the first light of face-to-face encounter. So he is overwhelmed by astonishment, bewilderment and intoxication. When he awakens from his intoxication, becomes sober after his attraction, is firm in witnessing and recognises the Worshipped King and returns to *baqa'*, then he is for Allah and by Allah. He has no need of the light by his witnessing the light of lights because he has become the light itself and has become a master of the lights after he was mastered by them by his need of them before he reached their source. When he arrives, he becomes the slave of Allah, free from what is other than Him. His outward is slavery and his inward is freedom.

The end result is that as long as the murid continues to travel, he is guided by the lights of turning and needs them so that he can travel by them. When he reaches the station of witnessing, he obtains the lights of face-to-face encounter and so he does not need anything because he is for Allah, not for anything less than Him. The travellers, who are those travelling to lights by their need of them, and so they rejoice in them. Those who have arrived have the lights because they are enriched beyond need by Allah. They are for Allah and by Allah, not for anything except Him.

Then the shaykh recited this ayat to the Path of the people of indication (*ishara*). "Say, 'Allah' with your heart and your *ruh* and withdraw from other than Him. Then leave people. i.e. '*leave them plunging in their games*,'" i.e. plunging into "other", playing with passion. One of the commentators criticised the Sufis by their citing this *ayat*; and he did not understand what they meant. "*All the people knew their drinking place*." (2:60) Shaykh Ibn ŌAbbad said, "Do not make the people of the outward an argument against the people of the inward," i.e. because the sight of the people of the inward is fine and their weaving delicate. Only they understand their indication. May Allah give us the benefit of them and join us to them. Amen.

This is the end of Chapter Two and, to sum up, it mentions that the adab and signs of the gnostic. There are eight types of *adab*. The signs are four: returning to Him in everything, relying on Him in every state, withdrawal into Him from everything, and being guided by Him to everything and the expansion of the provision of knowledges, opening the storehouses of understanding, reaching the face-to-face encounter of lights, and withdrawing from them by witnessing of the One, the Conqueror.

### CHAPTER THREE

It deals with relinquishment and adornment.

#### **Better to look at the defects hidden within you**

**than to look for the unseen worlds that are veiled from you.**

Looking at something is being concerned about it and looking for it.

O human being, your looking at the defects hidden in you, like envy, pride, love of rank and leadership, worry about provision, fear of poverty, seeking elitedom and other faults, and investigating them and striving to be free of them is better than your looking for the unseen worlds that are veiled from you, like learning the secrets of people, what destiny has decreed of future events, and like looking at the secrets of the enigmas of *tawhid* before being worthy of that because looking at hidden faults is someone which results in the life of your heart, and the life of your heart is a reason for eternal life and abiding bliss. Looking for the unseen worlds is excess and it can be a reason for the destruction of the self, as is its clinging to pride and seeking its prerogative over people. What the Shaykh said will come: "When someone perceives the secrets of the slaves and does not take on the character of divine mercy, his perception is a trial and brings him its bad results."

Know that there are three types of defects: defects of the *nafs*, defects of the heart and defects of the *ruh*. The defects of the *nafs* are its attachment to physical appetites, like good food, drink, clothes, mounts, houses, wives, and the life of that. The defects of the heart are its attachment to appetites of the heart, like love of rank, leadership, might, pride, envy, rancour, love of position, elitedom, and the like of that which will come, Allah willing in the attributes of humanity. The defects of the *ruh* are its attachment to inward portions, like seeking *karamat*, stations, castles, houris and other things.

So the murid's looking for any of that detracts from his slavedom and prevents him from undertaking the rights of lordship. Therefore his preoccupation with looking at the defects so his *nafs*, heart and *ruh* and his striving to purify himself from all that is better than his looking at the knowledge of the unseen worlds which is veiled from him, as was said. Success is by Allah.

When he mentioned relinquishment, he mentioned its fruit, which is adornment with gnosis since he is only denied that by the *nafs*, heart or *ruh* looking for their imaginary portions.

**The Real is not veiled**

**- it is you that are veiled from seeing Him.**

**If there was anything veiling Him**

**what veiled Him would cover Him.**

**If he was covered,**

**His existence would be contained.**

**If something contains something else,**

**it overpowers it.**

**But He is the Conqueror, overcoming His slaves.**

The veil is impossible for the Almighty. Nothing veils Him because He is manifest by everything, before everything and after everything. Nothing is manifest with Him nor does anything exist in reality except Him. So He is not veiled from you. That is which is veiled is you, who are veiled from looking at Him by your reliance on others and the attachment of your heart to physical matters. If your heart had been connected to seeking the Master and had turned away completely from looking at other, it would look at the light of the Real radiant in the places of manifestation of phenomenal being and what was veiled from you by illusion would be ready for witnessing and eye-witnessing. How excellent is what the speaker said:

What was hidden is manifest

and I contain all phenomenal beings.

My cup goes around from Me to me.

After my death you will see me alive.

All people witness but do not recognise. All of them are in the sea and are not aware. I heard our Shaykh say, "By Allah, people are not veiled from Allah. Your being veiled from Him is the illusion, and illusion is a non-existential matter without reality. The shaykh says later: "It is not the existence of anything with Him that veils you from Allah – since there is nothing with Him. What veils you is the illusion that something exists with Him."

That is because if anything physical had veiled Allah, that veil would be over him. If He were to have a sensory veil, His existence would be contained. It is impossible that He be covered from all aspects and so He is not contained. Anything that contains something else overpowers it. How could that be when the Almighty says that "He is the Conqueror, overcoming His slaves," i.e. because they are in His grasp and under the control of His power, the singling out of His will and volition?

Aboveness designates the elevation of majesty and position, not place, as one says, "The sultan is above the wazir" and "the master is above his slave," and the king is above the subject, and other things which confirm pride and negate the designate of in-timeness, and Allah knows best.

Then the veil of the spirit to gnosis is non-existent illusory matter with no reality. It is its illness with the qualities of humanity. If it were sound, it would be recognised. That is indicated by its words:

**Among the qualities of humanness,**

**get rid of every quality incompatible with your slavehood**

**so you can answer when Allah calls and be near His presence.**

The qualities of humanness are the qualities which are incompatible with sincere slavery. They derive from two matters. The first is the attachment of the heart to animal qualities, which are the appetites of the belly and the genitals, and what follows them of love of this world and its ephemeral appetites. The Almighty says, "*To mankind the love of worldly appetites is painted in glowing colours: women and children, and heaped-up mounds of gold and silver, and horses with fine markings and livestock and fertile farmyard.*" (3:14)

The second is taking on the qualities of shaytans, like pride, envy, rancour, anger, anxiety, light intellect, arrogance, love of rank, leadership, and praise, hardness, giving, coarseness, crudeness, respecting the wealthy and debasing the poor, and like fear of poverty, worry about provision, avarice, showing-off, haughtiness and innumerable others so that one of them said, "*The nafs has imperfections as Allah has perfections.*"

Shaykh Abu 'Abdu'r-Rahman as-Sulami wrote a book on *The Defects of Self and Its Cures*. Shaykh Zarruq wrote about 800 verses. If Allah gives someone a shaykh of instruction, does not need anything except listening and following.

When the *murid* leaves the qualities of animals, he takes on the qualities of the spirituals, like asceticism, scrupulousness, contentment, chastity, independence in Allah, and intimacy with Him. When he leaves the qualities of shaytans, he takes on the qualities of the believers or the qualities of the angels, like humility, sound heart, forbearance, tranquillity, gravity, being at peace, easiness, gentleness, obscurity, being content with the knowledge of Allah, compassion, mercy, esteem for the poor and paupers, the people of lineage and all the Community, generosity, open-handedness, magnanimity, sincerity, truthfulness, watchfulness, witnessing and gnosis.

When the person takes on these qualities and realises them by taste after freeing himself of its opposites, then he is a sincere slave of his Master, free from what is other than Him. He answers His call and is near to His presence. When his Lord says to him, "My slave," and he says to him, "O Lord!" He was truthful in his answer by his sincere slavery as opposed to when he is engrossed in his outward and inward appetites, then he is a slave to himself and his appetites. When he says, "O Lord," he lies since whoever loves a thing is its slave, and He does not want you to be a slave to other than Him. When he is freed of the bondage of appetites and portions, then he is also near to the presence of Allah. Rather he is devoted to it since nothing brings us out of the presence except love for these imaginary illusions. When we are freed of it and achieve slavery, we find ourselves in the Presence.

Know that Allah made these human qualities by which the Presence is veiled a handkerchief with which to wipe away the impurities of power, like the *nafs*, shaytan and this world. Allah made the *nafs* and shaytan a handkerchief for blameworthy actions and made humanity a handkerchief for wiping away base qualities. There are only the loci of the manifestation of the Real and the *tajalliyat* of the Real. There is only Him, and there is no strength nor power except by Allah.

Then the reason that these defects remain in man in respect of wisdom is neglecting to look into them. The reason for neglecting to look into them is being satisfied with the self. If he had had a bad opinion of it, he would have investigated its evil qualities, extracted them and been purified of them. That is why he said:

**The root of every act of rebellion, every appetite**

**and every moment of heedlessness**

**is satisfaction with one's self.**

This is because everyone who is satisfied with his self likes its states and covers up its evils as the poet said, "The eye of pleasure is blind to every defect."

**The root of every act of obedience, every restraint**

**and every moment of wakefulness**

**is lack of satisfaction with one's self.**

That is because whoever suspects his *nafs* and has a bad opinion of it and looks at it with the eye of anger investigates its defects and extracts its evils as the poet said, "But the eye of anger shows evils."

Therefore, *murid*, search out your evils and suspect your *nafs* and do not approve of any of its states. When you are pleased with it and admire its states, it will sting you while you are unaware. It has veiled you from the Presence while you are looking.

Abu Hafis al-Haddad said, "Anyone who does not suspect himself at all times and does not oppose it in all states and does not drag it to what it dislikes in all his days, is deluded. Anyone who looks at himself and approves of any of it has destroyed it. How is it sound for an intelligent person to be satisfied with his *nafs*? The noble son of the noble son of the noble son of the noble [the Prophet Yusuf] said, "*I do not say that my self was free from blame. The self indeed commands to evil acts – except for those my Lord has mercy on.*" (12:53) It is said about that:

Be cautious of your self and do not trust its tricks.

The self is fouler than seventy shaytans.

As-Sari as-Saqati said, "Whoever recognises Allah lives. Whoever inclines to this world is fickle. The fool goes to and fro, morning and evening in nothing. The intelligent person examines his defects."

So, my brother, be concerned with your defects if you want to be faithful to yourself. When you search out its defects and expose its imperfections, you will be purified, liberated, achieve realisation, and enter the Presence. Sight and reflection will be expanded for you. The view is wide enough for you and reflection complain to you. The shaykh of our shaykh said, "The curse of Allah is on the one to whom the defect of himself is shown and then does not shame him." He often used to advise lack of wariness of people and lack of concern for them since one can only be purified of the small points of eye-service by falling them fall from one's eye and his falling from their eyes. Anyone who wants to purify himself should accompany the one who is purified. That is why he said:

**Better to keep the company of an ignorant man**

**who is not satisfied with himself**

**than a man of knowledge who is satisfied with himself.**

That is because the company of the one who is not satisfied with himself is pure good since he has achieved sincerity and so it flows in that person until he is adorned with sincerity and becomes part of the elite. The company of the one who is satisfied with himself is pure evil, even if he is the most knowledgeable of the people of the earth because nature steal nature. That is because ignorance which is near the Presence is better than knowledge which is far from the Presence. That is why one of the gnostics said, "Those with the greatest veils to Allah are the scholars, then the worshippers, then the ascetics since they stop with their knowledge, worship and asceticism. Ignorance which leads to Allah is knowledge in reality and the knowledge which veils one from Allah is in reality ignorance. That is why he said:

**What knowledge does the self-satisfied scholar have?**

That is because he is veiled from his Lord.

**What ignorance does the ignorant man who is not self-satisfied have?**

Since the lack of satisfaction about himself makes him investigate it and purify himself from its bondage and he becomes a true slave of Allah. Then his Master loves him, chooses him for His presence, selects him for His love and informs him of His hidden knowledge. So He is the most knowing of His creation. Allah Almighty knows best.



When the slave is purified of his portions and qualities of his humanity, he is near Presence of his Lord by the soundness of his heart and its illumination by the light of his Lord. Then his existence is effaced in the existence of his beloved and his witnessing in witnessing the One he worships. He indicates that when he says:

**The light of the inner eye lets you see His nearness to you.**

**The source of the inner eye lets you see your non-existence by your existence.**

**The truth of the inner eye lets you see His existence,**

**not your own non-existence or existence.**

**"Allah was and there was nothing with Him.**

**He is now as He was."**

The inner eye is the eye of the heart as the sight is the sight of the vessel. So the inner eye sees the subtle meanings of light while normal sight sees dark dense physical things. The inner eye which perceives the light of the subtle meaning is of five types. One type is corrupt sight which is blind and so it denies the light of the Real its basis. Sidi al-Busiri said:

The eye denied the light of the sun by ophthalmia,

and the mouth denied the taste of water from illness.

This is the inner eye of the unbelievers. Allah Almighty says, *"It is not their eyes were are blind, but the hearts in their breasts which are blind."* (22:46)

Another category has sound sight but they are blocked by the weakness of their sight due to an illness which they have. So they confirm the light, but they are not strong enough for witnessing it nor to witness its nearness or distance of them. These are the hearts of the common Muslims.

Another category consists of those whose sight is sound and somewhat strong so that they are close to having their eyes open, but due to the intensity of the rays they are unable to open their eyes and so they perceive the rays of light near to him. That is the common people who direct themselves. This station is called "the station of the rays of the inner eye".

Yet another category have strong sight and open their eyes and perceive the light encompassing them so that they vanish from themselves by witnessing the light. This is for the elite of those who direct themselves and this station is called "the station of the eye/source of the inner eye."

The last category has sound insight and strong light and its light reaches the light of its source and it only sees the basic light and denies that there is anything besides that fundamental light. "Allah was and there was nothing with Him. He is now as He was." This is called "the truth of the inner eye".

The reason it is called "the rays of the inner eye" is that when the person in that station sees the existence of phenomenal beings, they are stamped in the mirror of his inner eye and so it veils him from witnessing the light from its source, but when its density becomes less and its proofs are luminous, he sees the rays of light near from beyond it, and so he perceives the rays but does not perceive the light. This is the light of faith, and it is "the station of the knowledge of certainty".

The reason it is called "the eye of the inner eye" is that when he is sound and strong, his eye is opened and he sees light as encompassing and connected to him and so it is called the eye of the inner eye since it is opened and perceives what is hidden to others. This is the "station of the eye/source of certainty".

The reason it is called "the truth of the inner eye" is that when the inner eye perceives the Real from his source and withdraws from the light of secondary things by the light of the roots, it is called "the truth of inner eye" since it perceives that it is from the Real and is absent to the witnessing of creation. This is the "station of the truth of certainty".

So the rays of insight are the light of faith for the people of watchfulness; the source of the inner eye is the light of *ihsan* for the people of witnessing; and the truth of the inner eye is the light of firmness and fixity for the people of direct speech. Or you could say that the rays of the inner eye refers to the light of the knowledge of certainty, the light of the inner eye to the light of the source of certainty, and the truth of the inner eye is the light of the truth of certainty.

So the knowledge of certainty is for the people of proof and evidence; the eye/source of certainty is for the people of unveiling and clarification; and the truth of certainty is for the people of witnessing and direct vision. An example of that is like someone who hears of Makka but has not seen it. This is the knowledge of certainty for him. When he is looking down on it and sees it but has not entered it, it is the source of certainty. When he enters it and remains in it, that is the truth of certainty. It is the same for the seeker of the truth. As long as he remains beyond the veil, annihilated in actions, he is in the knowledge of certainty. When he looks at the annihilation of the Essence and is not firm in annihilation, that is the eye of certainty. When he is firm and fixed, it is the truth of certainty. Or you could say that the rays of the inner eye belong to the people of the world of the Mulk. The eye of the inner eye is for the people of the world of the Malakut and the truth of the inner eye belongs to the people of the world of the Jabarut. Or you could say that the rays of the inner eye belong to the people of annihilation in actions; the eye of the inner eye to the people of annihilation in the Essence, and the truth of the inner eye to the people of annihilation in annihilation.

The rays of the inner eye make you witness the nearness of the Real to you, i.e. it obliges that you witness the light of the Real to you. The Almighty says, "*We created man and We know what his own self whispers to him. We are nearer to Him than his jugular vein.*" (50:16) The Almighty says, "*He is with you wherever you are.*" (57:4)

The eye of the inner eye makes you witness your non-existence, i.e. you disappear with the disappearance of your illusion by His existence, i.e. the existence of the Real since it is impossible that you witness Him and witness other than Him with you. When illusion leaves you and you are annihilated to your existence, you will witness your Lord by your Lord. It is the sign of the opening of the inner eye and the treatment of the secret as Shaykh 'Abdu'r-Rahman al-Majdhub says:

If someone sees the Maker through phenomenal being,

his might is in the blindness of the inner eye

If someone sees phenomenal being by the Maker

finds the cure for the inner secret.

So its literal sense is that the common Muslims have blind inner eyes in spite of the preference which was already mentioned. They are only blocked while their sight is sound, which is not the case with the inner eyes of the unbelievers. They are totally blind.

The truth of the eye inner makes you witness the existence of Allah alone, not your existence because your source is absent, not your existence, because non-existence is only that which has a confirmed existence, and there is no existent with Allah. "Allah was and there was nothing with Him. He is now as He was." This addition, even if it is not in the hadith, has a sound meaning since change is impossible for Him. Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-'Arabi al-Hatimi said, "Whoever witnesses that creatures have no action has won. Whoever witnesses them as having no life has won. Whoever witnesses them as non-existence itself has arrived." Whoever witnesses them with the eye of non-existence, has a firm connection. They wrote:

Whoever sees creation as a mirage

has risen above the veil

To existence which you see stitched up

without distance or nearness.

There is no address by it to it

nor indication of the address.

Allah knows best. Then when the fact is that Allah alone has existence, do not let your himma extend to other than Him since it is lacking.

He indicates that in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Do not let the intention of your aspiration veer to other-than-Him.**

#### **Hopes can go no further than the Ever-Generous.**

The intention of the *himmah* is its aspiration to which it is directed. The *himmah* is the force directed to obtaining aims. Hopes are that to which the someone aims.

*Murid*, when your *himmah* is connected to something which you want to obtain, then return to Allah and do not connect it to anything except Him because He is Ever-Generous and His blessings flow constantly night and day. Hopes can go no further than the Ever-Generous. He wants to be asked so that He can answer the request. They said in explaining His Name, the Ever-Generous, that He is the one who gives when asked and does not care how much He gives nor to whom He gives.

When you present your need to other-than-Him, He is not pleased. When He is harsh, He pardons. When He reproves, He does not exact. This is part of the perfection of His generosity and completeness of His kindness and blessing. Sidi Ibrahim at-Tazi wrote about that in a *qasida*:

The perfection of Allah is the most perfect of every good.

Allah has perfection without doubt

The love of Allah is the noblest of every intimacy,

so do not forget to take on gravity.

