

The Unveiling of the Mysteries  
and the Provision of the Pious

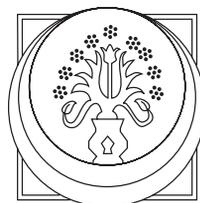
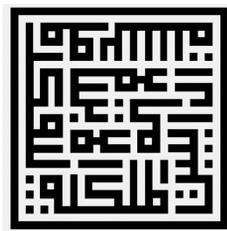


# The Unveiling of the Mysteries and the Provision of the Pious

*Kashf al-Asrār wa 'Uddat al-Abrār*

By  
Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī

SELECTIONS TRANSLATED BY  
William C. Chittick



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## Translator's Introduction

The full name of this commentary is *Kashf al-asrār wa ʿuddat al-abrār* (“The unveiling of the mysteries and the provision of the pious”). It is the longest Sunni commentary in the Persian language, about as long as the longest, pre-modern Persian Shiʿite commentary, *Rawḍ al-jinān wa rawḥ al-janān* (“The meadow of the gardens and the repose of the heart”) by Abuʿl-Futūḥ Rāzī, a contemporary of Maybudī.<sup>1</sup>

Practically nothing is known about Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī, though Annabel Keeler has done her best to come up with information in her important study of his work.<sup>2</sup> The best guess at his full name is Rashīd al-Dīn Abuʿl-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Abī Saʿd ibn Aḥmad ibn Mihr-i Īzād. He was apparently born in the town of Maybud, about fifty kilometers from Yazd in central Iran. Keeler thinks that he followed the Shafiʿite school of law because he usually gives priority to al-Shāfiʿī’s opinion in discussions of legal issues. He shows signs of both Ashʿarism and Hanbalism, so it is not clear if he held to a specific school of Kalam. It seems that he was more concerned to provide a range of exegetical opinions than to state his own position, which helps explain why his statements in one place may seem at odds with what he says elsewhere.

The only thing known about Maybudī’s dates is that he began writing *Kashf al-asrār* in the year 520/1126. Anyone who studies the book will quickly see that he was well-versed in the religious sciences and had a gift for simplifying complex discussions. In an appendix, he talks about the debate among the ulama concerning the legitimacy of the science of Qurʾan commentary and concludes that only those who have mastered ten fields of learning have a right to undertake it. These are lexicography (*luḡha*), the derivation of words (*ishtiḳāq*), Arabic grammar (*naḥw*), Qurʾan recitation (*qirāʾa*), biographies (*siyar*), Hadith, the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl-i fiqh*), the science of the legal rulings (*ʿilm-i aḥkām*), the science of transactions and interactions (*muʿāmalāt*), and the science of bestowal (*mawhibā*).<sup>3</sup> By the last he means knowledge that comes not from study or acquisition (*iktisāb*), but rather from “divine bestowal and lordly inspiration” (*mawhibat-i ilāhī wa ilhām-i rabbānī*; see under 8:29). Most commentaries deal only with some or all of the first nine fields, and a few focus on the tenth, such as those of al-Sulamī, al-Qushayrī, and ʿAbd al-Razzāq Kāshānī. What is distinctive about Maybudī’s work is that he addresses all ten fields. The structure of the book, however, shows that he considered the tenth special enough to be set apart from the others.

Maybudī translates and comments on every verse of the Qurʾan in a series of 465 “sessions” or “sittings” (*majlis*), a term that suggests that he wrote the book as a teacher’s guide for lecturing on the entire Qurʾan. Each session explains a few verses and takes up an average of fourteen pages

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1 *Kashf al-asrār* was printed over a period of several years in the middle of the twentieth century by a famous literary and political figure, ʿAlī Aṣghar Ḥikmat. The edition does not meet the standards of critical scholarship, but the editor did use several manuscripts in preparing it. Some of the volumes have addenda listing errata, most of which are in any case fairly obvious to careful readers; there is also a little book by Aḥmad Mahdawī-Dāmghānī listing additional errata, though these pertain almost entirely to the Arabic parts of the text. There is a downloadable edition of the text, without any changes to the printed version except for a few more typographical errors. In order to maintain reader friendliness I have refrained from noting the many instances in which my translation corrects the printed edition—in most cases, scholars of Persian will immediately see what I have done. On rare occasions I have added a footnote because of a significant deviation from the printed text (e.g., under verses 21:33 and 50:19).