The dhikr of Allah courses through every limb

and is more beneficial than that which slakes burning thirst.

In truth, there is no existent except Allah,

so cast aside connection to boasting.

When you know His generosity, magnanimity, perfection and kindness, do not ask other than Him, when it will not bring it to you. He says:

### **Do not ask other-than-Him for what you need**

#### **since He is the One who will bring it to you.**

You know what that is other than the Real is illusory imagination and there is no reality to its existence. When Allah makes you have a need like poverty, hardship or some other passing thing, take it to Allah, make it subject to the will of Allah, withdraw from it into the remembrance of Allah and do not turn to other than Him by attachment nor flattery. We read in a hadith, "If someone does not ask Allah, Allah is angry with Him." Abu 'Ali ad-Daqqaq said, "The sign of gnosis is that you ask all your needs only from Allah." Or you are engrossed like Musa, peace be him, who yearned for the vision of Allah." He said, "*Lord, show me Yourself so that I may look at You!*" (7;143) One day he needed some bread and said, "*My Lord, I am truly in need of any good You have in store for me.*" (28:24)

Then the author was astonished at those who ask for the judgements of Allah from other than Him in spite of their lack of power and incapacity.

### **How can other than the One who put it there relieve it?**

Part of a person's lack of modesty is that he asks others to relieve the judgement of Allah's force when he knows of His kindness and goodness and the lack that his kindness is not disconnected from His force. Shaykh ash-Shadhili said, "I have despaired of myself helping myself, so how could I not despair of other than me helping me? When I hope for Allah for other than me, how can I not hope for Him for myself? One of the gnostics among the unveiled said, 'It was said to me in a state between sleep and a dream: 'Do not display need so that it will be doubled for you in recompense for you bad adab and leaving the limits of your slavery. I have tested you with need so that you take refuge in Me from it and pray for it with Me and rely on Me in it. I have smelted you with need so that through it you become pure gold. So do not deviate after the smelting. I have imposed poverty on you and judged wealth for Myself. If you connect it to Me, I will make you reach wealth. If you connect it to other than Me, I will cut off the substance of my help from you, and I will sever your means from My means and cast you away from My door. If someone relies on Me, he rules. If someone relies on himself, he is destroyed.'"

Then he clarified the reason for his astonishment:

### **How can someone who is unable to relieve his own need relieve someone else's?**

If someone is unable to put himself straight, how can he be capable of putting someone else right? Both the seeker and sought are weak. One of them said, "Whoever relies on other than Allah is in delusion because delusion is that which does not abide. Nothing except Him abides for ever. He is the Eternal Timeless who continues and will continue. His giving and bounty continue. So do not rely on the one whose giving and excellence are not constant for you.

Then reliance on Allah and asking Him for needs and resorting to Him in all events is due to your good opinion of him as he indicated when he said:

### **If you do not think well of Him because His qualities are beautiful**

**then think well of Him because of the way He treats you.**

### **Has He made you used to anything but good?**

### **Has He bestowed on you anything but favours?**

In respect of a good opinion of Allah, people fall into two categories: the elite and the common. As for the elite, their good opinion of Allah Almighty derives from witnessing His beauty and seeing His perfection. So their good opinion of Allah does not cease, whether He directs beauty or majesty to them because He is described with mercy, compassion, generosity and magnanimity and that does not cease. When He gives a *tajalli* to them by His majesty or force they know that what is inside that is part of His perfect blessing and encompassing mercy, and so they are dominated by witnessing mercy and beauty and their good opinion of Him continues in every state.

As for the common people, their good opinion of Allah derives from witnessing His kindness, good treatment and favour. When force or a hardship descends on them, they look at His prior goodness and the good He bestowed on them from His kindness and favours. They compare what comes to what went before and so they receive what comes to them with acceptance and contentment. This opinion is weak with investigation and thought are weak and strong when they are strong, which is not the case with the first group. That is because the first derives from witnessing the attribute, and the attribute does not alter. The second view derives from witnessing the action which can vary.

Murid, if you cannot have a good opinion of Allah by witnessing His quality of compassion and mercy which does not change, then have a good opinion of Him by the existence of how He treats you with kindness and favours. Has Allah made you used to anything but good and kindness? Has He bestowed on you anything but favour in abundance and manifold blessings?

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Love Allah for what He nourishes you with of His blessings and love me by the love of Allah." Shaykh ash-Shadhili said, "We love only Allah." A man said, "Your ancestor rejected that, sir, by his words, 'Hearts are disposed to love the one who is good to them.'" Shaykh ash-Shadhili said, "Since we do not see any good-doer other than Allah, we do not love other than Him."

He also said, "One night I recited, '*I seek refuge with the Lord of people*' until I reached the words, '*the evil of the whisperer,*' and it was said to me, 'the evil of the whisperer, and the whisperer comes between you and your Beloved, reminding you of your evil deeds and making you forget your good needs, and that the fact that you have a lot of that which belongs to the left and little of what belongs to the right. This is in order to make you turn from good opinion of Allah and His generosity to a bad opinion of Allah and His Messenger. So beware of this door. It had captured many worshippers, ascetics and people of obedience and correctness."

He also said, "The gnostic is the one who recognises the hardships of time in the kindness which flows from Allah to him and recognises its evil in the goodness of Allah to Him. If you remember the blessings of Allah then perhaps you will be successful."

Since Allah Almighty has only made you used to good and has only bestowed favours on you, it is a wonder that you abandon Him and seek other than Him! He indicated that:

**How utterly amazing is someone who flees from something he cannot escape**

**to seek something that will not last!**

*"It is not the eyes that are blind,*

*but the hearts in the breasts are blind."*

That which cannot be escaped is Allah Almighty and His decree and determination, That which will not last is this world and what the *nafs* plans and decides. The greatest wonder is that the slave flees from his Lord and turns to seeking other than Him when he cannot escape Him. That must be true since he has no existence except from Him nor abiding except by Him. So how can he flee from Him by failing to seek His gnosis or draw near to Him by obeying His commands and avoiding his prohibitions, and seek what will not last of the transitory portions of this world. Even if it does not leave him while he is alive, it will leave him by death. So seek what abides rather than what is annihilated. How excellent is what was said!

The movement of this world drives you to you.

Is not the outcome of that disappearance?

This world is only like a shadow

which shades you briefly and then will depart.

You could also say that it is a total marvel that the slave flees from what he cannot escape of the power and Decree of Allah and seeks what will not remain of the portions of his decision and choice since all that he plans and decides is cancelled and destroyed by the Decree.

When the building is complete one day,

you built it while another will destroy it.

All of this is due to lack of the opening of the inner eye or its blindness. That is why He says that the eyes are not blind to the perception of the sensory because they perceive it and are veiled by it. The hearts, however, are blind to the perception of the meaning and so they only see the sensory and love only it and seek nothing but it. We ask Allah to grant us well-being and guidance. Shaykh ash-Shadhili said, "The blindness of the inner eyes lies in three; allowing the limbs to disobey Allah, desire for the creation of Allah and artifice in obeying Allah."

When you seek the Real whom you cannot escape and travel to him, seek gnosis of His Essence, not the ornament of His Garden which is one a phenomenal being. That is why he said:

**Do not travel from phenomenal being to phenomenal being.**

**You will be like the donkey going around at the mill.**

**It travels to what it set out from.**

**Travel from phenomenal beings**

**to the Maker of Being.**

*"And the final end is to your Lord."*

Travelling from phenomenal being to phenomenal being is going from other to seek other. That is like someone who is ascetic in this world and devotes himself to Allah and by so doing desires to give his body rest and for this world to come to him since the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If someone devotes himself to Allah, Allah will spare him every burden and provide for him from where he does not reckon," and "If someone's intention is the Next World, Allah will gather his business for him, put wealth in his heart and bring him this world humbled." He is like someone who is ascetic in this world because he seeks eliteness, like the attention of people, might and to produce awe in people's hearts, or like someone who is ascetic in it in order to seek miracles and breaking of normal patterns, or someone who is ascetic in it in order to seek castles and houris. All of this is travelling from one phenomenal being to another phenomenal being. Therefore he is like a donkey going around at the mill night and day while staying in the same place. That which he travels from is that to which he travels. His *himma* is for the portions of his self. So he is like the donkey at the water wheel which goes around in a circle. He thinks that he has covering the distance to what he seeks, but he is only increased in loss and weariness.

Shaykh ash-Shadhili says, "Stand at one door, not to have doors opened to you, and the doors will open to you. Be humble to one Master, not to have necks submitted to you, and necks will be humbled to you. The Almighty says, "There is nothing except that it is stored with us."

So, murid, you must take your need to the Glorious King and travel from seeing phenomenal beings to seeking the witnessing of the Eternal, or travel from the proof and exposition to the rank of witnessing and eye-witnessing. That is the ultimate goal and the achievement of desire. *"And the final end is to your Lord."*

Do not travel from one phenomenal being to another phenomenal being by leaving the portions of your self to seek portion of another. Then you are like the donkey going around at the mill which goes to that from which it came. His being like the donkey is evidence of his stupidity and lack of understanding since if he had possessed understanding from Allah, he would travel from the portions of his self and passion, aiming to reach the presence of his Master.

So, murid, do not travel from a created being to another created being like you, but travel from phenomenal being to the Maker of Being, and *"the final end is to your Lord."* Travelling to the Maker is achieved by three matters. The first is confining your *himma* to Him rather than anything else until He rises on your heart and you find no lover other Him, The second is returning to Him to establish the rights while fleeing from portions. The third is constancy in seeking refuge in Him, seeking His help, reliance on Him and submission to whatever He brings.

Shaykh ash-Shadhili says, "Four things which creatures are in need are: lack of need of anything, love for Allah, and wealth by Allah, sincerity and certainty. Sincerity is in slavery and certainty is about the judgements of lordship. *"Who could be better at giving judgement than Allah for people with certainty."* (5:50)

Shaykh Zarruq said, "Then he indicates seeking to raise the *himma* to Allah with turning away from what is other than Him by the hadith of emigration which is found in the Sahih."

**Look at the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:**

**"Whoever emigrates to Allah and His Messenger,**

**his emigration is to Allah and His Messenger.**

**Whoever emigrates to something of this world or a woman to marry,**

**his emigration is to what he emigrates to."**

**Understand his words, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:**

**"His emigration is to what he emigrates to."**

**Reflect on this matter if you have any understanding at all!**

**Peace!**

Emigration is moving from one land to another land when someone emigrates from the land he leaves and settles in the land to which he moves. Here it is one of three matters: from a land of disobedience to a land of obedience, from a land of heedlessness to a land of wakefulness, and from the land of the world of forms to the land of the world of spirits. Or you could say, from the land of the *mulk* to the land of the *malakut*, or from the land of the sensory to the land of the meaning, or from the land of the knowledge of certainty to the land of the source of certainty or the truth of certainty.

Whoever emigrates from these lands, and by his emigration is aiming for the pleasure of Allah and His Messenger, or to attain to gnosis of Allah and His Messenger, his emigration will bring him to Allah and His Messenger According to his aim and *himma*. If someone emigrates to the portions of his self and his passion, then his goal and striving is wasted and the end of his emigration is that for which he emigrates. His emigration increases the attraction of evil consequences for him.

Therefore, listener, understand his words, peace be upon him: "His emigration is to what he emigrates to." Reflect on it and present it to your heart and your *nafs*. Look to see whether inside of you there remains any attention to that from which you emigrated or whether there is a portion of "other" to which you have emigrated, which is other than the pleasure of Allah and His Messenger, or the gnosis of Allah and His Messenger, Allah is jealous and does not want for anyone who seeks Him to seek another along with Him. The one who has anything remaining in him of his portion and passion will not reach Him. Ash-Shushtari said:

If you desire Our union, then your death is a precondition.

Union is not obtained by someone who has excess in him.

He also said:

My union is not obtained

by anyone who has something left in him.

I heard our shaykh al-Yazidi say, "If you want to recognise whether your *nafs* has travelled from this world to the world of the *Malakut* or not travelled, then present to it the things which it desires and to which it inclines, one after another. If you find that it has travelled from them and love of them has left the heart and it does not rely on any of them, then rejoice. Your spirit has indeed travelled to the world of the *Malakut*. If you find that it relies or inclines to love of any of this world, then strive against it and bring it out from it entirely until you travel to your Lord.

This chapter ends with "peace" because of what it contains of travel and station, All of it indicates the journey of the heart from witnessing creation to witnessing the Creator. Therefore it is appropriate to end it with "peace" because of what it contains of the mention of safety (*salama*).

Since the journey is necessary, then a guide is needed or the person will stray from the Straight Path.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

This chapter discusses company and the preconditions of it and its adab. He said:

**If someone's state does not lift you up,**

**and his words do not lead you to Allah**

**- then do not keep his company!**

The one whose state lifts you up is someone who is such that, when you see him, you remember Allah. If you see him when you are in a state of heedlessness, he lifts you to a state of wakefulness. If you see him when you are in a state of desire, he raises you to a state of asceticism. If you see him when you are in a state of occupation with disobedience, he raises you to a state of repentance. If you are in a state of ignorance of your Lord, he raises you to recognition of your Lord, and so forth.

The one whose words guide you to Allah is the one who speaks by Allah. He directs you to Allah and withdraws from other than Him. When he speaks, he takes all the hearts, and when he is silent, his state raises you to the Knower of the Unseen worlds. So his state confirms his words and his words are in harmony with his knowledge. The company of someone like this is an elixir which transforms the sources. This is understood from the words of the shaykh, "If someone's state does not lift you up, then do not keep his company." Keep the company of the one whose state will lift you up and whose words will lead you to Allah.

Company in the Path of *tasawwuf* is a great matter in the journey to Allah Almighty according to the custom of Allah Almighty and his wisdom so that one of them said, "The one who has no shaykh has shaytan for his shaykh." Another said, "A man is like a tree growing in the wilderness. If it is not cut and pollinated, it is barren." Shaykh Abu'l-ÔAbbas al-Mursi said, "Whoever has no shaykh in this business has no joy."

There are four preconditions which the shaykh must have: sound knowledge, clear tasting, high *himma* and a pleasing state. Sound knowledge is that by which he is certain of his obligation. He must also know the stations and stages through which the *murid* passes as well as the delusion and tricks of the *nafs*. The *murid* travels through that at the hand of a perfect shaykh and experiences direct taste of that, not imitation, which is what is meant by clear tasting. A high *himma* is one which is connected to Allah and not to others. A pleasing state is going straight to the best of one's ability.

He must combine the Reality and the Shari'a, attraction (*jadhb*) and wayfaring (*suluk*). He attracted him by the attraction of the hearts and, through his *suluk*, brings him out of his state of attraction to going-on. The one who is only wayfaring is outward and is not attracted and does not achieve realisation. The one who is only *majdhub* does not travel nor arrive. The corruption of his company is greater than its benefit.

He said in *Usul at-Tariqa*, "Anyone who has one of five qualities is not valid to be a shaykh: ignorance of the *deen*, failing to respect the Muslims, being involved in what does not concern him, following passion in every thing and bad character without concern." So the company of someone like this is pure harm. He indicates this:

**It may well be that you are in a bad state -**

**but to keep company with someone worse than you**

**would allow you to see good in yourself.**

If you have a bad state and fall short in your actions and then you keep the company of someone with a worse state than you, your company with someone with a worse state than yours lets you see good in yourself since you see the good in yourself in relation of your companion's shortcoming and perfection. You therefore believe that you are superior to him because the self is naturally disposed to see its own excellence and witness the shortcomings of others in knowledge, action, or state. This is not the case when you keep the company of someone with a better state than you. Then you only see shortcoming in yourself, and there is much good in that.

Shaykh ash-Shadhili said, "My Beloved commanded me, 'Do not move your feet except where you hope for the reward of Allah and do not sit except where you are generally safe from disobeying Allah and do not choose for yourself other than the one who provides you with certainty. And they are very few indeed.'" He also said, "Do not accompany the one who prefers his *nafs* to you. He is blameworthy. Do not accompany the one who prefers you to himself. He is rarely constant. Rather keep the company of the one who, when he remembers, remembers Allah. Allah enriches by him when he is present and represents him when he is absent. His *dhikr* illuminates the hearts and his witnessing is the keys of the unseen worlds."

In short, do not keep the company of the for whom you take on a burden beyond your efforts nor the one who burdens you in the same way. The best of matters is the middlemost one. This, and Allah knows best, concerns the company of brothers. As for the company of shaykhs, you must hasten, according to your ability, to do all that the shaykh commands, or indicates, or you understand that he wants. Even if it is normally impossible, you begin to prepare for the action. The shaykh of our shaykhs, Sidi al-'Arabi ibn Ahmad ibn ÔAbdullah, said, "The true *faqir* is the one who, when



his shaykh tells him to enter the eye of the needle, does not hesitate and sets out to obey the command, even if he cannot achieve that."

Sidi 'Ali said in his book: "Know that the seeker of Allah does not draw near to Allah by anything like his sitting with a gnostic of Allah if he finds him. If he does not find him, he must remember Allah night and day, standing and sitting, while in retreat from the people of this world by not sitting with them, speaking to them, or looking at them because they are an encroaching poison. Nothing puts someone far from Allah like sitting with an ignorant *faqir*. The ignorant *faqir* is a thousand times worse than the heedless common person. Sitting with a gnostic is better than retreat, and retreat is better than sitting with the heedless common person. Sitting with a heedless common person is better than sitting with the ignorant *faqir*. There is nothing in existence which blackens the heart of the *murid* like sitting with the ignorant *faqir*. Just as the gnostic of Allah can join the slave to his Master with a glance or a word, so the *faqir* who is ignorant of Allah can ruin the relationship of a *murid* with his Master by a glance, a word or more. May Allah have mercy on al-Majdhub who said, "Sitting with other than the good is base, even if you are pure."

Sahl ibn 'Abdullah said, "Beware of the company of three sorts of people: heedless tyrants, reciters who flatter, and ignorant false Sufis." Shaykh Zarruq added, "Scholars of the outward meaning." He said, "Because they are dominated by their *nafs*."

Sitting with them today is worse than seventy heedless common people and ignorant *faqirs* because they only know the literal outward meaning of the Shari'a and think that anyone who opposes this outward is in error or misguided, and they strive to refute those who oppose them, believing that they are giving them good counsel while they are misleading them. The *murid* should be cautious about their company and avoiding being near them as much as possible. If he hesitates about a problem and cannot find any of the people of the inward to ask, he should ask him with caution and be with him like someone sitting with a scorpion or snake. By Allah, I have not seen any of the *fuqara'* who stayed near them and kept their company who ever had success in the Path of the Elite.

May Allah have mercy on Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, may Allah be pleased with him, when he said, "By Allah, I do not ask them for their world nor ask their opinion about the *deen*." He said, "This is about the scholars among the excellent Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. So what do you think about those today who are busy with the amassing this world and adorning themselves in clothes and large turbans and having good food, houses and mounts? And they think that is the *Sunna* of the Prophet. There is no strength nor power except by Allah!"

Yahya ibn Mu'adh ar-Razi used to say to the scholars of his time, "Company of scholar! Your houses are like those of Haman, your mounts are like those of Qarun, your food is Pharaonic, your wedding feasts are those of Jalut (Goliath), your festivals are of the *Jahiliyya*, and your schools have become shaytanic, so where is the Muhammadan religion?"

Part of what confirms looking for asceticism in this world and high *himma* in companions, even if actions are outwardly few is what is indicated when he said:

**No action from a heart without attachment is insignificant.**

**No action from a heart full of desires is great.**

*Zuhd* in something means to remove love of it from the heart and to be cool towards it. With some people it is to hate everything that distracts one from Allah and prevents the Presence of Allah.

It is used first in property. Its sign is that gold and dust, silver and stone, wealth and poverty, giving and denying are all the same to him.

The second is in rank and positions. Its sign is that might and abasement, public display and obscurity, praise and blame, rising and falling are the same to him.

The third is in stations, *karamat*, and elitedom. Its sign is that hope and fear, strength and weakness, expansion and contraction are the same to him. He deals with this in the same way he deals with that and he recognises this in the same way he recognises that.

Then asceticism in all phenomenal being is by witnessing the Maker of Being and His command. When the *murid* achieves these stations in asceticism, or most of them, then all his actions are immense in meaning in the sight of Allah, even if they are few in the physical in people's eyes. This is the meaning the words of the Prophet, peace be upon him,

"A little action in the sunna is better than a lot of action in innovation." Which innovation is greater and viler than love of this world and devotion to it with the heart and body which did not exist in the time of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, nor in the time of the Companions. Then the Pharaohs appeared and built, reinforced and adorned. This is the real innovation. The actions of these are few in meaning, even if it is a lot in the physical since there is no consideration for the movement of forms. What is important is the humility of the arwah.

The worship of the ascetic is by Allah and for Allah and the worship of the one with desires is by the self for the self. The worship of the ascetic is alive and abiding and the worship of the one with desires is dead and ephemeral. The worship of the ascetic is always connected and the worship of the one with desires is always severed and incomplete. The worship of the ascetic is in the mosques of the presence "*which Allah has permitted to be raised*" and the worship of the one with desires is in the dunghills of filth which Allah has permitted to be lowered. This is why one of them said one of them said, "The worship of the wealthy is like someone praying on a dunghill."

The worship of the ascetic, even if it is little in the sensory, is a lot in the meaning, and the worship of the one with desires, in spite of its abundance in the sensory, is little in meaning. It is like two men who give presents to a king. One of them gives a small pure ruby whose value is 60 qintars while the other gives 60 empty boxes. There is no doubt that the king will accept the ruby and honour the one who gave it and reject the boxes and demean the one who gave them and will be angry at him since he has mocked the king by giving him empty wood whose fame is greater than their use.

I heard our shaykh say, "The one who desires this world is heedless, even if he says, 'Allah, Allah' with his tongue constantly since there is no consideration given to the tongue. The ascetic in this world is always in *dhikr*, even he is has little *dhikr* on his tongue."

This is how one of them explained the words of Allah Almighty, "*They only remember Allah a very little,*" (4:142) i.e. with heedlessness and desires, even if it is a lot in the senses.

Sayyiduna 'Ali said, "Have greater concern for the acceptance of the action than for the action. An action is not small when there is *taqwa*. How can an action which is accepted be small?" Ibn Mas'ud said, "Two *rak'ats* from a zahid with knowledge is better and more beloved to Allah than the worship of those who strive and worship until the end of time for ever and ever." One of the Salaf said, "You did not miss the Companions of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, by prayer or fasting, but they had greater asceticism in this world."

One of the reports states that Sayyiduna 'Isa, peace be upon him, passed by a sleeping man while the people were worshipping. 'Isa said to him, "Rise and worship with the people." He said, "I have worshipped, Spirit of Allah." He asked him, "And what was your worship?" He replied, "I left this world to its people." He told him, "Sleep. This is an excellent worship!"

A man asked Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan, "Why do I see that people esteem you when I do not see that you perform a lot of action?" He replied, "For one year, Allah obliged it on His Messenger and I clung to it." "What is it?" he asked. He replied, "Turning from you and from your worldly things."

Shaykh Zarruq said, "The ascetic has three reasons for this virtue. One is what it contains of the freedom of the heart from occupations and distractions. The second is because it attests to the existence of truthfulness in love since this world is beloved and is not abandoned except for what one loves more. The Prophet said, '*Sadaqa* is a proof.' It was said, 'Of the love of a slave for his Lord.' The third is because it is an indication of gnosis of Allah and reliance on Him because he spends what exists with trust in the One he worships and the one who refuses does so because of a bad opinion of the One he worships."

Since outward good actions and their completion by which they are perfect or imperfect derives from the fact that they are the results of the excellence of the inward and its states, the author indicated that:

**Good actions are the results of good states.**

**Good states come from grasping the reality**

**of the stations where you alight.**

Actions are movements of the body through striving while states are the movement of the heart through constancy and the heart has tranquillity through stations. An example of that is, for instance, the station of asceticism. Its beginning is

action: striving through abandoning this world and its secondary causes and then being constant in steadfastness with poverty until it becomes a state and then the heart is still and tastes its sweetness and it becomes a station. It is like that with reliance. It is striving by abandoning secondary causes and then being constant in steadfastness in the bitterness of the blows of degrees and then it becomes a state and then the heart is still in it and tastes it and so it becomes a station. It is the same with gnosis. It is striving by outward action through breaking normal patterns in the self and then constancy in gnosis and recognition with knowledges which then becomes a state. When the spirit is settled and firm in witnessing, it becomes a station.

So the states are gifts and stations are acquisitions, i.e. stations are gifts from Allah as the reward for actions. When the actions continue and the state continues, it becomes a station. So the states change and come and go. When the heart dwells in that meaning, it becomes a station and it is acquired by the constancy of the action.

Know that each station and state has a knowledge and action. So the station is first connected to knowledge and then he strives in his actions until it becomes a state and then it becomes a station. The same is true of the state which is first connected to knowledge, then action, and then it becomes a station-state, and Allah knows best.

The sign of realisation of the stations of alighting is the good state and the sign of the good state is good action, and so the perfection and excellence of actions is the fruit and result of states and the perfection of states is the result of realisation of the stations of descent in the stations. You could say that the good states are evidence of realisation of the stations in which Allah puts His slave and good actions are evidence of good states, and realisation of the state and stillness in the station is an internal matter which effect appears on the limbs.

In short, the movement of the vessel indicates the soundness or corruption of the heart by the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "There is lump of flesh in the body, the nature of which is that when it is sound, the entire body is sound, and when it is corrupt, the entire body is corrupt - it is the heart." When the heart realises *zuhd*, for instance, and it becomes a state or station for it, that appears on the limbs in reliance on Allah, trust in Him, and lack of movements on account of secondary causes which provoke movement by the words of the Prophet, "*Zuhd* is not by making the lawful unlawful nor by wasting wealth. *Zuhd* is in trusting more in what is in the hand of Allah more than what is in his hand.

Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, may Allah be pleased with him, said to Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili in a dream: "The sign of love of this world leaving the heart is spending it when it exists and rest from it when it does not exist. The sign of realisation of descent into the station of trust is stillness and tranquillity at the changes of means. The sign of realisation of descent into the station of gnosis is *adab* outwardly and inwardly, and good character with every creature."

That is why Abu Hafs al-Haddad said, "Good *adab* outwardly is the sign of good *adab* of the inward." The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If the heart is humble, the limbs will be humble." Refer to earlier commentary on actions and states.

The best of actions through which a *murid* can pass are stations, and the closest of them is the *dhikr* of Allah. That is why he then said:

**Do not give up invocation of Allah**

**because you are not present with Allah in it.**

**It is worse to forget to invoke Him**

**than to be inattentive while invoking Him.**

**He might raise you up from invocation with heedlessness**

**to invocation with wakeful attention,**

**and from invocation with wakeful attention**

**to invocation with presence,**

**and from invocation with presence**

**to invocation with withdrawal from all that is other than the Invoked.**

**That is not difficult for Allah.**

*Dhikr* is a strong pillar in the Path of the People. It is the best of actions. Allah Almighty says, "*Remember Me and I will remember you.*" (2:151) He also said, "*O you who believe, remember Allah much.*" (33:41) Frequent *dhikr* is that you never forget Him.

Ibn 'Abbas said, "In every act of worship which Allah obliged has a specific time and there are excuses for those who perform outside its time – except for *dhikr*. Allah did not appoint it any particular time. He says, '*Remember Allah much*' (33:41), and He says, '*When you have finished the prayer, then remember Allah, standing, sitting and lying on your sides.*' (4:103)"

A man said, "Messenger of Allah, I find the practices of Islam to be too many, so tell me something I can do by which I can catch what I miss, and be brief." He replied, "Let your tongue be moist with *dhikru'llah*." The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "If a man in has some dirhams which he distributes and another man remembers Allah, the one who remembers Allah is better." The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Shall I tell you of the best and purest of your actions in the sight of your King, the highest of your degrees and what is better for you than spending gold and silver than meeting your enemy and you striking their necks and them striking your necks." They asked, "What is that, Messenger of Allah?" He said, "Dhikr of Allah."

'Ali said, "I asked, 'Messenger of Allah, which path is the nearest one to Allah, the easiest for the slaves of Allah and the best in the sight of Allah Almighty.'" He replied, "Ali, you must have constant dhikr of Allah.'" 'Ali said, "All people remember Allah." The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The Final Hour will not come until there does not remain of the face of the earth anyone who says, 'Allah.'" 'Ali said to him, "How shall I remember, Messenger of Allah?" He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said to him, "Close your eyes and listen to me three times and then say the same thing while I am listening." The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "There is no god but Allah" three times with his eyes closed, and then he said it in the same way. He taught to al-Hasan al-Basri and then al-Hasan to al-Habib al-'Ajami and Habib to Da'ud at-Ta'i and Da'ud to Mar'uf al-Karkhi and then Mar'uf to as-Sari and as-Sari to al-Junayd, and then it moved through the masters of teaching.

So no one reaches Allah except by way of dhikr. So the slave's obligation is to occupy his moments with it and to expend his effort in it. *Dhikr* makes *wilaya* public, and it must be present in both the beginning and the end. Whoever is given *dhikr*, is given the decree. Whoever abandons it, has retired. They wrote:

Dhikr is the greatest door. You enter it for Allah

and He makes the breaths a guardian for you.

So insofar as he is annihilated in the Name, he is annihilated in the Essence, and insofar as he flags in annihilation in the Name, he flags in annihilation in the Essence. So the murid should cling to *dhikr* in every state and not abandon *dhikr* on the tongue because the heart is not present in it. He should remember Him with his tongue, even if he is heedless with his heart. Your neglect of the existence of His remembrance is worse than your neglect while mentioning Him because your neglect of His remembrance is turning away from Him completely, and your mention of Him is turning towards Him by a certain aspect.

By remembering Allah the limb is adorned by obedience of Allah. When it is absent in he turns to his preoccupation with disobedience. One of them was asked, "Why do we do dhikr with the tongue when the heart is heedless?" He replied, "Thank Allah for the success of the dhikr of the tongue. If it had been busy with absence, what would you do?" So a person should cling to the *dhikr* of the tongue until Allah opens the dhikr of the inner heart. Perhaps Allah Almighty will move you from *dhikr* with heedlessness to *dhikr* with wakeful attention, i.e. being awake to the meanings of *dhikr* when one is busy with it, and from *dhikr* with wakeful attention to *dhikr* with presence of the One Invoked and visualising Him in the imagination until the heart is still by *dhikru'llah* and he is present with his heart and remembrance of Him is constant. This is the *dhikr* of the elite. The first is the *dhikr* of the common people.

If you are constant in *dhikr* of presence, that will raise you to *dhikr* with withdrawal from all that is other than the One Invoked which your heart is immersed in light. Perhaps the nearness of the light of the One Invoked will become

immense and the one doing the *dhikr* will be drowned in the light until you withdraw from all that is other than the One Invoked until the one doing the *dhikr* becomes remembered and the seeker becomes the sought and the seeking arrival the one made to arrive. That is not difficult for Allah, i.e. not forbidden. So the one who was in the lowest degrees may rise to the highest ranks where the tongue is still and the *dhikr* moves to the inner heart. Then the *dhikr* of the tongue becomes heedlessness in respect of the people of this station, as the poet said:

As soon as I remember You, my secret,

my heart and my *ruh* curse me when I remember You

Until a watcher from You addresses me in a voice without form:

"Beware and woe to you! Beware of remembrance!

Do you not see that the witnessings of Allah have appeared

and all arrives of your meaning from His meaning?"

Al-Wasiti said, indicating this station, "Those who remember are more heedless in His *dhikr* than those who forget His *dhikr* because His *dhikr* is other than Him," meaning that those who remember Allah with their hearts are more heedless in the state of their *dhikr* of Allah by their tongues than people who fail to invoke Him, because his *dhikr* by the tongue and its burden demands the existence of the *nafs*, and that is *shirk*, and *shirk* is uglier than heedlessness. This is the meaning of his words "because His *dhikr* is other than Him," i.e. because the *dhikr* of the tongue demands the independence of those who remember, while the obligation is that the one who remembers should be effaced in the station of eye-witnessing.

Shaykh ash-Shadhili said, "The reality of *dhikr* is being cut off from the *dhikr* with the One Invoked and from everything except Him by His words, '*Remember the Name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him completely.*' (73:7)" Al-Qushayri said, "*Dhikr* is the gradual entry of the one doing the *dhikr* into the One Invoked. They said in that meaning:

I remembered You, not because I forgot You for an instant.

The least part of *dhikr* is the *dhikr* of the tongue.

Without ecstasy, I would have become frantic with passion,

my heart wildly beating in passion.

When ecstasy showed me that You are present with me,

I witnessed You as existing everywhere.

I addressed one who is present without speaking,

and I witnessed one who is present without seeing.

In this station the *murid* realises the worship of reflection or investigation: "Reflection for an hour is better than worship for seventy years. That is why Shaykh Abu'l-'Abbas said, "All its moments are the Night of Power," i.e. all our worship is multiplied, in spite of its lightness, by the realisation of sincerity in it since no angel sees and records it nor does any shaytan see and corrupt it. One of them, said to be al-Hallaj said on that:

The hearts of the gnostics have eyes which see

what is not seen by those who look.

The *Sunna* is intimate conversation of secrets

unseen by the noble scribes.

Wings fly without feathers

to the *Malakut* of the Lord of the Worlds.

I added two verses to it:

Hearts are frantic with the passion of ecstasy, yearning

for the *Jabarut* of the One with certain truth.

If you want to set out early for the one with meanings,

then expend your spirit and have little of us.

*Dhikr* is the reason for the life of the heart and leaving it is the reason for its death. The like of this is found in the *hadith*, "The metaphor of the one who remembers his Lord and the one who does not remember his Lord is like the living and the dead."

Then he mentions the sign of its life and death at the beginning of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER SIX

### A sign of the death of the heart:

**lack of sadness about beneficial actions you have missed,**

**and lack of regret about your mistakes.**

Three things can cause the death of the heart: love of this world, heedlessness of *dhikru'llah*, and allowing the limbs to commit acts of disobedience. Three things can result in the life of the heart: asceticism in this world, occupation with *dhikru'llah*, and keeping the company of the *awliya'* of Allah.

There are three signs of its death: lack of sorrow for missing acts of obedience, lack of regret for mistakes committed and keeping the company of the heedless dead. That is because the issuance of obedience from a person is a sign of ultimate happiness and the issuance of disobedience is a sign of wretchedness. If the heart is alive with gnosis and faith, it is pained by that which will oblige its wretchedness and happy about what will oblige its happiness. Or you could say that acts of obedience issuing from the slave is a sign of the pleasure of his Master and the issuance of disobedience is a sign of His anger.

The living heart feels what pleases his Master and rejoices, and feels what angers Him and sorrows. The dead heart does not feel anything. It is the same to it where it obeys or disobeys. It does not rejoice in obedience and harmony nor is it sad for a mistake or disobedience, as is the business of the physical corpse. In a hadith from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "Whoever is delighted by his good actions and grieved by his evil actions is a believer." 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, "The believer sees his wrong actions as if they were the foot of a mountain which he fears will fall on him. The impious sees his wrong actions as flies which land on his nose and he says, 'Like that,' and swats them away."

But the slave must not mostly look at the sign of the wrong action and then have scant hope and a bad opinion of his Lord, as he indicates:

### Do not become so overwhelmed by your wrong action

**that it stops you thinking well of Allah.**

Regarding fear and hope, people fall into three categories: the people of the beginning who must be dominated by fear; the people of middle, who must have a balance between fear and hope; and the people of the end who are dominated by hope. When the people of the beginning are dominated by fear, they strive in actions and refrain from mistakes. By that their end shines. *"As for those who do jihad in Our Way, We will guide them to Our paths."* (29:69) The people of the middle turn their worship to purification of their inward, and so their worship is of the heart. If they were dominated by fear, they would return to the worship of the limbs when what is desired of them is the worship of the inward with the hope of arrival and fear of Allah's immensity. So their fear and hope are balanced.

As for those who arrive, they do not see that they have any action or non-action. They look at the management of the Real and what flows according to the Decree and meet it with acceptance and pleasure. If it is obedience, they thank and bear witness to the favour of Allah. If it is disobedience, they apologise, show adab and do not stop with their selves since they hold that they have no existence. They watch for what emerges from the element of power and expect His forbearance, pardon, goodness and kindness more than they expect His force and subjugation. May Allah have mercy on ash-Shafi'i who said:

When my heart is hard and my positions are constricted,

I make my hope a ladder to reach Your pardon.

My wrong actions seem immense to me. But in relation

to Your pardon, my Lord, Your pardon is far greater.

You continue to possess generosity, abundant favour and grace,

showing generosity, pardon and nobility.

Would that I knew whether I will go to the Garden and rejoice

or go the Hellfire, full of regret.

Allah Almighty says, *"Say: 'My slaves who have transgressed against yourselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Truly Allah forgives all wrong actions. He is Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.'" (39:50)* Reflect on the case of the man who killed ninety-nine people and then asked a monk, "Can I repent?" and the monk replied to him, "You cannot repent," and so he completed the hundred. Then he went to a scholar and asked him and he said to him "Who will come between you and that? Go to a certain town. There are people in it who worship Allah. Be among them until you die." Halfway there, he died and the angels of mercy and the angels of punishment quarrelled over him. So Allah revealed to them to measure the distance between the town he left and the town to which he was going, and he would belong to the people of whichever of them was closer. So Allah inspired the town to which he was going to come nearer and to the town from which he left to go further away. So he was found to be nearer the town to which he was going and the angels of mercy took him. The *hadith* is found in the two *Sahih* collections.

Shaykh Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mursi said, "When the common people are frightened, they fear. When they are made hopeful, they hope. When the elite are frightened, they hope, and when they are given hope, they fear."