2 *Sufi Hermeneutics: The Qurʾan Commentary of Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

3 Maybudī, *Kashf al-asrār* 10:679.

in the printed edition (which consists of 6400 pages in ten volumes). Every session is then divided into three stages called “turns” (*nawba*). In the first stage Maybudī provides the Arabic text of the Qur’an broken up into phrases and clauses, each of which he translates. In the second stage he offers a fairly standard commentary, relying on sayings of the Prophet, the Companions, and the great early authorities and deriving much of the material from well-known sources. In the third he demonstrates his mastery of the tenth sort of knowledge, that of bestowal and inspiration. Altogether, Stage I takes up 15 percent of the text (990 pages of the Persian text), Stage II 60 percent (3850 pp.), and Stage III 25 percent (1560 pp.).

The selections translated here represent slightly more than one-half of the third stage. The longest consists of two-thirds of the commentary on Surah al-Baqara. I have translated the full text only in the case of al-Fātiha and a handful of short surahs (60, 76, 84, 95, 103, and 113).

Maybudī almost never mentions the sources from which he draws. Keeler has shown that in Stage II he borrows from the well-known commentaries of Mujāhid, Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Ibn Qutayba, and al-Ṭabarī. In Stage III he uses the commentary of al-Qushayrī and sometimes that of al-Sulamī. It is clear that he also used many other books, some of which may no longer be extant, but a great deal of research needs to be done before these can be specified.

Maybudī was a compiler rather than an original thinker. What makes his commentary attractive is its comprehensiveness, its arrangement in stages, and the extent to which it employs Persian rather than Arabic. The very act of using Persian meant that the author was not writing simply for the ulama, all of whom knew Arabic, but also for those not proficient in the sciences. This is especially obvious in Stage III, about eighty percent of which is in Persian (in contrast to Stage II, about half of which is Arabic). In Stage III Maybudī singles out a few verses and explains their “allusions” (*ishāra*) and “intimations” (*ramz*) as these have been discerned by recipients of divine bestowal and lordly inspiration. The Persian idiom is simple, clear, and sweet, with a great deal of story-telling, imagistic language, and poetry (Stage II also quotes poetry, but mainly in Arabic). It is clear that Maybudī did not expect the readers of Stage III to be well versed in the sciences. Rather, he was addressing those who have a personal desire to understand the message and gain proximity to God.

In keeping with the type of commentary that has often been called *ta’wīl* (though Maybudī does not use the word in this sense), Stage III interprets tales of the prophets or mentions of the signs of God in the natural world as references to the inner life of the reader. Thus, for example, the Qur’an may be telling the story of Joseph, but this is a love story, and every soul is called upon to be a lover of God, so the story pertains to each and every one of us. In other words, Maybudī is answering a question that often occurs to readers of the Qur’an: “Well, that may be very interesting, but what does it have to do with me?”

Most of the works from which Maybudī draws in Stage III were written by authors whom the secondary literature associates with “Sufism,” a term I employ for want of a satisfactory alternative. The word has come to be used as a generic designation for an inward orientation among Muslims only in relatively recent times. When used early on, it typically referred to a specific station (*maqām*) on the path to God achieved by a small number of seekers. Other scholars may prefer to talk about Sufism as “mysticism” or “esotericism,” but both of these words carry unfortunate historical and cultural baggage and are by no means adequate to designate the many facets of the Sufi tradition.<sup>4</sup>

In my understanding, Sufism is a broad approach to Islamic learning that can be distinguished from three other broad approaches, namely jurisprudence (*fiqh*), dialectical theology (*kalām*), and philosophy (*falsafa*). Sufi authors often dealt with the same topics that are addressed in the other three fields and acknowledged the legitimacy of those approaches. But they held that in the last analysis the standard sources of knowledge—transmitted reports and rational investigation—are inadequate and need to be supplemented by what Maybudī calls “bestowal.” At the same time, it should be kept in mind that the various approaches to knowledge were by no means mutually exclusive. It was common for a single individual to master them all, as is shown by Maybudī himself