He said in *Lata'if al-Minan*, "The meaning of these words of the shaykh is that the common people stop with the outward business. So when they are frightened, they fear since they cannot pass beyond the expression by the light of understanding which the people of Allah possess. When the people of Allah are frightened, they hope, knowing that beyond their fear and beyond their fear are the attributes of the One they hope for. One must not despair of His mercy nor give up hope of His grace. So they therefore strive for the qualities of His generosity, knowing that what frightens them is only in order to gather them to Him and return them to Him. When they are made hopeful, they fear His hidden will which is beyond their hope and dear that what has appeared of hope is in order to test their intellects to see whether they will stop at hope or penetrate to what is hidden in His will. That is why their hope provokes their fear."

Al-Junayd visited Shaykh as-Sari and found him in a state of contraction. He asked, "What is wrong, shaykh? Why are you in contraction?" He replied, "A young man came to me and asked me, 'What is the reality of repentance?' I told him, 'That you do not forget your wrong action.' The young man said, 'Rather repentance is that you forget your wrong action.' Then he left me." Al-Junayd continued, 'I said, 'What the young man said is correct, because when I was in a

state of concealment and then He moved me to witnessing purity, remembering concealment in the state of purity is concealment."

As-Sari looked at the people of the beginning while al-Junayd looked at the people of the end. Each is correct, and Allah knows best. Then the author mentions the obligation to think of wrong action as insignificant and said:

**Whoever has gnosis of his Lord,  
finds that his wrong action is insignificant  
beside His generosity.**

Whoever recognises his Lord, withdraws from seeing his wrong action because he is annihilated to himself by witnessing his Lord. If an action issues from him which is contrary to wisdom, witnessing the blessing dominates him. The Almighty says, "*Tell My slaves that I am the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.*" (15:49) As for His words, "*My punishment is the Painful Punishment,*" that is for the person who does not repent. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If you were to sin until your errors reached the reins of heaven and then repented, Allah would still turn to you. If Allah's slaves had not committed wrong actions, Allah would have removed them and then brought another people who would commit wrong actions and ask forgiveness so that He could forgive him. He is the Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Allah is happier about the repentance of one of His slaves than one of you would be about finding your camel which had strayed away from you in the middle of the desert."

But nevertheless one must not think that his wrong action is insignificant so that he is deluded by the forbearance of Allah. Allah revealed to Da'ud, peace be upon him, "Da'ud, tell my true slaves that they should not be deluded. I will implement My justice and fairness and punish them without wronging them. Tell my wrongdoing slaves not to despair. No wrong action is so great that I will not pardon them for it."

Al-Junayd said, "When a source appears from the Generous it joins the evildoer to the good doer." Shaykh Abu'l-'Abbas said in his *Hizb*, "My God, disobeying You calls me to Your obedience, and obeying You calls me to Your disobedience. In which will I fear and in which will I hope? If I profess disobedience You meet me with Your favour and do not leave me any fear. If I profess obedience, You meet me with Your justice and it does not leave me with hope. Would that I knew how I could see my good-doing in the face of Your good doing, or how I could remain ignorant of Your favour in the face of My disobedience."

The meaning of what the shaykh said is that when a person is committing disobedience, he witnesses the force and immensity of the Real and his own weakness and powerlessness beside Him. Therefore from disobedience he obtains the contrition and abasement of himself and exaltation and reverence of his Lord. This is the best of the acts of obedience, so the disobedience he was committing has called him to the obedience he obtained from it. When, however, he is doing obedience, in it he may witness himself and the aim of his enjoyment and his portion and so he will associate (himself) with his Lord and shoe incorrect *adab* with Him. This is disobedience. So when he is involved in obedience, he is called to this disobedience which he obtains from it. Therefore he does not know which of them to fear and which of them to hope for.

His words, "If I profess disobedience" mean if I look at the form of disobedience, You meet me with Your favour and its name is erased and its trace effaced. If I look at the form of disobedience, You meet me with Your justice, and it disappears and is wiped out and pure hope remains of the Generous Giver who gives without reason and whose forbearance envelops the objection and the rebuke. Allah Almighty knows best.

So the result is that the gnostic does not stop at disobedience, even if it is great, nor with disobedience, even if it is terrible. That is the meaning of his words:

**There is no minor wrong action when you face His justice.**

**There is no major wrong action when you experience His bounty.**

The minor wrong action is a crime which against which there is no threat in the Qur'an or in *hadith*, and the major wrong action is the one about which there is the threat of punishment or hadd-punishment in the Qur'an or in the *Sunna*. Other things are said as well. This is all by an outward regard of the matter. As for what is in the sight of Allah in the unseen and by looking at His forbearance and injustice, it occurs different to what is supposed. The Almighty says,



"What confronts them from Allah will be something they did not reckon with." (39:45) So in the case of whoever is already the object of Divine concern, the crime does not harm him. They are those whose evil deeds Allah transforms into good deeds.

Even if actions are signs, they vary in some stations, and so it is mandatory to have equal hope and fear in some stations and to submit to Allah at all times. "The words of your Lord are perfect in truthfulness and justice. No one can change His words." (6:116) When Allah confronts you with His justice and majesty, no minor wrong action remains for you and your minor wrong actions become major ones. When Allah meets you with His gracious favour, generosity, goodness and beauty, no major wrong action remains for your and your major wrong actions become minor ones.

Yahya ibn Mu'adh ar-Razi said, "When they obtain His favour, no evil deed remains for them. When His justice is placed on them, no good deed remains for them." It is said that if the hope and fear of a believer are weighed, neither of them outweighs the other. Rather the believer is like a bird with two wings. Shaykh Zarruq said something to that effect.

There is the *hadith* of the man who had ninety-nine scrolls, each scroll stretching as far as the eye could see. Then a card the size of a finger nail was produced which contained "There is no god but Allah." Those scrolls were light, indicating the immensity of His forbearance, mercy, and the comprehensiveness of His generosity and grace.

After he mentioned the sign the death of the heart, he mentioned the actions which oblige its life.

### **No deed has more hope of being accepted**

**than the one you do and forget about, thinking it insignificant.**

It is as if that the text of the Shaykh is addressed to the hearts. That is most likely by the context since all his words are about the life and death of hearts, i.e. there is no deed which has more hope of reviving hearts than an action which is by Allah and for Allah in which one is withdrawn from other than Him, without observing its portion and passion in it and in which he is free of his strength and power. When power makes it manifest in him, he is absent to seeing it and the form of its existence is insignificant in his eyes since it is *tajalli* of the immensity of his Master in his heart. So everything except Him is insignificant in his eyes. So the like of this deed gives life to hearts and grants witnessing of the Knower of the unseen worlds. It is the spirit of certainty, and it is the life of the hearts of the gnostics.

When Allah wants to take charge of His slave, He raises him to action and makes it seem insignificant in his eyes. So he continues to strive in the actions of the limbs until He moves him to the actions of the hearts and then the limbs have rest from toil, and all that remains is witnessing immensity with adab. An-Nahrajuri said, "One of the signs of Allah taking charge of his states is that he witnesses his deficiency in his sincerity, his heedlessness in his *dhikr*, his imperfection in his truthfulness, lassitude in his striving and lack of care in his poverty. So all his states are not pleasing and he is increased in poverty and need of Allah for his goal and his journey until he has no need of anything except Him."

When the heart is alive with gnosis of Allah, it is a place for the *tajalli* of the divine *waridat*. He indicates that:

### **He only sent a *warid* to you**

**so that it would bring you to Him.**

The *warid* is a divine light which Allah casts into the heart of those He loves among His slaves. There are three categories of *waridat* according to the beginning, the middle and the end. Or you could say, according to the seekers, the travellers and those who have arrived. The first category is the *warid* of awakening. It is a light which brings you out of the darkness of heedlessness to the light of certainty. It is for the people of the beginning among the seekers. When he awakens from his sleep and awakens from his heedlessness, and goes straight, seeking his Lord, then He turns to him with his heart and body and concentrates his entire being on Him.

The second category is the *warid* of the advance (*iqbal*). It is a light which Allah casts into the heart of His slave which moves him to remember his Lord and makes him withdraw from other than Him. He continues to be busy with His remembrance, withdrawn from others, until his heart is filled with light and he withdraws from all that is other than the One Invoked. So he only sees Allah. That brings him out of the prison of others and frees him of the bondage of effects.

The third is the *warid* of the arrival, which is a light which overpowers the slave and then overpowers his outward and inward and brings him out of the prison of his *nafs* and makes him withdraw from witnessing the sensory.

He indicates the first *warid*, the *warid* of waking up when he said, "*He only sentÉ*", i.e. He shone the light of wakefulness and awakening on him. It is the *warid* by which you come to Him and travel to Him. If this *warid* had not come to you, you would remain in the land of your heedlessness, slumbering in Your intoxication, remaining in your regret.

Then he indicates the second category, which is the *warid* of the advance, and said:

**He sent a *warid* to you**

**to deliver you from the control of otherness**

**and to free you from being a slave to effects.**

This means that the *warid* of the advance comes to make you intimate with the dhikr the Great and Exalted. When you are busy with remembering Him and have withdrawn from other than Him, He receives you, i.e. saves you from the power of the thieves of others after they had tightened your bonds with the rope of your passion and imprisoned you in the prison of your portion and hopes. He also frees and liberates you from the bondage of secondary effects after they had power over you by what they displayed to you of the adornments of delusion. When you are delivered from the authority of others, then you will reach the witnessing of lights. When you are freed from the bondage of effects, then you rise to witnessing the secrets. So the lights are the lights of the attributes and the secrets are the secrets of the Essence. The lights are for the people of annihilation in the Attributes, and the secrets are for the people of annihilation in the Essence.

Then he indicates the third category, which this the *warid* of arrival:

**He sent a *warid* to you**

**to release you from the prison of your existence**

**and to bring you to the open space of inner witnessing.**

He sent to you a *warid* of arrival after He gave you the breezes of advance to bring you out of the prison of seeing your existence to open space, the expansiveness of witnessing your Lord and seeing that your existence is an impediment which prevents you witnessing your Lord since it is impossible that you witness Him and witness other than Him with Him. Your existence is a wrong action which cannot be compared to any other wrong action. Al-Junayd recited:

My existence is that I withdraw from existence

by what appears to me of witnessing.

Annihilation to the self and removing it is harder than annihilation to phenomenal beings and its destruction. Whenever the *nafs* is removed and destroyed, then phenomenal being is destroyed and has no effect. Phenomenal being may be destroyed while some of it remains in the *nafs*. That is why the shaykh said that phenomenal beings are the prison of man's existence, and Allah knows best.

Then he explained those *waridat* and said:

**Lights are the mounts of the hearts and the secrets.**

"Light" is a speck in the heart of the slave from the meaning of a Name or Attribute whose meaning flows through his entire being until he directly sees truth and falsehood with which it is not possible to fail to grasp his obligation. Shaykh Zarruq said that. "Mounts" are camels which are ready for riding, and hearts are the realities which accept things which are understood, Secrets are the realities which accept the tajalliyat. The secret is finer and purer than the heart.

All are names for the *ruh*. As long as the *ruh* is darkened by acts of disobedience, wrong actions, appetites and faults, it is called "*nafs*". When it is curbed and hobbled like a camel, it is called intellect (*'aql*). When it continues to alternate between heedlessness and presence it is called heart (*qalb*). When it is at peace and still and has rest from the toil of humanity, it is called *ruh*. When it is purified of the darkness of the sensory, it is called a secret (*sirr*) since it becomes one of the secrets of Allah when it returns to its source, which is the secret of the *Jabarut*.

When Allah wants to make someone reach the Presence of His Purity and convey him to the place of His intimacy, He supports him with the *waridat* of lights, like mounts, on which he is carried in the sedan of Divine concern, fanned by the gentle breeze of guidance and surrounded by the help of Divine care. So the *ruh* travels from the worlds of humanity to the worlds of spirituality until it becomes one of the secrets of Allah which only Allah knows. "Say: 'The *ruh* is my Lord's concern.'" (17:85)

So the lights, which are the *waridat*, are the mounts of the hearts which carry them to the Presence of the Knower of the Unseen worlds. The mounts of the secrets carry them to the *Jabarut* of the Almighty, All-Compelling.

So *suluk* (wayfaring) is guidance and *jadhb* (attraction) is Divine concern. In the *warid* of awakening and advance, *suluk* conveys him, and in the *warid* of arrival *jadhb* conveys him. The lights which are the mounts of the hearts convey them through *suluk*, although in it they are conveyed with the sweetness of the light of awakening and advance, and so all their *suluk* becomes *jadhb*. As for the lights which convey them on the mounts of the secrets, they convey them by means of *jadhb* mixed with *suluk*. This conveying is greater, and Allah knows best.

Then he explains how they travel on this mounts and what hinders them in the journey.

**The army of the heart is light.**

**The army of the self is darkness.**

**When Allah wishes to help His slave,**

**He reinforces him with the armies of light**

**and cuts off the reinforcements of darkness and otherness.**

Darkness is a speck which falls into the self from passion from the impediments of illusion and so it obliges blindness to the truth which gives falsehood control over the reality. So the slave remains without insight. Shaykh Zarruq said that.

We already mentioned that the *nafs*, *'aql*, heart, *ruh* and secret are names for the same thing. It is the divine luminous *latifa* lodged in this dark physical vessel. Its names vary according to its different states and stages. An example of that is the rain which falls to the roots of a tree and rises in its branches and so leaves appear and then blossoms and then flowers and then the fruits which grow until it is complete. The water is the same, but its names vary according to its different stages. That is like what as-Sahili said in *al-Bughya* and I wrote about it in a *qasida* which I mentioned elsewhere.

According to this, the heart confronting the *nafs* in battle is an allusion to the difficulty of the *ruh* moving from the land of darkness, which is the place of the *nafs*, to the land of light, which is the heart, and what is beyond it. The heart fights it in order to move it to its source. It does not want to go and sinks to the earth of humanity and its appetites. The heart has the lights of the *waridat* to support it and help it so that it can ascend to the Presence which is its source and where its homeland lies. It is as if the lights were its armies since they strengthen it and help it against the darkness of the *nafs*. These lights are the *waridat* which were already mentioned.

When the *nafs* relies on appetites and they take control of it, it is as if they had become its army. They are darkness since they veil it from the truth and prevent it from witnessing the suns of gnosis. When the self uses the armies of its darkness and appetites to embark on disobedience or appetite, then the heart moves against it with the armies of its light and there is a battle between them. When Allah desires concern and assistance for His slave, He reinforces him with the armies of lights and cuts off from the *nafs* the reinforcements of otherness. So light overcomes darkness and the *nafs* retreats in defeat. When Allah desires to disappoint His slave, He reinforces the *nafs* with otherness and cuts off the shining of lights from the heart. So the heart is victorious by the business as it should properly be, and is disappointed when things are the opposite.

Shaykh Zarruq said, "Light has three reinforcements. The first of them is certainty which is not sullied by doubt. The second is knowledge which is accompanied by insight and clarification. The third is inspiration which prepares for eye-witnessing. Darkness has three reinforcements. The first is the weak certainty, the second is ignorance predominating in the *nafs*, and the third is compassion for the *nafs*. The basis of all of that is being content with the *nafs* and or not being content with it. Its manifestation has three levels: acts of disobedience, appetites and heedlessness. Their opposites were mentioned in Chapter Three, so understand."

So light is the army of the heart because it discloses the realities of things and so the truth can be distinguished from falsehood, and "*He might verify the truth and nullify the false*". (8:8) So the heart is helped in its advance to the Truth with a clear intention, and the *nafs* with the army of its darkness is defeated since darkness does not remain when light is clear, as he indicated:

### **Light unveils.**

### **The inner eye judges.**

### **The heart both advances and retreats.**

The business of light is to unveil things and make them clear so that their beauty is clear from their ugliness, Part of the business of the opened inner eye is to judge beauty as beautiful and ugliness as ugly. The heart advances to what is confirmed as beautiful and retreats from what is confirmed as ugly. You could say, it accepts that which will benefit it and retreats from that which will harm it. The metaphor for all that is when a man enters a dark house in which there are scorpions and snakes and ingots of gold and silver. He does not know what to take and what to leave, nor what will benefit him from what will harm him. When he brings a lamp into it, he can see what will benefit him and what will harm him, and what is safe for him and what he should beware of.

It is the same for the heart of the disobedient believer. He does not distinguish between the bitterness of disobedience and the sweetness of obedience. When he is illuminated by the light of *taqwa* he recognises what will harm him and what will benefit him, and can distinguish between the truth and the false. Allah Almighty says, "*O you who believe, if you have taqwa of Allah, He will give you a discrimination,*" (8:29) i.e. a light by which you can distinguish between the truth and false. Allah Almighty says, "*Is someone who was dead and whom We brought to life, supplying him with a light by which he walks among people*" (6:123) and He says, "*Is he whose breast is opened to Islam and who is therefore illuminated by his Lord*" (39:21)

This light which unveils things is the light of the *waridat* which are the mounts which bear the hearts to the Knower of the unseen worlds. The first is the *warid* of awakening whose business is to dispel the darkness of heedlessness, and then the light of certainty appears and so the inner eye judges heedlessness to be ugly and wakefulness to be good. The heart then advances to remembrance of its Lord and retreats from what would make it heedless to its Lord. This is the light of the seekers.

The second is the light of the advance whose business is to dispel the darkness of others. The radiance of *gnoses* and secrets appears and so the inner eye judges others to be harmful and secrets to be good. The heart then advances to the radiance of the secrets and retreats from the darkness of others. This is the light of the travellers.

The third is the light of the *warid* of arrival whose business is to dispel the darkness of phenomenal being and the cloak of preservation (sawn). Then the light of the *tajalliyat* of the Maker of being appears and the heart advances to witnessing its Master and retreats from turning to other than Him. This is the light of those who arrive. It is the light of the face-to-face encounter. The light of what is before it is the light of directing oneself.

If you wish, you could say that it is the light of Islam, *iman* and *ihsan*. The light of Islam dispels the darkness of disbelief and disobedience and the light of submission and compliance appears and the inner eye judges *kufr* and disobedience to be ugly and the light of Islam and submission to be good. So the heart advances to obeying its Lord and turning away from what will put him far from his Lord. The light of faith (*iman*) dispels hidden *shirk* and so the radiance of sincerity and faithful truthfulness appears. Therefore the inner eye judges *shirk* to be ugly and harmful and sincerity and its good to be beautiful. So the heart advances to the *tawhid* of his Lord and turns from *shirk* and its evil. The light of *ihsan* dispels the darkness of other and so the light of the existence of Master appears, and the inner eye judges the darkness of secondary effects to be ugly and the light of the One who effects to be good. So the heart advances to *gnosis* of its Master and withdraws completely from other than Him.

If you wish, you could say that this is the light of the Shari'a, the *Tariqa* and the reality. The light of the Shari'a dispels the darkness of idleness and falling short, so the light of striving and resolve appears and the inner eye judges idleness to be bad and striving to be good. So the heart advances to the striving of the limbs in the obedience of its Lord and retreats from following its portions and passion. The light of *Tariqa* dispels the darkness of evils and faults, and the radiance of purity appears and its fruits from the knowledge of the unseen and so the inner eye judges that faults are ugly and that purity and the knowledge of the unseen is good. So the heart advances to what purification demands and retreats from what prevents it in divestment and adornment. The light of the reality dispels the darkness of the veil and the beauties of the lovers appear to him. You could also say the light of the reality dispels the darkness of beings so that the light of witnessing and eye-witnessing appear and the heart advances to witnessing lovers inside the veil and retreats from what cuts it off from *adab* with lovers. May Allah make us among them forever in this abode and in the Abode of Peace! Amen.

Since the basis of every light, secret and good is obedience of Allah and the root of every darkness, veil and distance is disobedience of Allah. One of the signs of the light of the heart is its joy in obedience and its sorrow for disobedience, the Shaykh informs you of the meaning of delight in obedience, which is the reason of the light of the hearts and the keys to the Unseen.

**Don't be overjoyed at obedience because it has issued from you.**

**Rejoice in it because it has come from Allah to you.**

***"Say: It is the favour of Allah and His mercy that should***

***be the cause of their rejoicing.***

***That is better than anything they accumulate."***

The *hadith* was already quoted: "Whoever is delighted by his good actions and grieved by his evil actions is a believer." People fall into three categories in rejoicing in obedience. One group rejoice in them because they hope that they will bring them bliss and avert from them His painful punishment. They see that they issue from themselves for themselves and so they are not free of their strength and power in them. They are the people of His words, "*You alone we worship.*"

Another group rejoice in them since they are the sign of pleasure and acceptance and a reason for nearness and arrival. They are gifts from the Generous King and mounts which carry them to the presence of bliss. They do not think that they themselves possess either action or non-action nor power nor strength. They think that they are conveyed by pre-eternal power and directed by the primal will. They are the people of His words, "*You alone we ask for help.*" The worship of the people of the first category is for Allah and the worship of the people of the second category is for Allah and by the power of Allah. There is a great difference between them.

A third group rejoice in Allah rather than anything else, and are annihilated to themselves, going on by their Lord. If obedience appears from them, it is a favour they owe Allah. If an act of disobedience appears from them, they apologise to Allah, showing *adab* with Allah. It does not diminish their joy if an error appears from them nor does it increase if an act of obedience or wakefulness appears from them because they are by Allah and for Allah. They are the people of 'there is no strength nor power except by Allah'. They are the gnostics of Allah.

O murid, if obedience and good appear from you, do not rejoice in it since it issued from you. If you do so, you will be guilty of association (shirk) with your Lord. Allah has no need of you and your obedience and He has no need of the one who obeys other than Him. The Almighty says, "*Whoever does jihad does it entirely for himself. Allah is Rich Beyond Need of any being.*" (29:5) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, relating from his Almighty Lord, "O My slaves! If the first and last of you, all the jinn and all the men among you, possessed the heart of the most godfearing man among you, that would not increase My kingdom in any way." Rejoice in it since it is a gift from Allah to you indicating that you have obtained His generosity, favour and kindness.

So joy is in the bounty of Allah and His mercy. The Almighty says, "*Say: 'It is the favour of Allah and His mercy that should be the cause of their rejoicing.'*" (10:58) So the favour of Allah is His guidance and granting of success, and his mercy is His selection, and bringing them near. It is said that the favour of Allah is Islam and His mercy is the Qur'an. It is said that the favour of Allah is the guidance of the *deen* and His mercy is the bliss of the Garden. It is said that the favour of Allah is the *tawhid* of the evidence and the proof and His mercy is the *tawhid* of witnessing and eye-witnessing. Other things are said, and Allah knows best.

Since joy at obedience might give rise to the illusion that it is a branch of seeing it and looking at it, he removed that when he said:

**He prevents those who are travelling to Him and those who have reached Him -**

**from seeing their actions and witnessing their states.**

**The travellers -**

**because they have not made sincerity with Allah in them a fact.**

**Those who have arrived -**

**because when they see Him,**

**He makes them oblivious to seeing their actions.**

"Prevents" here means "makes withdraw". If it is interpreted, then it is more evident and easier as indicating being cut off from misfortune. Using the term (*qat*, cutting off) implies a sort of diminishment which would not be the case if he had said, "He made those who are travelling to Him and those who have reached Him withdraw from seeing their existence."

As for those travelling, it is because they have not made sincerity with Allah in them a fact, and as for those who arrived, it is because they do not witness other-than-Allah with Allah, i.e. Allah has made those travelling to Him and those who have reached Him withdraw from seeing their outward actions and witnessing their inward states. As for those travelling, it is because they always suspect themselves. Whenever some good action issues for them, or wakefulness or some ecstasy appears to them, they see that they have enormous shortcomings and imperfections and therefore they are too ashamed before Allah to rely on themselves or to give themselves any credit. They therefore withdraw from their actions and states and rely on the bounty of their Lord.

So truthfulness is the core and secret of sincerity, i.e. they have made the secret of sincerity a reality in them and so they do not see their actions nor rely on them. One of the gnostics was asked, "What is the sign of the acceptance of action?" His reply was, "Your forgetting it and cutting of your seeing it on the basis of the evidence of the words of Allah, *'All good words rise to Him and He raises up all virtuous deeds.'* (35:20)" Zayn al-'Abidin said, "If you still see any of your actions, that is evidence that it is not accepted because accepted actions are raised up and are withdrawn from you and you are prevented from seeing them. That is the evidence of acceptance."

As for those who have arrived, it is because they are annihilated to themselves, withdrawn in witnessing the One they worship. So all their movements and stillnesses are by Allah and from Allah and to Allah since it is impossible to witness Him and witness other than Him with Him. When an act of obedience occurs from them or issues from them, they witness the One, the Gracious in that.

It is related that when al-Wasiti went to Nishapur, he asked the companions of Abu 'Uthman, "What did you Shaykh command you?" They replied, "He commanded us to cling to obedience and to see our incapacity in it." He said, "He has commanded you to pure Magianism! Did he not command you to withdraw from them by witnessing the One who made them occur and originated them?" Al-Qushayri said, "He meant to protect them from pride and to guide them to *adab*."

So the pronoun in "He prevents" refers to Allah Almighty. Know that the travellers in the words of the shaykh are the second category who rejoice in obedience since it is a sign of acceptance and they must be delighted to see it since it is a sign of acceptance. there should be no delight in seeing them themselves since they may delight in them since they are a favour from Allah and cease to see them since he relies on Allah. Here those who have reached Him form the third category who only rejoice in Allah and nothing other than Him. Allah knows best.

This is the end of Chapter Six and a quarter of the book. In short, it deals with the treatment of hearts, the sign of their death, illness and soundness, the reinforcement of their lights and the arrival of their *waridat* so that they withdraw from witnessing their stations and states and are annihilated to the domain of the senses by the expanse of the open space of witnessing. That is where their honour and might lie. Their abasement and humiliation lie in the opposite of that, which is seeing creatures and relying on them.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **The branches of abasement only grow from the seeds of greed.**

Growing has to do with height, as Allah says, "*Soaring (bâsiqat) date palms.*" (50:10) Greed is the attachment of the heart to what is in the hands of people and the longing for other than the Lord. It is the root of the tree of abasement. So the branches of the tree of abasement only grow from the cultivation of greed. That is why Shaykh Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mursi said, "By Allah, I have only seen that might lies in removing aspiration from creatures."

Greed is the root of abasement because a greedy person leaves a mighty Lord to attach himself to a lowly slave and so he becomes low like him. He leaves a noble Lord to attach himself to a poor slave and so he becomes poor like him. He fails to raise his *himma* to the Rich, Noble One and lowers his *himma* to what is base and blameworthy. Allah provides for the slave according to his *himma*. The slave of Allah is free from what is other than Him and then he becomes a slave of creatures and a slave of his *nafs* and passion because whenever you love something and desire it you are its slave. Whenever you despair of something and remove your *himma* from it, you are free of it. A poet said:

Desires refuse to smash me.

I am a slippery slope for them.

A slave is free as long as he does not obey desire.

The free man is a slave whenever he obeys desire.

We read in *at-Tanwir*, "O slave, be like Ibrahim! Your father Ibrahim, blessings and peace be upon him, said, '*I do not love what sets.*' (6:77) All that is other than Allah sets, either in existence or possibility. The Almighty says, '*The religion of your forefather Ibrahim.*' (22:76) Therefore it is obligatory for the believer to follow the religion of Ibrahim. Part of the religion of Ibrahim is to remove any aspirations from creation. On the day when he was shot out of the catapult, Jibril, peace be upon him, came to Ibrahim and asked, 'Do you have a need?' He replied, 'As for you, no. As for Allah, yes.' He said, 'Then ask Him.' He said, 'His knowledge of my state spares me asking.' So look at how Ibrahim removed his aspiration from creation and directed it to the True King. He did not ask Jibril for help nor take the opportunity to ask Allah. He saw that Allah was nearer to Him than Jibril and from his request. That is why He saved him from Nimrod and his punishment, and blessed him with His gift and bounty and singled him out for His acceptance. Part of the religion of Ibrahim is to oppose all that distracts a person from Allah and to direct the *himma* with love to Allah by the words of the Almighty, '*They are all my enemies – except for the Lord of all the worlds.*' (26:77) If you desire direction to the Rich, it lies in despair.

Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili said, "I have despaired of myself benefiting myself, so how should I not despair of other than me benefiting it? I have hopes of Allah for others besides me, so how can I not have hope for myself? This is the alchemy and the elixir by which one obtains wealth with no poverty in it and might with no abasement in it and spending which does not run out. It is the alchemy of the people of understanding of Allah."

Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan also said, "A man kept my company and was burdensome for me. I was frank with him and he was delighted. I said, 'My son, ask what you need and then do not keep my company.' He said, 'Sir, I am told that you know alchemy and so I kept your company to learn from you.' I said to him, 'You spoke the truth and whoever told you spoke the truth, but I suspect that you will not accept.' He replied, 'But I will accept!' I said, 'I have studied creatures and found them to fall into two categories: enemies and lovers. I looked at the enemies and knew that they would not be able to even pierce me with a thorn if Allah did not will that for me. So I ceased to look at them. Then I attached myself to the lovers and I saw that they could not help me with anything which Allah had not willed for me and so I completely despaired of them and attached myself to Allah. I was told, 'You will not reach the reality of this matter until you completely despair of Us as you despaired of other than Us, as We will only give you what was written for you before time.'"

He said another time when he was asked about alchemy, "Expel the creation from your heart and despair of your Lord giving you other than what He has allotted you."

A person's understanding is not indicated by the abundance of his knowledge nor by his persistence in obtaining it. His light and understanding are indicated by his wealth in his Lord, his being gathered to Him with his heart, being on guard about the bondage of greed, and being adorned in the robe of scrupulousness. It is by that that actions are good and

states purified. The Almighty says, "*We made everything on earth adornment for it so that we could test them to see whose actions are the best.*" (18:7)

So good actions are understanding from Allah and understanding is what We mentioned of being made rich with Allah, finding Him to be enough, relying on Him, presenting needs to Him, and remaining constantly before Him. All of that is the fruit of understanding from Allah. Lack of the scrupulousness in yourself is greater than your lack of anything else and your purification than of desire for creation. Even if the greedy person had been purified with seven seas, he would only be purified when he despairs of them and removes his aspiration from them.

'Ali came to Basra and entered a mosque and found story-tellers telling stories. He made them get up until he came to al-Hasan al-Basri. He said, "Lad, I will ask you about something, If you answer it, I will let you stay. Otherwise I will remove you as I removed your companions." He saw that he possessed proper behaviour and guidance. Al-Hasan replied, "Ask whatever you wish." He asked, "What is the basic foundation of the *deen*?" "Scrupulousness," he replied. He asked, "What is the corruption of the *deen*?" "Greed," he replied. He said, "Sit. Someone like you can speak to people."

I heard our shaykh, Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mursi, say, "At the beginning of the business I was in Alexandria and went to someone who knew me and bought something I needed from him for half a dirham. I said to myself, 'Perhaps he will not take it from me.' An invisible voice said to me, 'Safety in the deen lies in abandoning greed for creatures.'" I also heard him say, "Someone with greed will never be full. Do you not see that all its letters are hollow? *Ta'*, *mim* and *'ayn*."

So, murid, you must remove your aspirations from creatures and do not abase yourself to them for the sake of provision. Your allotment was already decided before you even existed and its manifestation was already confirmed. Listen to what one of the shaykhs said, "O man, whatever is decreed that you chew must be chewed, so eat it. Woe to you if you have might but do not abase yourself to eat it."

Abu'l-Hasan al-Warraaq said, "If anyone feels love for anything of this world in himself has slain it with the sword of greed. If anyone desires something he is abased to him and destroyed by his abasement." Abu Bakr al-Warraaq said, "If greed were to be asked, 'Who is your father?' it would say, 'Doubt in what is decreed.' If it were asked, 'What is your craft?' it would reply, 'Earning abasement.' If it were asked, 'What is your end?' it would reply 'Deprivation.'"

They wrote on this meaning:

Humbly entreat Allah and do not entreat people.

Be content with might. Might lies in despair.

Be independent of need of every relative and kin.

The wealthy one is the one who is free of need of people.

The cause of the existence of greed is illusion and anxiety. So he mentioned after that:

### **Nothing leads you on like illusion.**

One is led by a thing when it pulls him to it. You lead an animal when you pull it to you. Illusion is the first thought and it is weaker than doubt. What is meant here is what differs from certainty so that one affirms suspicion and doubt. He is saying that nothing leads you on and pulls you to greed for creatures and flattering them and being humble to what is in their possession like illusion. This means that when you imagine that they possess benefit or harm, or giving or withholding, then you desire them, are humble to them, rely on them and fear them.

If you have certainty, their business lies in the hand of Allah and they themselves are in the power of Allah, unable to help themselves, so how can they have the power to help others? You must totally despair from them and remove your aspiration from them and connect your himma to the Lord of Lords and forsake companions and lovers. Or, you could say, nothing guides you more away from the presence of witnessing and eye-witnessing than your illusion that phenomenal beings exist. If the veil of illusion were rent for you, eye-witnessing would occur regarding the absence of sources. When the light of certainty shines, the existence of beings is covered up.



He said in *at-Tanwir*, "The slaves are prevented from coming to Allah by attractions to other than Allah. Whenever their hearts desire to travel to Allah, that attachment pulls them to what they are attached to and they think of returning to it and turning to it. The presence of Allah is denied to those who are like this and forbidden to the one with this description."

One of the gnostics said, "Do not suppose that you will enter the Divine presence when there is anything behind you attracting you. Understand here the words of Allah, *"The Day when neither wealth nor sons will be of any use except to those come to Allah with a sound and flawless hearts."* (26:88-89) A sound heart is one which is not attached to anything except Allah. He said, *"You have come to Us all alone just as We created you at first."* (6:95) It is also understood from that it is not valid that you come to Allah and reach Him except when you are alone and separated from other than Him. He said, *"Did He not find you orphaned and shelter you."* (93:6) So it is understood that He will not give you shelter unless you are orphaned from other than Him. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Allah is odd and loves the odd," i.e. He loves the heart which is not paired with the duality of secondary effects." One of them said, "If I had been obliged to see other than Him, I would not be able to do so and witness it with Him."

In short, illusion veils the common people and elite from Allah. As for the elite of the elite, nothing veils them from Allah. In the case of the common people, it leads them to being attached to creation and prevents them from travelling to the True King. So they are preoccupied with watching the lovers and enmity towards those who oppose them. So they are led by love of a lover and the watchfulness of a watcher. As for the elite, they are led to thinking that secondary effects are established and stopping with the lights and so they are content with that and do not yearn for what is beyond that. Contentment from Allah is deprivation, and information is not like witnessing. I heard our shaykh say, "People are only veiled from Allah by illusion, and illusion is something which is absolutely without reality."

As for the elite of the elite, nothing veils them from Allah and they have knowledge and understanding from Allah. They have cut through the veil of illusion and obtained knowledge and understanding from Allah. They are not attached to anything and nothing veils them from Allah. May Allah make us among them by His grace and generosity!

Illusion produces greed and greed produces abasement and slavery. Certainty produces scrupulousness. Scrupulousness produces might and freedom. He called attention to that:

**You are free when you despair of it.**

**You are a slave when you are eager for it.**

A human being is free of that of which he despairs since despairing of that thing removes his aspiration from it and then he connects his aspiration to the True King. When he connects his himma to the True King, then the True subjugates all creation to him. So all creatures become slaves to him and subject to his command.

You remain with phenomenal beings as long as you do not witness the Maker of being. When you witness the Maker of being, phenomenal beings are with you. Whoever is a slave of Allah is free from other than Him. Man is a slave to what he desires because desire for a thing demands love for it, submission to it, and following it. Therefore you are subject to its command and prohibition because your love for a thing is blind and dumb. This is the reality of slavery. Along these lines, it is said, "The slave is free as long as he is content and the free man is a slave as long as he has desires."

How ugly is the person whose Master desires that he be a king and while he wanted to be enslaved, whose Master wants him to be free while he wants to be a slave! His Master created all phenomenal being to serve him when he commands and forbids but then he serves phenomenal being with his self and becomes a slave to the least and basest thing.

In the *Tanwir*, the author says in conversation with Allah Almighty with invisible voices, "We made your worth sublime, O slave, so that We attend to the business of yourself. Therefore do not lower your worth. You who We have elevated, do not be abased by your transfer to other than Me! You who We have exalted, woe to you! You are too sublime in Our eyes to busy with other than Me. I created you for My presence and I seek you for it, and I attract you to it by the pull of My concern. If you are occupied with yourself, I veil you. If you follow its passion, I drive you away. If you leave it, I bring you near. If you love Me by turning away from other than Me, I love you."

In short, love of things and desire for them is the cause of abasement, humiliation and slavery to other beings. Despairing of things and not having any aspirations from them is the reason for might, freedom and pride over peers. How excellent is what the speaker said:

I saw that contentment is the capital of wealth

and so I clung to its coat-tails.

So its might invested me in a robe of honour

which was not rent over the passage of time.

So I become wealthy without dirhams,

proud above people as a king is proud.

This is the greatest wealth and the master elixir of all elixirs. In Sufi terminology it is called scrupulousness, and by that I mean the special scrupulousness. It is to completely remove aspirations from others. We read in *Lata'if al-Minan*:

"Know that the scrupulousness of the elite is only understood by a few. Part of their scrupulousness is their scrupulousness in not relying on other than Allah, inclining with love to other than Him, or their desires extending to other than His favour and good. Part of their scrupulousness is their scrupulousness in not having fear about means and secondary causes and stripping away equals and lords. Part of their scrupulousness is scrupulousness in not stopping with customs and relying on acts of obedience and not depending on the lights of *tajalliyat*. Part of their scrupulousness is their scrupulousness in not allowing this world to tempt them or settling for the Next World. They are scrupulous regarding this world out of faithfulness and regarding the Next World out of purity."

"Shaykh 'Uthman ibn 'Ashura' said, 'I left Baghdad to go to Mosul and while I was travelling this world presented itself to me with its might, rank and elevation, mounts, garments, adornments and delights, and I turned away from it. Then the Garden presented itself to me with its houris, castles, rivers and fruits and I did not occupy myself with it. I was told, "Uthman, if you had stopped with the first, We would have veiled you from the second. If you had stopped with the second, we would have veiled from Us. We are for you, and your portion of both worlds will come to you."'