4 Concerning the problems with the word, see Carl Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism* (Boston: Shambhala, 1997); Chittick, *Sufism: A Beginner’s Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008).

or his famous contemporary Muḥammad al-Ghazālī. Indeed, learned scholars like al-Ghazālī often held that being a master of one field of knowledge without having achieved depth in the others was a sure sign of immaturity.

The science of bestowal comes to those who achieve *maʿrifa*, recognition of self and God. Such people are called *ʿārif*, recognizers. These words have typically been translated into English as “gnosis” and “gnostics,” and in many cases these translations are appropriate, but not, I think, in the actual context of classical Islamic texts. One problem is that gnosis calls to mind esotericism, mysticism, and Christian heresy, whereas the Arabic word is associated (especially in hindsight) with many of the greatest minds of the Islamic tradition. A greater problem for a translator, however, is that *maʿrifa* (like its Persian equivalent, *shinākht*) is an everyday word, like recognition in English, and it never raises eyebrows. In the context of the religious sciences, its basic meaning is to “re-cognize,” that is, to come once again to see what one already knows. It is contrasted with the standard word for knowledge and learning, *ʿilm* (Persian *dānīsh*). The basic distinction between the two sorts of knowledge is that recognition is discovered within oneself, but learning is acquired from outside. In much of Islamic literature, recognition is considered to be the realization and actualization of true learning: One comes to see face-to-face what was only known by hearsay and following authority (*taqlīd*). An often quoted *locus classicus* for the use of the term in this sense is the saying of ʿAlī: “He who recognizes himself (or “his soul”) recognizes his Lord.”

Maybudī calls those who have mastered the tenth field of knowledge by many names in addition to recognizers, such as realizers (*muḥaqqiqān*), chevaliers (*jawānmardān*, *fitya*), and the lords or masters of the realities (*ḥaqāʾiq*), of the states (*aḥwāl*), of the meanings (*maʿānī*), and of the heart (*qalb*, *dil*). He designates their divinely bestowed recognition as finding (*wujūd*, *yāft*),<sup>5</sup> contemplation (*mushāhada*), witnessing (*shuhūd*), unveiling (*kashf*), and tasting (*dhawq*). All of this terminology will be familiar to readers of Sufi texts.

Stage III is not limited to discussions that are recognizably Sufi. A great portion of it, as Maybudī mentions in his introduction, is dedicated to “reminder” (*tadhkīr*). The literal meaning of this word is to stir up remembrance (*dhikr*) of God in the hearts of listeners. Someone who occupies himself with *tadhkīr* is called by the word’s active participle, *mudhakkir*, one who calls to remembrance, that is, an admonisher or preacher. Much of Stage III takes the form of reminder, encouraging readers to increase their efforts on the path to God. In contrast Stage II is addressed not to the soul’s innate yearning for happiness and perfection, but rather to the mind’s quest for understanding. In other words, Stage II was written largely for scholars, and Stage III for seekers.

### THEMES OF STAGE III

Like other masters of the science of recognition, Maybudī sometimes offers broad overviews of the Islamic tradition. On occasion he talks of the tradition in terms of three dimensions: submission (*islām*), faith (*īmān*), and beautiful doing (*iḥsān*) or godwariness (*taqwā*).<sup>6</sup> He typically refers to what we would call “Islam” as “the religion” (*dīn*), though he also uses the word religion in a generic sense. Like the Qur’an he uses the word *islām* itself to designate the activity involved in surrendering to God’s guidance and obeying His commands (an activity, the Qur’an insists, that has been shared by all prophets and their true followers). Maybudī rarely if ever uses *islām* in the modern way, as a designation for the whole tradition, so I translate it as “submission” and *muslim* as “submitter.” In contrast I translate the Persian modifications of *muslim*—*musalmān* and *musalmānī*—as “Muslim” and “Islam,” since they do seem to designate this specific religion as contrasted with other religions.

Maybudī also discusses the tradition as a whole using the well-known terms Shariah (*sharīʿa*),

5 Notice the use of the word *wujūd* to mean finding, tasting, realizing for oneself. This is the Qur’anic meaning of the verb and is common in Sufi texts into the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century. Maybudī also uses the word in the philosophical sense, that is, to mean existence (equivalent to being, *ḥastī*).

6 On the Islamic tradition understood in these terms, see Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (New York: Paragon, 1994).

Tariqah (*tarīqa*), and Haqiqah (*ḥaqīqa*). The Shariah or broad path designates the realm of the first nine sciences, those discussed in Stages I and II. The Tariqah or narrow path designates efforts exerted to achieve the realization (*taḥqīq*) of the Reality, the Haqiqah, which is God Himself. Sometimes Maybudī contrasts Shariah with Tariqah, sometimes with Haqiqah, and on occasion he provides a three-tier structure, with Haqiqah as the final goal of the Shariah and the Tariqah understood as complementary paths.

The prominence given to the words Shariah and Tariqah along with other Qur’anic words for path, like *ṣirāt* and *sabīl*, are natural consequences of the fact that the Qur’an presents the religion as a road leading to God. Like any road, it has stages. Traveling from Marv to Mecca before the age of machines took months, and travelers necessarily stopped at many places along the way. Traveling from here to God should not be quite so easy. A characteristic discussion of the Folk of Recognition depicts the stages that must be traversed in order to reach the Haqiqah. The archetype of the road is provided by the Prophet’s night journey (*isrāʾ*), more commonly called the *miʿrāj* or ladder by which he climbed to God and then returned to his community (see the commentary under 17:1 and 53:1-10). Maybudī does not provide a systematic description of the stages of the path, but he frequently discusses prominent Qur’anic virtues and character traits as stages on the journey, and he often explains the order in which they must be actualized by the soul.

Another important discussion throughout the text is that of the human self (*khwud*). As is typical in writings of the Folk of Recognition, Maybudī understands the human self as a reality that is structured in the same way as the external world. The universe can be viewed as having two basic realms: the unseen realm of heaven, which is inhabited by spiritual beings like angels, and the visible realm of earth, which is inhabited by bodily things. In the same way, the human self has an invisible spirit and a visible body. As for the soul (*nafs*), it is neither fully spiritual nor fully bodily, but wavers between the two sides. It becomes more spiritual and luminous by adhering to prophetic guidance, and more bodily and tenebrous by rejecting such guidance. By imitating the Prophet in his *miʿrāj* and following the path toward self-recognition and God-recognition, seekers may pass beyond the limitations of the soul and enter into deeper levels of selfhood, which Maybudī typically calls heart (*qalb*, *dil*), spirit (*rūh*, *jān*), and secret core (*sirr*). (See for example, 2:121, 2:218, 2:223).

### SOURCES OF STAGE III

The subtitle of the printed edition of *Kashf al-asrār* reads, “Known as the Commentary of Khwāja ʿAbdallāh Anṣārī.” Anṣārī (d. 481/1088) was a Hanbalite theologian from Herat in present-day Afghanistan and a great master of simple and elegant Persian prose. Among his many works are *Munājāt* or “Whispered prayers” in Persian and *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn*, “The way stations of the travelers” in Arabic. The latter, a description of one hundred stations on the path to God, is probably the most famous work of its kind. If *Kashf al-asrār* is associated with Anṣārī’s name, this is mainly because Maybudī says in the introduction that he based his book on Anṣārī’s commentary on the Qur’an. This introduction reads as follows (the first paragraph is in Arabic, the second in Persian):