"Shaykh 'Abdu'r-Rahman al-Maghribi, who lived in the eastern part of Alexandria, said, 'One year I made hajj, and when I had finished the hajj, I resolved to return to Alexandria. Then there was a call: "You must be with Us next year." I said to myself, "Since I must be here next year, I will not return to Alexandria." Then it occurred to me to go to Yemen and so I went to Aden. One day I was walking on its coast when I came across some merchants who had brought out their foods and wares. I looked and saw a man who had spread out his carpet on the sea and walked on the water. I said to myself, "I am not fit for this world or the Next." Then it was said, "Whoever is not fit for this world or the Next is proper for Us."'

"Abu'l-Hasan said, 'Scrupulousness is the best path for the one who wants to hasten his inheritance and sublime reward. Scrupulousness leads them to taking from Allah and by Allah and speaking by Allah and acting for Allah and by Allah with the clear evidence and piercing insight. So in all their moments and states they do not manage, choose, desire, or reflect, look, speak, strike, walk or move except by Allah and for Allah since they know that knowledge will compel them to the reality of the matter. So they are gathered in the source of gatheredness and do not separate in what is higher nor what is lower. as for the lowest of the low, their scrupulousness regarding it is a reward for their scrupulousness in being careful to not contend with the Shari'a. Anyone who inherits nothing from his knowledge or actions is veiled by this world or subject to a false claim. His inheritance is to exalt his character and be proud towards his peers and to direct to Allah by his knowledge. This is the 'clear loss'. We seek refuge with Allah Almighty from that! Those who are clever are scrupulous regarding this scrupulousness and they seek refuge with Allah from it. Whoever is not provided by his knowledge and action with need of his Lord, abasement of himself and humility towards His creation is destroyed. Glory be to the One who cuts off many of the righteous by their righteousness from their benefit, as He cuts off many of the corrupters by their corruption from the One who brought them into existence. So seek refuge with Allah, He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing.'

"So look! May Allah give you understanding of the path of His *awliya'* and those among His lovers whom you must follow in this scrupulousness which the shaykh mentioned! If he lets you understand it, it will take you to this type of being scrupulous about scrupulousness. Do you not see his words? "Scrupulousness leads them to taking from Allah and by Allah and speaking by Allah and acting for Allah and by Allah with the clear evidence and piercing insight." This is the scrupulousness of the *Abdal* and *Siddiqin*, not the scrupulousness of those who are obstinate which is produced by bad opinion and being overpowered by illusion." (pp. 90-92)

This is the scrupulousness which the Shaykh mentioned is the scrupulousness of the elite or the elite of the elite. It is that which is opposite greed as was already mentioned in the words of al-Hasan al-Basri: "The rightness of the deen is scrupulousness and the corruption of the deen is greed." It is not the scrupulousness of the common people, which is to abandon the doubtful and unlawful because that is not the complete opposite of greed. It results in sound certainty, perfect attachment to the Lord of the world, the existence of trust in Him, aspirations being devoted to Him, and the tranquillity of the heart in Him so that he does not rely on anything other than Him. This is the scrupulousness which is opposed corrupting greed, and through it every action of devotion and fortunate state is sound.

Yahya ibn Mu'adh said, "Scrupulousness has two aspects: outward scrupulousness, which is only moving by Allah, and inward scrupulousness, which is that your heart only enters Allah." It is mentioned that one of them was eager to see to see someone who had this attribute and he began to strive to seek him out and attempt to find him. He therefore took one thing after another from his property and gave it to the poor and wretched. He used to say to the one to whom he gave, "Take, not for you." They used to take and none of them was heard to utter a suitable answer to what he until one day he obtained his desire that day and reached his goal and hope. That was when he said to one of them, "Take, not for you," and he said to him, "I take it not from you."

If the slave looks up to creatures or he looks first to them before or after provision comes to him, in respect of *adab* this scrupulousness and duty demand that he not give himself anything that comes to him in this state in order to punish his *nafs* for looking to his fellow human being. That is like the well-known story of Ayyub the Porter with Ahmad ibn Hanbal. It is like what is related about Shaykh Abu Madyan when a porter brought him some wheat and his *nafs* contended with him and said, "Do you know where this from?" He replied, "I know better where it is from, enemy of Allah!" He ordered one of his companions to give it to one of the poor to punish the *nafs* since it saw creation before seeing the Real. It is said that the most lawful of the lawful is that which does not occur to one's mind and for which you have not asked any man or woman.

Shaykh 'Abdu'l-'Aziz al-Mahdawi said, "Scrupulousness is that you do not move or be still except that you see Allah in the movements and stillnesses. When he sees Allah, movement and stillness departs and he remains with Allah. Movement is describes the state he is in it. It is as he said, "I did not see anything but that I saw Allah in it." When you see Allah, you depart." He also said, 'Scholars agree that the absolute *halal* is what is taken from the hand of Allah without secondary means. This is the station of *tawakkul* (reliance).' That is why one of them said, 'The *halal* is that in which Allah is not forgotten.'"

According to the transmission of Ibn 'Abbad, "When Allah desires to exalt His slave and elevate him to this station, he cuts off from him the reins of illusion and anxiety, liberates him from the bondage of greed and leads him to Him with the tenderness of goodness or with the fetters of trial," as he indicates:

### **Whoever does not advance to Allah by the tenderness of His goodness**

#### **is chained to Him by the fetters of trial.**

Allah has divided His slaves into three categories: the people of the left, the people of the right and the forerunners. There is no discussion on the people of the left since they do not turn to Allah at all. The people of the right turn by an aspect but they have no eliteness in that because they are content with the outward Shari'a and do not turn to travelling on the Path or the reality. So they stop with proof and evidence and do not rise to the station of witnessing and divine witnessing. There is also no discussion about them.

As for the forerunners, they turn to Allah and direct themselves to Him, seeking to reach gnosis of Him. They are in two groups on that. One group turn to Allah the tenderness of His goodness and being grateful for His blessing and grace. They are the people of the station of thankfulness. Another group turn to Allah by the fetters of trial and various afflictions and tests. They are the people of steadfastness.

The people of the first station turn to Allah voluntarily and the people of the second station turn to Allah unwillingly. The Almighty says "*Everyone in heaven and earth prostrates to Allah prostates the earth, willingly or unwillingly.*" (13:16) Abu Madyan said, "The custom of Allah is to invite His slaves to obey Him by ample provision and constant preservation so that they return to Him by His blessing. If they do not do it, then He tests them with good and bad times so that hopefully they will return because what is desired is that the slaves return to him, willingly or unwillingly." So for some people Allah expands blessings to them, averts affliction and retribution from them, provides them with health, and supports them with wealth and well-being so that they come to Him. They remove that from their hearts and put it in their hands, and very few are they. Allah says, "*But very few of My slaves are thankful.*" (34:13) A *hadith* is

related about people like them, "This world is an excellent mount for the believer. On it he reaches good and by it he is saved from evil," or words to that effect.

One of our companions said, "The Prophet made this world a mount for the believer so that it can carry him and did not make the believer a mount for it so that he would be responsible for carrying it. This indicates that it is in his possession so that he can use it to help him to travel to his Lord, not that it should be in his heart so that he endures hardship in seeking it, and Allah knows best.

Some people are supported by Allah with blessings and He expands wealth and well-being for them, and averts retribution from them and that distracts them from rising to Him and prevents them from travelling to His Presence. So He divests them of them and strikes them with afflictions and trials and they turn to Allah by the fetters of trials. "Your Lord marvels at a people who are driven to the Garden in chains." Allah the praises the thankful wealthy one and the steadfast poor person with the same praise. Allah Almighty says in respect of Sulayman, peace be upon him, "*We gave Da'ud Sulayman. What an excellent slave! He truly turned to his Lord.*" (38:29) He says about Ayyub, peace be upon him, "*We found him steadfast. What an excellent slave! He truly turned to his Lord.*" (38:43)

One of them said, "I prefer that I be given to and be thankful than to be tested and steadfast." Shaykh Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mursi said, "The thankful rich person is preferred to the poor steadfast person." That is the school of Ibn 'Ata' and the school of Abu 'Abdullah at-Tirmidhi al-Hakim. He said, "Thankfulness is the attribute of the people of the Garden and poverty is not." He said that in *Lata'if al-Minan*.

The fact is that poor steadfast is the rich thankful one and vice versa because wealth is by Allah. When the heart is rich by Allah, the person is thankful and wealthy without any care for what is in his possession. The hand may be full and the heart poor, and the heart be rich in Allah and the hand is poor, and the hand may be full while the heart is with Allah, rich, without need of other than Him.

One of the shaykhs said, "There was a man in Morocco who was one of those ascetic in this world and one of the people of seriousness and striving. His livelihood came from what he caught from the sea. He gave away part of his catch as sadaqa and lived on the rest. One of the people of this shaykh wanted to travel to the one of the towns of Morocco and this ascetic told him, 'When you go to such-and-such a town, go to my brother so-and-so and give him my greeting and ask him to make supplication. He is one of the awliya' of Allah.' The man said 'So I travelled to that town and asked about that man and I was directed to a house which is only fit for kings. I was amazed at that and I asked for him and was told that he was with the sultan. My astonishment increased. After a time he arrived on the most sumptuous mount and clothes, riding like a king. My astonishment increased still further than before. I wanted to go back and not meet with him, Then I said, 'I cannot oppose the shaykh.' So I asked permission to enter and he gave it. When I entered, I saw an awesome amount of slaves, servants, and fine appearance. I said to him, 'Your brother so-and-so greets you.' He said to me, 'You have come from him?' 'Yes,' I replied. He said, 'When you return to him, tell him, 'How much you are preoccupied with this world! How much you turn to it! When will your desire for it cease?'" I said, 'By Allah, this is more wondrous than the first!' When I returned to the shaykh, he asked, 'Did you meet with our brother?' 'Yes,' I replied. He asked, 'And what did he say to you?' 'Nothing,' I replied. He insisted, 'He must have said something for me.' So I repeated to him what he had said and he wept for a long time and then said, 'My brother spoke the truth. Allah has washed his heart of this world and put it in his hand and on his outward while I have taken it from my hand and I still look towards it!'" That is from the *Lata'if al-Minan*. (164-165)

So the states of the *awliya'* are not determined by poverty or wealth because *wilaya* is a matter of the heart which is only known by the one who has it. Success is by Allah. Whoever advances to Allah by the tenderness of His goodness must be grateful for what he has been given of tender generosity and favour. Otherwise they will vanish because of his disbelief and disobedience. The author indicates that:

**Whoever is not grateful for blessings is asking for them to vanish.**

**Whoever is grateful for them ties them up with their own tether.**

The statements of the wise men agree on this concept. Gratitude ties up what exists and catches what is lacking. They also said, "Whoever receives a gift and is not grateful will be stripped of it while he is not aware. Whoever is grateful for the blessings ties them up with their tether. Whoever is ungrateful for them is asking for them to vanish. Allah says, "*Allah never changes a people's state until they change what is in themselves,*" (13:12) i.e. Allah does not change a blessing in a people until they change the thankfulness in themselves, and the change of thankfulness is their preoccupation with acts of disobedience and disbelief. That is why al-Junayd said, "Gratitude is that you do not disobey

Allah with His blessings." It is said that gratitude is the joy of the heart with the Blessor, not because of His blessing, until that extends to the limbs and they are expanded to commands and recoil from prohibitions.

We read in *Lata'if al-Minan*: "There are three categories of thankfulness: thankfulness of the tongue, thankfulness of the limbs and thankfulness of the heart. The thankfulness of the tongue is to speak about Allah's blessings. The Almighty says, '*As for the blessing of your Lord, speak out.*' (93:11) The thankfulness of the limbs is to obey Allah. Allah says, '*Work, family of Da'ud, in thankfulness.*' (34:13) The thankfulness so the heart is to acknowledge that every blessing to you or to any of the slaves of Allah is from Allah. Allah says, '*Any blessing you have is from Allah.*' (16:53)

"Related to the first category are the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "Speaking of blessing is thankfulness.' Part of the second is that the Prophet stood until his feet became swollen. He was asked that: 'Do you oblige yourself to do all that when Allah has forgiven you your past and any future wrong actions?' He replied, 'Am I not a thankful slave?'" (pp. 160-161)

Abu Hazim was asked, "What is the thankfulness of the eyes?" and he answered, "That when you see good with them, you proclaim it. When you see evil with them you conceal it." He said, "What is the thankfulness of the ears?" He replied, "When you hear good with them, you retain it, and when you hear evil with them, you bury it." "What is the thankfulness of the hands?" he asked. He said, "That you do not use them to take what is not yours nor deny any right which Allah is owed in them." "What is the thankfulness of the belly?" he asked. He answered, "That its bottom is steadfastness and its top is knowledge." He said, "And what is the thankfulness of the genitals?" He said, "As Allah Almighty says, '*those who guard their private parts É they are not blameworthy.*' (23:4-5) He said, 'What is the thankfulness of the feet?' He said, 'If you see something you are pleased with, you use them. If you see something you hate, you turn them aside.'"

Know that people fall into three levels in thankfulness: the common, the elite, and the elite of the elite. The thankfulness of the common is only for blessings. The thankfulness of the elite is for the blessing and retribution. The thankfulness of the elite of the elite is to withdraw from witnessing the blessing and the retribution into the Blessor.

The blessings for which for which one is thankful fall into three categories: those relating to this world, like health, well-being, lawful wealth; those relating to the *deen*, like knowledge, action, *taqwa* and gnosis; and those related to the Next World, like the reward for few actions with an abundant gift.

The most glorious of blessings in the *deen* for which one must show thanks are the blessings of Islam, faith and gnosis. Thankfulness for them is the belief that they are a gift from Allah without intermediary or by means of one's strength or power. Allah says, "*However, Allah given you love of faith and mad it pleasing to your hearts and has made kufr, deviance and disobedience hateful to you.*" (49:7) Then He says, "*A great favour from Allah and a blessing.*" (49:8) Abu Talib al-Makki said after some words, "If our hearts had been overturned into doubt and misguidance as they are overturned in intentions in actions, what would we do, on what would we rely and in what would be at peace and hope for? So this is one of the great blessings, and acknowledging it is gratitude for the blessing of faith. Ignorance of this is being heedless about the blessing of faith and that makes punishment mandatory. Claiming that faith is an intellectual acquisition or that it is possible to obtain it by capacity and strength is to deny the blessing of faith, and it is feared that the one who is suspected of that will have his faith stripped away because he has exchanged thankfulness for the blessing of faith with ingratitude/disbelief (*kufr*).

If the slave neglects to be thankful for these blessings but their form remains with them, he should not be deluded. That is in order to lead him on, as he indicates:

**Fear that the fact that He is good to you when you are acting badly towards Him**

**might be bait to draw you on.**

*"We shall lead them, step by step, into destruction,*

*from where they do not know." (7:182)*

Leading on (*istadraja*) is to conceal affliction in blessing. It is derived from *daraja*, which is used for a child starting to walk, i.e. beginning to walk little by little, and from the steps (*daraj*) which one used to ascent upwards. So the one who leads someone on is the one who takes blessing from him little by little while he is unaware of it, as the Almighty says,

*"We shall lead them, step by step, into destruction from where they do not know,"* i.e. "We will take away blessings until We drag them to retribution while they are unaware."

Shaykh Zarruq said, "O murid, fear that the constant kindness of Allah to you with health, leisure, vast provision and constant physical or spiritual support while you behave badly with him by heedlessness, falling short, and lack of thankfulness to the Great King is that is being led on by Him. Allah Almighty says, *'We shall lead them, step by step, into destruction from where they do not know.'* Sahl ibn 'Abdullah said, "We support them with blessings and make them forget thankfulness for them. Then when they rely on the blessing and it veils them to the Blesser, they are taken."

Ibn 'Ata' said, "Whenever they commit an error, We renew blessing for them and make them forget to ask forgiveness for that error. Then Allah says, *'I will give them more time,'* (7:183) i.e. support them with well-being and blessings, 'until We suddenly seize them.' Allah Almighty says, *'When they forgot what they had been reminded of, We opened up for them the doors to everything, until, when they were exulting in what they had been given, We suddenly seized them and at once they were in despair.'* (6:45) i.e. when they are heedless about what the punishment and penalty they are reminded of then We open up for the doors to blessings and expand physical provision to them until, when they exult in the blessings they have been given and command them, then suddenly seized them with destruction and then they despair of every good."

That is the custom of Allah in His creation: to send to them those who will remind them of Allah and direct them to Allah. When they turn away from him and reject him, then He expands physical blessings to them until they are tranquil and exult in them. Then Allah destroys them suddenly so that that will be a harsher punishment. A poet said, "The thing is greater when it comes suddenly." Allah Almighty says, *"Those who disbelieve should not imagine that the extra time We grant to them is good for them. We only allow them more time so that they will increase in evildoing. They will have a humiliating punishment."* (3:178)

So it is mandatory for someone who is aware of a physical blessing, inward or outward, or a spiritual blessing, that he should acknowledge its due and hasten to be thankful for it in speech, belief and action. So articulation is praise and thanking with the tongue. Belief is witnessing the Blesser in the blessing and ascribing it to Him and withdrawing from means in the heart while thanking the means on the tongue. "Whoever does not thank people has not thanked Allah." Your thanking people is your thanking Allah. When you tell him, 'May Allah repay you well,' then you have performed its due thankfulness. Thankfulness in action is to direct them to obeying Allah as already stated. If he does not perform this obligation, it is feared that it will be stripped from him and he will be led on bit by bit. That is uglier.

In short, thankfulness is *adab* with the Blesser and whoever brings it to you. If shows bad *adab*, he is disciplined, and he may be disciplined inwardly while he was not aware, as he indicates:

**It is ignorance on the part of the murid if he has bad *adab***

**to then say when the punishment is delayed,**

**"If this were really bad *adab*,**

**He would have cut off help or sent me into exile."**

**Help can be cut off while one is unaware of it**

**- by stopping any increase**

**- or by letting you do what you like.**

One of the well-established commands for the true *murid* is that he should observe *adab* with Allah in everything and cling to exalting Him in every thing and maintain respect for Him in everything. If he fails in any of these matters and has bad *adab* with his Lord, he should hurry to repent and apologise with abasement and contrition. If he then puts off repentance until another time, help is cut off from him and exile and distancing is obliged for him while he is not aware of that immediately. So he convinces to himself and says, "If this really were bad *adab*, then help would be cut off from me." This is repulsive ignorance on his part which will lead to ruin if he does not receive concern from the Lord of the lords.

This is ignorance on the part of the *murid* who is supporting his *nafs* at the moment when it displays bad *adab* while he is not aware of his heart's imperfection. If he had known the tricks of the *nafs*, he would suspect it and not help it. If he had recognised his Lord, he would have been aware of his heart's imperfection. Therefore he combines ignorance and folly. Ignorance is the bad *adab* which issues from him and folly is his quarrelling with his *nafs* and his lack of recognition that what he did is bad *adab*, not to mention his argument that he does not sense any penalty and if it had really been bad *adab*, he would have felt the cutting of help and the obligation of exile and distance has not arisen. Help may be cut off from him while he is unaware of it. An example of that is the trees which are on the water. When the water is cut off from them, the effect of thirst does not show on them except after a time, and then if that goes on a long time, then they gradually dry up. The heart of the *murid* is like that. He is not aware of the cutting off of nearness until he drowns in illusion and is burned by the sensory. If he has preordained good, he repents and puts right what he corrupted and so help returns to him, If he does not have it, he returns to his homeland and is made to reside in distance. We ask Allah for security from having His blessing stripped away after He has given it!