“The best words of gratitude are those that open the Qur’an,” so *Praise belongs to God, the Lord of the Worlds* [1:1] and blessings and peace be upon His messenger Muḥammad and all of his family. So to begin: I studied the book by Shaykh al-Islām, the solitary of his era, the unique of his age, Abū Ismāʿīl ʿAbdallāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Anṣārī, which comments on the Qur’an and unveils its meanings. I saw therein that he had reached the limit of inimitability in words, meanings, realization, and ornamentation, but he did so with extreme concision and by following the road of brevity. The student seeking guidance can barely grasp the goal, and the ardor in the breast of the insightful ponderer cannot be quenched. Hence I desired to spread over it the wing of speech and to let loose within it the reins of the tongue, combining the realities of commentary and the subtleties of reminder, thus making the situation easy for those who busy themselves with this art. I resolved to realize what I intended, and I began, with God’s help, to write down that to which I aspired in the first days of the year

520 [January-February 1126]. I entitled the book *The Unveiling of the Mysteries and the Provision of the Pious*. I hope that this will be a name that corresponds to its content and words that coincide with its meaning. And God is the patron of giving me success to complete it and to realize therein my goal. And He suffices me, an excellent trustee!

My stipulation in this book is that I will make sessions in the successive verses of the Qur'an. In each session I will speak in three turns: First, clear Persian with an allusion to the meaning and with utmost brevity in the expression. In the second turn, I will comment on the aspects of the meanings, the well-known readings, the causes of descent, the explanation of legal rulings, the mention of reports and traditions, the rarities that belong to the verse, the various aspects and likenesses, and other such things. The third turn will contain the intimations of the recognizers, the allusions of the Sufis, and the subtleties of those who provide reminders.

This text says rather explicitly that Maybudī studied a book by Anṣārī. It is unlikely that Maybudī actually met Anṣārī, though he easily could have known some of his students. It is not impossible, though unlikely, that he had in mind a text passed down orally. What exactly he means has been much discussed by historians. At one point it was generally thought that Anṣārī wrote a commentary that was later lost, but it is now known that there is no reference to any such book in the literature. One of the most recent attempts to solve the riddle is by the well-known Iranian scholar, Muḥammad Riḍā Shafi'ī Kadkanī, who thinks that Maybudī has confused Anṣārī with an earlier scholar from Herat to whom a Persian commentary on the Qur'an has been attributed, though no trace of it has yet been found.<sup>7</sup> This is a plausible hypothesis, but, as Kadkanī acknowledges, it cannot be proven without a thorough analysis of the contents of *Kashf al-asrār* and the discovery of at least some portions of the lost commentary.

Whatever the actual situation of the book mentioned by Maybudī, there is no explicit reference to it in the text, though there are many brief quotations from Anṣārī, mostly in Stage III. The text calls him by two names, "Shaykh al-Islām 'Abdallāh Anṣārī" and "the Pir of the Tariqah" (*pīr-i tariqat*, that is, "the elder of the path"), and on occasion by both names together. The majority of the explicit citations take the form of whispered prayers, some of which are known from other sources. Many of the prayers are quoted more than once, often with significant textual variations, so it seems that Maybudī was citing them from memory. In many cases parts of these prayers and sayings are integrated into the text without any mention of Anṣārī. In addition, a number of short passages are borrowed from Anṣārī's Persian book about the stages on the path to God, *Ṣad maydān* ("One hundred fields"), some of them more than once, without any mention of their source. All unascribed borrowings from Anṣārī that I noticed are mentioned in the footnotes.

When we look at the passages from Anṣārī, whether or not they are explicitly ascribed to him, they amount to less than ten percent of Stage III, making Anṣārī a major source. Maybudī almost never mentions any other authors by name. Keeler thinks that the second major Persian source for Stage III "from the point of view of doctrine and mode of expression" is the famous classic on love, *Sawāniḥ* ("Apparitions") by Aḥmad Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), the younger brother of Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, but she can offer no more than one example of an actual quote, along with a handful of quatrains also found in Aḥmad's book.<sup>8</sup> In fact, there is little evidence that Maybudī was influenced by Aḥmad. The "doctrine and mode of expression" were in the air at this period of Islamic history and were also prominent in the Persian works of Anṣārī, which Aḥmad may have seen. These include the short *Maḥabbat-nāma* ("The book of love") and the much longer *Chihil u daw faṣl* ("Forty-two chapters").<sup>9</sup> The same ideas were also present in the Arabic literature of which Maybudī made a great deal of use.

The most important Arabic source of Stage III, as Keeler mentions, seems to be *Laṭā'if al-*

7 Kadkanī names the scholar in question as Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Matt Ishtikhānī, known as the Pir of Herat (a title by which many later scholars call Anṣārī). See Kadkanī, "Pīr-i Harī."

8 Keeler, *Sufi Hermeneutics*, p. 34, n. 137.

9 For passages from both of these works, see my *Divine Love* (index, under Anṣārī).

*ishārāt* (“Subtle allusions”), a seminal commentary on the Qur’an by Abu’l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), author of the famous *Risāla* (“The treatise”), a classic textbook about the Folk of Recognition and their teachings.<sup>10</sup> Al-Qushayrī’s Qur’an commentary is made up of aphoristic sayings on the meaning of verses, sometimes a dozen or more for a given verse. Maybudī often quotes one or more of these, sometimes translating them into Persian and expanding upon them in the process. Sometimes he does not quote the saying but simply translates it, and on other occasions he offers an expanded Persian version. I have noted most of these instances but may have missed a few. Altogether, less seems to be taken from al-Qushayrī than from Anṣārī.

Maybudī often quotes sayings from great teachers and recognizers, like Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī, Junayd, or al-Ḥallāj, but these are taken from sources like the Qur’an commentary of al-Sulamī or *Hilyat al-awliyāʾ* by Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī. The most important single source for Stage III seems to be *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ fī sharḥ asmāʾ al-malik al-fattāḥ* (“The repose of the spirits: Explaining the names of the all-opening king”) by Maybudī’s contemporary Aḥmad ibn Maṣṣūr Samʿānī (d. 534/1140), a scholar from Marv (in today’s Uzbekistan). This is a Persian commentary on the ninety-nine names of God, written with great profundity and remarkable eloquence. Samʿānī died at the age of 46, so he would have been 32 when Maybudī began his commentary in 520/1126. Thus it is likely that Samʿānī had not yet written *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ* when Maybudī began writing. In any case, Maybudī apparently received a copy when he was busy composing the explanation of Surah 16. The first passage borrowed from it that I have found is under verse 16:66. From then on Maybudī quotes from *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ* repeatedly, so much so that the very tenor of the second half of Stage III alters in subtle ways that attentive readers will notice. Again, Maybudī never mentions Samʿānī’s name, nor does he suggest that the borrowed passages are anything but his own words, with the exception of a handful of instances. Interestingly, in at least three cases (under 19:1, 21:89, and 45:5), he attributes passages taken from *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ* to the Pir of the Tariqah, the term by which he typically refers to Anṣārī. He may be using this expression as a generic word—though in that case one would expect him to say “a pir of the Tariqah.” He may also have forgotten where the sayings are coming from, or he may simply be obscuring the source for reasons of his own.

In borrowing passages from earlier books, Maybudī sometimes takes them verbatim, but more often he revises them to fit his own style, always integrating them into the text. In the case of borrowings from Samʿānī, he usually modifies the wording. Samʿānī is given to ornate rhetorical flourishes and numerous asides. Maybudī usually tones down the artistry of the language, replaces unusual Arabic words with more usual Arabic or Persian words, and deletes the digressions, yielding a tighter passage. I try to indicate the nature of the borrowing in my footnotes. “Taken from” means a more or less direct quotation; “derived from” means that the content and much of the wording are based on the source; “based on” means that Maybudī had a specific passage in view but made use of it rather freely.