If the punishment were only that he is denied increased travelling and arising, that would be enough because if someone is not in increase, then he must be in decrease. If today someone is worse than yesterday, then he is in loss. If this is bad *adab*, then his words in justification oblige distance and so he is put in the station of distance while he supposes that he is in a place of nearness because the levels of nearness and distance are endless. There is no station in nearness but that the one after it is greater than it and the same applies to the one after that and the one after that. If it had not been for that, that distance would only leave you with what you want and that would be enough exile and distance since leaving distance with passion and appetites is a sign of neglect. The slave emerging from his passion and what he relies on it a sign of concern and turning. When Allah is concerned with the slave and wants to make him reach His presence, he disorders all that his *nafs* relies on and upsets him, willing or unwilling until He makes him despair of this world and he no longer relies on anything in it. Then He chooses him for His presence and selects him for His love. Then that person has no information about his *nafs* nor any abiding with other than Allah.

The basis of that is the story of Musa, peace be upon him, when Allah informed of him of his love for his staff and his reliance on it. Allah asked him, "*What is that in your right hand, Musa?*" He said, "*It is my staff. I lean on it and beat down leaves for my sheep with it and have other uses for it.*" He said, "*Throw it down. Musa.*" He threw it down and suddenly it was a slithering snake." (20:17-19) When he fled from it and completely despaired of it, He said to him, "Take hold of it and have no fear" because it will not harm you when you return to it by Allah." So it is said to the faqir, "What is that in your right hand, *faqir*?" He says, "It is this world on which I rely and by which I achieve my hopes." Then he is told, "*Cast it from your hand.*" It is a slithering snake which has bitten him while he was not aware. When he despairs of it and is intimate with Allah and trusts in Him, he is told, "Take hold of it and do not fear because you take it by Allah, not by yourself." Allah knows best.

The areas of *adab* in which the *murid* might fall short and for which he would be punished are three: *adab* with Allah and His Messenger, *adab* with the shaykh, and *adab* with the brothers.

Adab with Allah in relation to the common people is to obey His commands and avoid His prohibitions. With His Messenger, it is to follow the *Sunna* and avoid the people of innovations. When they fall short in the commands and oppose the prohibitions, they are punished sooner physically or later both in the meaning and physically.

In relation to the elite, with Allah it is much *dhikr* of Him and watchfulness in His presence and preferring His love. Shaykh Zarruq added, "and observing the limits (*hudud*), fidelity to contracts, clinging to the Loving King, being pleased with what exists, and expending one's effort and power." With His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, it is preferring his Lord, following his guidance and taking on his character. If they fall short in His *dhikr*, or their hearts wander without presence, or their love inclines to something else or they fall short in any of what was mentioned, or they dissolve one of their contracts with Allah, they are punished by beating, imprisonment, harm by the tongue or in the meaning which is stronger, like having His help cut off, and exile and establishment in the station of distance being obliged.

In respect to the elite of the elite, who are those who have arrived, with Allah it is humbleness in everything, respect for everything, constant recognition of the *tajalliyat* of majesty and beauty, or with the changing of secondary effects and the changing of stages. With His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, it is by realisation of his worth, respect for his community, and witnessing his light, as Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mursi said to me, "For thirty years the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was not absent from me for the blink of an eye. If he had been absent from me, I would not count myself to be one of the Muslims." When the gnostic falls short in what was mentioned in adab in respect of him or in respect of others, then he is punished in the senses or in the meaning. Generally he wakes up immediately and so he strives to catch what he missed. "*As for those who have taqwa, when they are bothered by visitors from Shaytan, they remember and immediately see clearly.*" (7:201)

This is the total of the *adab* with Allah for the common, the elite and elite of the elite, or you could say, the seekers, the travellers and those who have arrived, and Allah knows best.

As for the *adab* with the Shaykh, it concerns eight matters: four are outward and four are inward.

As for the outward *adab*, the first is to obey his commands, even if he thinks he should oppose something, and avoid his prohibitions, even if it kills him. The error of the shaykh is better than the correctness of the *murid*.

The second is silence and gravity when sitting in his presence. He should not laugh in his presence, raise his voice to him nor speak unless he invites him to speech or that is understood from the circumstances, as in a discussion. He lowers his voice and speaks kindly and gently. He should not eat with him or in his presence, nor sleep with him or near him. Shaykh Sidi 'Ali said in his book, "Among the *adab* of the *murid* with the shaykh is to not to eat with him, sleep with him, laugh in his presence, sleep in his bed, sit where he sits, nor speak in the gathering of the shaykh, even a single word. Speaking in it is bad *adab* worse than anything. One should avoid all that resembles these qualities which might lead to lack of respect and contempt towards the shaykh. That is clear loss. We seek refuge with Allah from being deplored after the gift and exile after advancement." They said, "Make your actions salt and your *adab* flour." A poet said:

"The *adab* of the slave is abasement

and the slave should not abandon abasement.

When his humility is perfect,

he obtains love and draws near."

The third is hastening to serve him as much as possible with one's person, property or words. Serving the men is a reason for reaching the Master of the masters. Sidi 'Abdullah al-Hibti az-Zajali said in his poem on *Wayfaring*:

The opinion of the servant is beautiful.

Evidence indicates his success.

He offers himself to the service of the men

in order to obtain arrival with his Beloved.

The lover is abased in the quest of nearness,

and a dear one is precious to the people of love.

The child of the houses of nearness is at their gates

and all their doors are open for him.

Bliss for him! Good news for him which he obtains!

He has obtained and been granted the blessing of nearness.

Then he said:

Your station, is better known, O servant.

It is immense and great.

Evening finds you in the vicinity of the One served,



sharing also in His secret.

Do not be delighted in other than your high position.

All good is concentrated in you.

The fourth is being constantly present in his gathering. Otherwise, he returns to him as much as it is possible to be near him. The help of the shaykh is like a water wheel or the bucket of water wheel. If the water wheel or the bucket is neglected, it will get holes and the water will go elsewhere. Repeated visits also indicate intense love, and the drink is according to the amount of love. Shaykh al-Majdhub said along these lines:

No love except by the root and no arrival except what is dear.

No drink except what is sealed and no station except the lofty.

Shaykh 'Ali al-Jamal said in his book, "Know that the one who seeks arrival cannot draw near Allah Almighty with anything equal to his sitting with a gnostic of Allah if he finds one." Then he said, "Sitting with a gnostic of Allah is better than retreat, and retreat is better than sitting with the common heedless people. Sitting with a common heedless person is better than sitting with an ignorant *faqir*. Just as the gnostic joins the murid to his Lord by a look or a word, so the faqir who is ignorant of Allah may remove the murid from his Master with a glance or word or more." May Allah have mercy on Sidi al-Majdhub who said, "Sitting with other than those who are good is base, even if it is pure."

As for inward *adab*, the first is belief in his perfection and that he is worthy of being a shaykh and teaching by his joining the Shari'a and the reality, *jadhb* and *suluk*, and that he is following in the footsteps of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

The second is that one esteems him and respects him, whether absent or present, and cultivates love for him in his heart. That indicates his truthfulness. Realisation is according affirmation. Anyone who has no truthfulness has no travelling, even if he remains with the shaykh for a thousand years.

The third is withdrawal from his intellect, leadership and action except for what comes to him from his shaykh as was done by the shaykh of our *tariqa*, ash-Shadhili, when he met his shaykh. It is a *sunna* in his *tariqa*. So whoever comes to his shaykh in this Shadhili *tariqa* must wash himself of his knowledge and action before he reaches his shaykh in order to obtain the pure drink from the sea of his ample help.

The fourth concerns moving from him to other than him. In their view, this is the most ugly and abhorrent of things, and it is the reason for the decay of the seed of the will. The tree of the will becomes corrupted by the corruption of its root. All of this is with teaching shaykhs as was stated. As for the shaykhs of the people of the outward, there is no harm in moving from them to the people of the inward if they can be found, and that does not require *idhn* (permission). Allah knows best.

As for the *adab* to be shown with the brothers, there are four. The first is maintaining respect for them, absent or present and not slandering or deprecating anyone. One does not say, "The people of Sidi so-and-so are perfect and the people of Sidi so-and-so are deficient," or "so-and-so is a gnostic" or "so-and-so is not a gnostic," or "so-and-so is weak and so-and-so is strong, or similar things. This is slander itself, and it is *haram* by consensus, especially in respect of the *awliya'*. Their flesh is deadly poison, as is the flesh of the scholars and righteous. Therefore the *murid* should be completely on guard against this blameworthy quality and flee from someone who has this nature as he would flee from a lion. Anyone fond of this will never be successful.

So the *awliya'* are like the Prophets. Whoever differentiates between them is denied their good and is ungrateful for their blessing. One of the Sufis said, "Anyone broken by the *fuqara'* is not mended by the Shaykh. Anyone broken by the shaykh can be mended by the *fuqara'*." It is sound and tested because the harm of one *wali* is not like the harm of many *awliya'*. Anyone broken by the shaykh has his brothers intercede for him and so the heart of the shaykh is mended. This is not the case with the *fuqara'*. When they change, mending rarely occurs. Allah knows best.

The second is their counsel by teaching those of them who are ignorant, guiding those who are misguiding and strengthening those who are weak, even if by travelling to them. If among them there are people of the beginning and the end, strong and weak, each is reminded of what befits his station. They should speak to people according to what they understand, as the hadith states.

The third is humility to them and being just with them from yourself and serving them as much as possible. The servant of a people is their master. If someone has work which he cannot finish, then it is obligatory to help him so as to free him for remembering Allah, even if it is little. Allah Almighty says, "*Help each other to goodness and taqwa.*" (5:2) So all that occupies the heart of the *faqir* should move him to jihad and goodness.

The fourth is witnessing purity in them and believing in their perfection. So he does not deprecate anyone, even if he sees in him something which would demand imperfection outwardly and so the believer must look for excuses. He should look for seventy excuses. If the person continues is that which demands his imperfection, he should witness it in himself. The believer is the mirror of his brother. What the looker sees is manifest in him. The people of purity only witness purity and the people who are mixed only witness mixture. The people of perfection only witness perfection and the people of imperfection only witness imperfection. The hadith was already mentioned in which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "There is nothing better than two traits: good opinion of Allah and good opinion of the slaves of Allah. There is worse better than two traits: bad opinion of Allah and bad opinion of the slaves of Allah." Success is by Allah.

This is the total of the *adab* which the *faqir* must observe and maintain, whether he is a seeker, traveller, or someone who has arrived. At the beginning of the first chapter, eight *adâb* were already mentioned, some of them for the gnostic and some for the traveller. Refer to them there and act according to them. The path is all *adab*, so that one of them said, "Make your actions salt and your *adab* flour." Abu Hafs said, "*Tasawwuf* is all *adab*. Every moment has *adab*. Every state has *adab*. Every station has *adab*. Anyone who holds to *adab* reaches the level of the Men. Anyone who is denied *adab* is far when he thinks he is near and rejected when he thinks that he is accepted."

One of them said, "Cling to *adab* outwardly and inwardly. No one has bad *adab* outwardly but that he is punished outwardly and no one has bad *adab* inwardly, but that he is punished inwardly." We read in *al-Mabahith al-Isliyya*:

Outward *adab* gives eye-witnessing

of the evidence of a person's inward.

It is also a support for the poor

and an adornment and mastery for the rich.

It is said that the one who is deprived of *adab* is far away

and will not draw near or approach.

It is said that the one imprisoned by lineage

is set free by *adab*.

So people are truly masters by *adab*.

And it is from it that the People benefit.

Abu Hafs as-Sarraj said, "In *adab*, people fall into three ranks: the people of this world, the people of the *deen* and the people of election among the people of the *deen*. As for the people of this world, most of their *adab* is in eloquence, reports of kings, and poems of the Arabs. As for the people of the *deen*, most of their *adab* is preserving knowledge, disciplining the selves, training the limbs, rectifying nature, maintaining the *hudud*, abandoning appetites, avoiding doubts and hastening to good actions. As for the people of election among the people of the *deen*, their *adab* is preservation of heart, observing secrets, and making and the secret and outward the same. The *murids* vary in rank by knowledge, those in the middle by *adab* and the gnostics by their *himmas*."

Then the shaykh mentioned that ignorance is obliged for the murid who is confined to what he mentioned of self-justification and self defence because in this state he is a person of argumentation, organising premise and conclusion. That is how one understands their statement, "The people of argumentation are only inspired to deny action." If he had admitted his bad behaviour and been fair to himself, that would not be ignorance or folly for it since they said, "If lack of *adab* brings one to *adab*, it is *adab*." Allah knows best.

Part of *adab* is that one does not despise any station in which Allah Almighty established one of his slaves, whatever it is, as he indicates:

When you see someone whom Allah has made persist in recitation of *wirds*  
and then continues to help him in that,  
do not despise what his Master has given him  
because you do not discern in him  
the mark of the gnostics or the radiance of the lovers.

No *warid*, no *wird*.  
If a *warid* had not come, there would be no *wird*.

What the shaykh mentioned here is one of the things which are stressed in this chapter which is all about *adab*. It is that one should not despise any of the *tajalliyat* of Allah in any state. He must not contend with the All-Powerful nor oppose the Conqueror nor object to the All-Wise.

When you see that Allah has established a slave with *wirds*, like a lot of prayer, fasting, *dhikr*, recitation, and striving, and he is constant in that for long periods, and it is strengthening inwardly and discarding distractions and disturbances outwardly, while at the same time he has not received opening in the science of tastes and the actions of hearts, do not despise his state and what his Master has given him simply because you do not see the signs of the gnostics on him: tranquillity, peace of heart, and rest of the limbs and heart from the gentle breeze of pleasure and submission of the spirits.

Shaykh Zarruq said, "The gnostics have three signs. The first is turning away from what other than the One they recognise in every state and by every aspect. The second is turning to Him by abandoning portions and carrying out rights. The third is pleasure with Him in whatever He decrees."

Do not despise his state simply because you do not see on him the radiance of lovers, which is joy in the Beloved, much *dhikr*, thankfulness, delight in His love, hastening to what He loves, seeking His pleasure, humility to His immensity, and abasement to His compulsion and might.

Be humble to the One you desire. Passion is not easy.

If the Beloved is pleased, arrival is proper for you.

Be humble to Him and you win the sight of His beauty.

There are obligations and voluntary acts for the one who loves.

So how can you despise the One whose service continues and whose *wirds* are continuous? If it had not been for the existence of the divine *warid* inwardly, he would not be able to continue in his *wirds*. If it had not been for the *warid*, there would be no *wird*. The *warid* is from Him to you and the *wird* is from you to Him. "Were it not for Allah's favour to you and His mercy, not one of you would ever have been purified." (24:21) "If it were not for Allah's favour and to you and His mercy, all but a few of you would have followed Shaytan." (4:82) "He loves them and they love Him." (5:54) "He turned to them so that they might turn to Him." (9:119) So divine concern preceded, guidance reached them and the entire business in His hand. In truth, there is only prior success and there no strength nor power except by Allah.

Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili said, "Honour Muslims, even if they are deviant rebels. Carry out the *hadd* punishments on them and shun them as a mercy to them. Do not loathe them." Shaykh Zarruq said, "The one ascribed to the Truth must be honoured because of his ascription. If he is lying, then the matter is between him and the One to whom he is ascribed. We are commanded to give him his due since it is incumbent for us, just like the slave of a master who beats his master's son with his permission in order to teach him and does not despise him. Al-Harrani wrote:

Show mercy to all creatures.

Look at them with an eye of kindness and compassion,

Respect the old and show compassion to the young.

Give every creature the right of its creation.

Then constantly performing wirds, which is the service of the limbs, is the business of the people of service. They are slaves and ascetics, and moving from it to the support of the hearts is the business of the people of love and gnosis. They are the gnostics. All of them are the slaves of Allah and the people of His concern, and so only someone ignorant or cast aside despises them as he makes clear:

**Allah makes some people serve Him**

**while He singles out other people for His love.**

*"We sustain each one, the former and the latter,*

*through the generous giving of your Lord*

*and the giving of your Lord is not restricted." (17:20)*

The slaves singled out for concern fall into two divisions. Allah directs one division to His service and establishes them in it. They have different categories. Some of them are isolated in deserts and the wilderness to pray at night and fast in the day. They are the slaves and ascetics. Allah directs some of them to establish the *deen* and preserve the laws of the Muslims. They are the scholars and righteous. Allah directs some of them to support the *deen* and make the word of Allah uppermost. They are those doing *jihad* in the Way of the Lord of the Worlds. Allah directs some of them to putting the lands in order and soothing people. They are the amirs and sultans. There is a second division which Allah establishes for His love and singles out for His gnosis. They are the perfect gnostics. They travel on the Straight Path and reach the source of realisation.

There is a great difference between them because the people of service are seeking rewards and the people of love have the veils lifted from them. The people of service take their rewards before the door and the people of love speak intimately with the lovers. The people of service have a veil between them and Him and the veil is removed between Him and them is removed from the people of love. The people of service are the people of evidence and proof and the people of love are the people of witnessing and eye-witnessing. The people of service have portions snatched from them and the people of love have portions poured on them. The love of the people of service is divided and the love of the people of love is concentrated.

That is why the people of service are constant in their service and the lovers reach witnessing of their Beloved. If they had abandoned portions and confined their love to one Beloved, they would reach their Beloved and witness Him with vision and certainty and have rest from the toil of their service, but the wisdom of the All-Wise established them in their service and it is obliged to respect them in general. That does not oblige lack of preference for the people of gnosis and love. Look at what Allah Almighty says after that: *"Look how We favour some of them over others. But the Next World has higher ranks and greater favours."* (17:21) So this indicates that some of them are preferred to others. Nonetheless, all the slaves of the King are respected, and the King does not like for any of His slaves to be despised, even if they vary in His sight, and Allah knows best.

Abu Yazid said, "Allah is aware of the hearts of His *awliya'*. Some of them are not fit for gnosis and so He makes them busy with worship." Abu'l-'Abbas ad-Dinawari said, "Allah has slaves not fit for His gnosis and so He makes them busy with serving Him. He has slaves not fit for His service and so He prepares them for His love." Yahya ibn Mu'adh said, "The ascetic is caught by the Real in this world and the gnostic is caught by the Real in the Garden." He means that Allah catches the ascetic in this world, takes him and admits him to the Garden. Allah catches the gnostic in the Garden and admits Him to His presence. He catches him in the sensory Garden and put him in the Garden of meaning, which is the Garden of Gnoses.