Every passage I have translated represents the complete text of the Stage III commentary on the verse in question, including the poems that Maybudī frequently cites. Mostly these are Persian or Arabic lines taken from unnamed sources. Tracking down the names of the poets—assuming that the poems are not anonymous—is a task for scholars with a great deal of leisure time on their hands. One important poet from whom Maybudī does cite, probably more than any other, is his contemporary Sanāʾī (d. 525/1131), who is often considered the first of the great Persian poets, to be followed by ʿAṭṭār, Niẓāmī, Rūmī, Saʿdī, and Ḥāfiẓ (and many others, of course, but not quite of the same rank). Frequently but not always Maybudī introduces quotes from Sanāʾī by calling him “that chevalier” (*ān jawānmard*). As noted, he considers chevaliers to stand among the Folk of Recognition. The Persian word, *jawānmard* (literally “young man”), translates Arabic *fatā*, and, as the Prophet said, “There is no *fatā* but ʿAlī.” “Chivalry” (*futuwwa*) is of course an important topic in the history of Sufism.<sup>11</sup> When Maybudī does cite the poetry of Sanāʾī, I indicate the source in

10 For a complete English translation, see Alexander D. Knysh, *Al-Qushayrī’s Epistle on Sufism* (Reading: Garnet, 2007).

11 See Lloyd Ridgeon, *Javanmardi: A Sufi Code of Honour* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

the text with the abbreviation DS, “the Divan of Sanāʿī.”

By no means have I found or attempted to find all the sources of Stage III. I have only listed those that quickly came to hand by reference to books that I was reading anyway, such as *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ* and the works of Anṣārī, or books that were already known to be important, such as al-Qushayrī's commentary.

## THE TRANSLATION

Maybudī has been my commentary of first resort for almost forty years. His explanations of the meanings of verses in Stage II are always comprehensive and concise, and his Stage III explanations, when provided, offer insights difficult to find elsewhere. I had always wanted to read Stage III systematically, but never found an opportunity to do so until I received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 2009 to write a book on love in Islamic thought (which appeared as *Divine Love*). I devoted several months to Maybudī and collected a great deal of material, some of which I used in that book. Prince Ghazi of Jordan got wind of my work and invited me to translate 1000 pages of Maybudī for *altafsir.com*, offering a reasonable deadline, so I took that as a sign that I should spend more time on translating the book.

As noted, the translation covers fifty percent of Stage III. My criteria of selection were personal. The first time I read the text, I chose passages that addressed love explicitly or implicitly, and the second time I translated whatever I found interesting. This is not to say that the rest of Stage III is without interest, simply that it did not attract my attention. God willing, an opportunity will arise to complete the translation, but life is short and the art is long. Let me say in passing that it would be extremely useful for someone to undertake a translation of Stage II, though it would take years of hard work.

In selecting passages, I ignored many that are mainly in Arabic. These often consist of long hadiths and reports (*khābar*) about the prophets or various saintly figures. I left out several passages that are biographical, that is, edifying accounts of the conduct of the Prophet and his Companions. Much of that material would be familiar to readers from other sources, and their presence in Stage III has more to do with the concern of a *mudhakkir* to stir up wonder and love in the hearts of listeners than with any profundity of insight. I also left out many passages because the same ideas are discussed in other passages. Given that the Qur'an repeatedly comes back to many of its themes, it is not surprising that Maybudī often repeats himself, though rarely in exactly the same words. In a few cases I have translated repetitive passages because the overall discussion adds something new.

I have tried to be as consistent as possible in translating words, especially technical terminology. The Glossary provides the Arabic and/or Persian equivalents for many of the important words as well as references to passages in which Maybudī explains their meaning.

I use a good number of English terms that go against the trends of translation from Arabic and Persian, not least in dealing with important Qur'anic words. In the case of the Qur'an I am guided by Maybudī's understanding of the verse (which he makes especially clear in Stage I). For example I translate *ḥusn* and its derivatives as beauty (beautiful, etc.), never “good,” because beauty is the primary connotation and good secondary. Qur'an translators typically waver with this word, translating *ḥasanāt*, for example, as “good deeds,” and *al-asmā' al-ḥusnā* as “the most beautiful names,” whereas consistency would demand “the best names.” Once we recognize that the primary meaning is beauty, we can see that much of the Islamic discussion of “good and evil” does not revolve around morality but rather ontology. “God is beautiful, and He loves beauty,” the Prophet famously said, using the word *jamāl*, which the dictionaries and the tradition consider synonymous with *ḥusn*. The Qur'an says, “*He made beautiful all that He created*” (32:7) and “*We created man in the most beautiful stature*” (95:4). Thus “beautiful deeds,” which can also be translated as “beautiful traits,” are those that correspond with the divine beauty as well as with our own innate, created beauty, whereas ugly deeds and ugly traits (*sayyi'āt*) are those that go against the harmony and balance of creation. In a similar way “wholesome deeds” (*ṣāliḥāt*) are not “righteous,” as most