The shaykh of our shaykh, Sidi 'Ali, said in his book, "Glory be to the One who prepared people for His service and established them in it and Who prepared people for His love and established them in it. Allah gives the people of service a *tajalli* by the attributes of majesty and awe, and so they become alienated from creation. Their hearts are fixed on what comes to them from the Presence of the Real. Their bodies become emaciated, their colour sallow and their bellies hollow. Their livers melt from yearning and pass through the darkness weeping and sighing. They exchange this world for striving in the *deen*. They desire the Garden whose breadth is the heavens and the earth, prepared for the

godfearing. Allah gives the people of love a tajalli by the attributes of beauty and love. They are intoxicated by the delicious wine of proximity. The One they worship distracts them from being among the slaves or ascetics. They are occupied outwardly and inwardly with Allah, and so they are veiled from every outward and inward thing. They are ascetic in blessing and bliss as they are preoccupied with witnessing the All-Knowing King."

This is the end of Chapter 7. In short, it deals with raising the himma, being grateful for blessing, having good adab in service, and the resolve to move from constant service to love and gnosis. When Allah wants to choose a slave for His gnosis and to move him from the toil of His service, He strengthens him by divine *waridat* which attract him to the Presence of the Lord. They are gifts, not acquisitions obtained by actions or devices.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

**It is very rare that divine *warids* come**

**in other than a sudden flash.**

**That protects them -**

**because the slaves cannot lay claim to them**

**because they are ready for them.**

Al-Qushayri said, "A *warid* designates praiseworthy thoughts which come to the hearts on which the slave has no bearing. *Waridat* are more general than *khawatir* because *khawatir* are particular to a type of instruction or what contains that meaning. *Waridat* can be *waridat* of joy, *waridat* of sorrow, *waridat* of contraction, *waridat* of expansion and other such things. It is close to the state." Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Qadir al-Jilani was asked about the attributes of divine *waridat* and shaytan impulses and replied, "The divine *warid* does not come through claim and is not removed by a cause. It does not come in one form nor at the same time. Shaytan impulses are generally different to that."

What is meant here is a particular type. It refers to the divine breezes which blow on the hearts and spirits or secrets and make hearts withdraw into the Presence of the Knower of the Unseen worlds, and the spirits and secrets into the Jabarut of the Almighty Compeller. So they become light-headed out of joy and happiness and dance out of yearning and rapture. When the spirits are moved by yearning for the encounter, the forms dance, O you who are ignorant of the meaning!

It is very rare that these divine *warids* come other in a sudden flash because they are not obtained by earning. They are an opening granted by the Generous Giver, If they had been obtained by effort and striving, the slaves and ascetics would have laid claim to them by the obligation of predisposition and preparation. Then they would have been acquisitions. States and *waridat* are gifts. "But Allah selects for His mercy whomever He wills. Allah's favour is truly vast." (2:105)

He (Zarruq?) said, "There are three aspects to the wisdom of its coming all of a sudden. One is so that it is recognised that it is a gift from Allah. The second is that it is properly valued and there is immense joy in it. The third is jealousy for it and feeling that it is precious because what is from the 'Aziz (Almighty, Precious) is precious."

Then these divine *waridat* and special gifts are secrets which come from the Generous, All-Forgiving, which He only gives to the people of protection and trust, not to the people of disclosure and treachery, as the author indicates:

**When you see someone answering all he is asked,**

**and mentioning all he knows**

**and interpreting all he sees**

**- that proves that he is an ignorant man.**

The aspect of his ignorance in answering all that he is asked is that his state would demand that he has encompassing knowledges whereas the Almighty says, "You have only been given a little knowledge" (17:85) i.e. what ignorance is

greater than for someone to oppose the words of Allah? It also contains pretension and the Almighty says, "Say: 'I do not ask you for any wage for it, nor am I a man of false pretensions.'" (38:86) The Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, said, "I and those who are godfearing in My community are free of pretension." The pretentious person is not lacking in artifice and adornment.

Part of his ignorance of Allah is shown by the fact that if he had truly known Him, His knowledge would be enough for him and he would recognise his true value. We read in a report, "Whoever recognises his worth lives."

One of them was asked about useful knowledge and said, "It is that you recognise your worth and do not exceed your level." One of those who have achieved realisation said, "When a scholar says, 'I do not know,' you have dealt him a mortal blow." He said in *al-Ihya'*, "When one of the righteous Salaf was asked a question, he would send the asker to someone else and the second person would send him to another, and that would continue until he came back to the first. When one of them was asked about a question, he would tell the asker, 'Take it to the Qadi and place it on his neck.'" Malik was asked about 32 questions and answered three and said about the rest, 'I do not know.' The asker asked him, 'What do I say to people?' He said, 'Tell them that Malik said, 'I do not know.'"

To answer every question is ignorant and *haram* since the asker may be opinionated and not deserve an answer. The question which he asked may not be proper for him because he will not understand it nor be capable of its knowledge and that may lead to confusion or denial." The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Do not give wisdom to other than its people so that you wrong it, and do not deny it to its people so that you wrong them." A poet said about that:

I will conceal my knowledge from who are ignorant as much as

possible and not cast precious pearls before beasts.

If Allah the All-Generous decrees by His kindness

that I meet those worthy of knowledge and wisdom,

I will spread my knowledges and benefit from their knowledge.

Otherwise it remains stored and concealed with me.

Anyone who gives knowledge to the ignorant wastes it

and anyone who denies it to those who deserve it has done wrong.

'Ali spoke to people according to what they understood. Do you want for Allah and His Messenger to be denied? It was said to al-Junayd, "Two men ask you the same question and you give this one a different answer to the one you give to that one." He said, "The answer is according to the capacity of the asker." The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "We are commanded to speak to people according to their intellects." When a man asked a question of one of the scholars and he did not answer him, the man said, "Do you not know that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'Anyone who conceals useful knowledge will be bridled on the Day of Rising with a bridle of fire?'" The scholar told him, "Put down the bridle and go. If someone comes who is entitled to it and I conceal it, then bridle me."

As for the aspect of his ignorance in interpreting all the *karamat* he witnesses, the stations he reaches and the lights and secrets he tastes, these matters are inner tastes and sovereign secrets, and only their masters understand them. To mention them to those who do not understand or taste them is ignorance of their value. They are trusts and one of the secrets of the King. It is not lawful to divulge the King's secrets. Anyone who divulges it is a traitor and merits exile and punishment and is not fit to be trusted afterwards. So concealment of secrets is the business of the good and revealing secrets is the business of the evil. They said, "The hearts of the free are the graves of secrets." A poet says:

Only someone trustworthy conceals the secret.

The secret is concealed with the best of people

There is little point in divulging them for their benefit is inward. The benefit of these states and divine *waridat* are that they obliterate the sensory and manifest the meaning or obliterate doubt and strengthen certainty. When they are divulged, their action is weak and their result is weak. All good lies in concealing. The hadith says, "Seek help in fulfilling your needs by concealing them," or words to that effect.

One of the matters in states which must be concealed is breaking the normal patterns of the self. If this happens to someone, he must not disclose it to someone else. The self has a machination in that because it loves being mentioned with strength and courage. So whenever he kills part of it, it is revived immediately. This also decreases sincerity and entails showing-off, which is a cause for destruction. We seek refuge with Allah!

As for the aspect of his ignorance in mentioning all that he knows of realities, knowledge and gnosis, that is because it is ignorance of their worth and making light of them. If they had truly been lofty and precious in his eyes, he would not have divulged them to others since the owner of treasure does not divulge it. Otherwise it will be stripped from him immediately. See what Shaykh al-Majdhub said:

Dig a hole for your secret and level it seventy fathoms deep.

Leave creatures complaining until the Day of Rising.

Since Allah says, "*Do not give the simple-minded their property,*" (4:5) what is the case with knowledge which is a hidden pearl? The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Part of knowledge is hidden and is only recognised by the people of knowledge. If they were to display it, those people who are deluded by Allah would deny it." Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "I retained two bags of knowledge from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. One of them I have disseminated among people. If I were to disseminate the other, this throat of mine would be cut." How excellent is what Zayd al-'Abidin said!:

O Lord, if I divulge a jewel of knowledge,

I will be told, 'You are one of those who worship idols!'

And Muslim men would consider my blood lawful,

seeing the beauty I bring them as ugly.

I will conceal the gems of my knowledge so that

someone ignorant does not see the truth and denounce us.

Ar-Ruzebadhi said, "This knowledge of ours is indication, and when it becomes expression, it is hidden." Imam al-Ghazali said, "The realities can harm some people just as the dung beetle is harmed by rose and musk."

It is allowed for the skilled gnostic to convey the realities in the presence of those who do not know them by using fine expressions, subtle indications and fine weaving so that the listener does not take anything from that. Al-Junayd conveyed the realities in the presence of witnesses and that was mentioned to him and he said, "Some knowledge is too guarded to be taken by other than its people, and our knowledge is protected from other being taken by other than its people." Allah knows best.

Then answering all one is asked, interpreting all that one sees, and mentioning that all one does obliges going to creatures, and esteeming and honouring them in this abode because if anyone shows his prerogative, he must be served. Part of the business of the common is to esteem the one with a miracle and so he plucks the fruit of his knowledge and action in this passing abode and misses the degrees of the *siddiqin* in that abiding abode. So he is commanded to conceal it and be content with Allah's knowledge and that the repayment is stored up for him until the Day in which he will meet Allah. He calls attention to that:

**He made the Next World the place where He will reward His believing slaves**

**because this world is not vast enough**

**to hold what He wants to give them**

**and because He thinks too much of them to reward them**

**in a dimension which lacks any permanence.**

There is no doubt that Allah branded this abode the Abode of Delusion and judged that there be ruin and destruction in it. It is a base, low vanishing ephemeral abode. That is why it is called "*dunya*", either because of its nearness or its baseness. It is constricted in time and place. The Next World is called as the Abode of Abiding the place of the manifestation of lights and the unveiling of secrets, the place of the Vision and delight, constant bliss and joy, the place of witnessing lovers and the lifting of the veil. Its bliss is constant and will always exist and abide.

That is why Allah Almighty made it the place for the repayment of His believing slaves and a seat of truthfulness for the Prophets and *Siddiqin*. He is not pleased to repay them in an abode which lacks any permanence which has a limited time and place and is a place of impurities, others, abasement and humiliation because it is limited and not vast enough to hold what He wants to give them, i.e. it is not vast enough for the honour the Almighty desires to give them in time and place because the least of the people of the Garden possesses the equivalent of the entire world ten times over, so what is the case with the lofty one? The Almighty says, "*No self knows the delight that is hidden away for it in recompense for what it used to do.*" (32:17) The Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, said, "Allah Almighty has prepared for His righteous slaves what no eye has seen nor ear heard and what has not occurred to the heart of a mortal."

It is because Allah thinks too much of His believing slaves and those brought near to repay them in an abode which lacks any permanence. Its prosperity is a ruin and its existence is a mirage. In one report, "If this world had been made of gold, it would vanish. If the Next World would made of clay, it would remain. The intelligent person is the one who chooses what abides over what does not abide." And the opposite is true. The Next World is gold which will abide and this world is like china which will vanish. None chooses it except the one for whom Allah has judged wretchedness, distress,

In another hadith, "The happy one is the one who chooses that which abides and whose bliss abides over that which banishes and whose punishment will not end. He is given what he advanced which is now in his hand to replace it for the one who is fortunate, The one who is wretched is the one who amasses and hoards it.

Abu Ayyub al-Ansari said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, "Adorn yourselves with obedience and wear it as the armour of fear. Make the Next World for yourselves and your striving for what will last for you. Know that you are travelling from what is little to Allah. Here all that will help you are righteous actions which you have sent ahead or an excellent reward which is your repayment. You go to what you have sent ahead and you are repaid for what you advanced. Therefore do not let the finery of this world which is base deceive you about the lofty ranks of the Gardens. It will be as if the armour is removed and doubt removed, and every person will meet what will last for him and recognised his home and final destiny."

Then repayment in that abode is for action in this abode, provided that it is accepted. Its acceptance is invisible, but it still has signs by which it is known here. He indicates this:

**If you find the fruit of your deeds quickly,**

**that is a proof of your acceptance!**

The fruit of deeds is the pleasure of obedience, the sweetness of intimate conversation, the familiarity of the heart with watchfulness, and the joy of the *ruh* in direct witnessing and the secret in direct speaking. "*All the people knew their drinking place.*" (2:60) The evidence for the existence of this fruit is energy in rising to the actions, delight in them, continuing with them and increased support in them. It is the sign of the descent of guidance into the heart. The Almighty says, "*He augments those who are guided by giving them further guidance.*" (19:76) Al-Busiri said in his poem in *hamza*:

When guidance alights in a heart,

the limbs are busy with worship.



When we see someone increasing in actions and rising in states, we know that he has found the fruit of his actions. It is good news for him that they are accepted. When we see someone stops acting or his states decrease, then we fear that his actions are not accepted. Another fruit of action is alienation from creation and people and intimacy with the True King. Other fruits of action include being content with Allah's knowledge and having no need of other than Him. Shaykh Zarruq added, "A good life, effective words and negation of sorrow by joy in the favour."

The evidence for the first is found in the words of the Almighty, "*Anyone who acts rightly, male or female, being a believer, We will give them a good life.*" (16:97) It is contentment. It is said that it is pleasure and submission. In fact, it is gnosis. The evidence for the second, which is effective words, is found in the words of the Almighty, "*Allah has promised those of you who believe and do right actions that He will make them successors in the land,*" (24:55) and the effectiveness and implementation of the Word is the khalifate. He also says, "*We made them leaders, guiding by Our command*" (21:73) because of their steadfastness. The evidence for the first, which is negation of sorrow, is experienced in himself because the sweetness of action makes him forget sorrow and grief because they resemble the blessings of the Garden. The Almighty says about the people of the Garden, "*Praise be to Allah who has removed all sadness from us!*" (35:34) Allah knows best.

One should be on guard against stopping with the sweetness of obedience. It is a deadly poison. When he mentions the criteria of actions, he mentions the criteria of the Men. You could say, when he mentions the criteria of the accepted action in relation to the rejected action, he mentions the criteria of the beloved doer in relation to the one turned away. He says:

### **If you want to learn your value with Him**

#### **look where He has put you.**

Allah, by His wisdom, has divided His creation into categories: wretched and happy. He divided those who are happy into two portions: the people of nearness and the people of distance, or the people of the right and those who brought near, who are the forerunners.

If you want to learn whether you are one of the people of wretchedness or the people of happiness, look at your heart. If you affirm the existence of your Lord and unify Him in His kingdom and obey the one who acquainted you with Him – His Messenger, peace be upon – then you are one of those for whom the best has been decreed. If you deny or doubt your Lord, or associate others with Him in your creed and do not obey the one who acquainted you with Him, then you are one of the people of wretchedness.

If you find that you are one of the people of happiness and want to know whether you are one of the people of nearness or the people of distance, then look. If you are one of those who finds evidence for Him in His secondary effects, then you are one of the people of distance among the people of the right. If you are one of those finds evidence for others by Him, then you are one of the people of nearness among those who are brought near.

Then if you know that you are one of the people of the right hand and want to learn your value with Him and whether you are one of the honoured or one of the abased, look. If you obey His commands, avoid His prohibitions and hasten to please Him and love His *awliya'* and beloveds, then you are one of the honoured and esteemed. If you are disdain His commands, are easy about His prohibitions, lax in obeying Him, violate His sanctity, and are hostile to His *awliya'*, then you, by Allah, then you are one of those condemned, deprived and out cast unless you are taken in hand by the concern of the Lord of the worlds.

If you realise that you are one of the people of nearness and you have reached the station of witnessing by which you are directed to others, you do not see other than Him. If you affirm the means (*wāsita*), confirm wisdom and give everything with a due its due, then you are one of the perfect ones who are brought near. If you deny wisdom and withdraw from the means, then you are attracted (*madhjub*) and overcome. So you are deficient in this place. When you become sober, you will fall unless your hand is taken by a shaykh who has arrived or a perfect gnostic.

There is another criterion by which you will recognise where you are in nearness and distance. If you find a teaching shaykh whose lights Allah unveils to you and acquaints you with the special qualities of his secrets, then you are absolutely one of the people of nearness by action or potential by the words of the Shaykh: "Glory be to the One who made the guide to His *awliya'* the guide to Himself, and He only allows them to be reached by those He makes to make reach Him." If you do not find a teaching shaykh and are deluded by the words of someone who says that they do not

exist, then you are definitely one of the people of the right among the common Muslims. This is the usual case, and the aberrant case has no judgement. Allah knows best.

In a *hadith*, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, says, 'I am Allah. There is no god but Me. I created good and evil, so bliss to the one whom I created for good and at whose hands I make good occur. Woe to the one whom I created for evil and at whose hands I made evil occur.'" In another *hadith*, "Whoever wants to know where he is with Allah should look where Allah is with him." In one variant, "Whoever wants to know his position with Allah should look at the position of Allah is in his heart." Allah puts the slave where the slave puts Him in himself. Allah Almighty says, "*As for him who gives out and has taqwa and confirms the Good, We will pave his way to the Ease.*" (92:5-7) Allah knows best.

Then he mentioned another criterion by which the near and rich thankful rich are known. He said:

**When He provides you with obedience and having no need of other than Him,**

**know that He has bestowed His outward and inward blessings on you.**

Obedience outwardly consists of following the rules of the Shari'a and having no other need inwardly occurs when the reality is witnessed. When you have both obedience in your limbs and are free of other than Him inwardly, He has given you a full measure, i.e. perfected you and granted you inward and outward blessings. These are the marks of the gnostics who are brought near, wealthy by Allah and poor in relation to other than Him. They have no need of other than the One that he worshipped so that they do not see their worship. The One they know distracts them from their knowledge and the One who puts them right distracts them from their own righteousness.

Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan said in his *Hizb al-Kabir*: "We ask You for poverty from what is other than You and wealth by You so that we witness only You." Those are the ones who are rich in Allah and absent in Him from other than Him. Their worship is by Allah, for Allah, and from Allah, showing thankfulness for the blessing and fulfilling the duties of wisdom. In a *hadith*, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is reported to have said, "The slaves who are most beloved of Allah are the hidden wealthy godfearing ones," or words to that effect. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said in another *hadith*, "Wealth does not consist in having a lot of goods. Wealth consists in the wealth (independence) of the self."

That is wealth in Allah, and this is the real blessing. The outward blessing is the adornment of the limbs by the Shari'a and the inward blessing is the shining of the secrets by the reality. It is said that the outward blessings are sufficiency and well-being, and the inward blessings are guidance and gnosis. It is said that the outward blessing is the body having rest from opposition to His commands and the inward is safety from contending with His judgements. The reality of the blessing is that it is something which does not oblige pain and is not followed by regret. It is said that the greatest blessing is to stop seeing the *nafs*. It is said that the blessing is what connects you to the realities and purifies you of attachments to creatures. Success is by Allah.

This is the end of Chapter Eight. To sum up, it is to identify *adab* with divine *waridat* because they are special gifts. Anyone who desires the help of their light must conceal their secrets. Their reward must be deferred to the abode which will abide. It is at that time that his sincerity will be confirmed and his selection manifested, and then he will taste the sweetness of obedience and faith and his value with the King and Judge will be immense. He withdraws in Him from other than Him and so He gives him His full favour. When He makes him wealthy in Him, He makes him have no need of seeking. If you must seek, then seek from Him what He seeks from you, as he indicates in Chapter Nine