translators would have it, but whole, harmonious, and balanced acts in conformity with the *fiṭra*, our original created nature. Hence *ṣalāḥ*, wholesomeness, is the Qur'anic opposite of *fasād*, corruption, and the *muḥṣidūn fi'l-ard*, “those who do corruption in the earth,” are those who willfully strive against the wholesomeness and wholeness of God's created order.

In the past I have used “sincerity” to translate *ikhhlās*, and it works fine in most contexts. However, the moment we look at the etymology (as Maybudī does under 2:112), we realize that the root means pure, unmixed, unadulterated. Hence, *ikhhlās* means to purify, to remove the adulteration, to restore to the original state. It is an internal activity of the soul, tightly bound up with *tawḥīd*, the active assertion of God's unity by eliminating the association (*shirk*) of all others (*ghayr*). It is not by accident that Surah 112, al-Ikhlās, is also known as the surah of al-Tawḥīd. As everyone knows and as Maybudī explains on many occasions, *tawḥīd* lies at the heart of Islamic thought and practice. Although “sincerity” might be understood to convey what is meant by *ikhhlās*, the word “self-purification” conveys both the literal sense and the connotation of engagement with the path to God. One of the drawbacks of the word sincerity itself is that nowadays in English it means honesty in expressing one's deep feelings, but these are typically the deep feelings of a self cut off from its divine roots. *Tawḥīd* would be the last thing that “sincerity” calls to mind in the average English-speaking reader. “Self-purification” points us in the right direction.

The use of capitalization in reference to God is always a problem in translation. I have chosen the minimalist route, capitalizing only those words that are clearly employed as divine names. In Qur'anic verses, I translate *al-karīm* as “the Generous” but *karīm* (as a predicate referring to God and without the definite article) as “generous.” For the sake of clarity I use capital letters for pronouns referring to God. In Persian and Arabic the ambiguity of pronouns is often eliminated by adding prayers, such as “He—exalted is His name!—is such and such.”<sup>12</sup> In addition to the usual Arabic names of God, Maybudī uses a host of Persian words, some of which were already well established and some of which never caught on; these I do not capitalize unless they are used as proper names, for example in supplications.

Generally in translating Arabic technical terms I try to use English words of a more abstract nature, typically derived from Latin and Greek, whereas I use the everyday words of largely Anglo-Saxon origin for non-technical and most Persian words. This reproduces the feel of Arabic words in the midst of Persian sentences, though many of them are so domesticated that it would be inappropriate to use a heavy English word.

## HOW TO READ THE COMMENTARY

Qur'an commentaries are typically used as reference books. One dips into them when in need of explanation of a verse's meaning. Serious students may go further and undertake the careful reading of the commentary on a whole chapter. I can hardly imagine anyone sitting down and reading the commentary of al-Ṭabarī or Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī from cover to cover, especially these days when people have little time for serious study. Nor would the typical Sufi commentary—such as al-Sulamī or al-Qushayrī—lend itself to easy reading. Both are composed largely of aphoristic sayings, and deciphering any given aphorism can demand a great deal of knowledge of the tradition as well as leisurely reflection on what the author may have had in mind.

The present commentary can certainly be used as a reference book, but it explains relatively few verses, and only half of the text is translated, so readers will probably find that most of the time, the desired verse is not explained. They should not give up at this point, however, because Maybudī is constantly quoting other verses to throw light on any given verse, so the next step would be to look at the Index of Qur'anic Verses.

This having been said, I suggest that the best way to read *Kashf al-asrār* is from cover to cover, or simply to dip into it anywhere. As commentary goes, it is light reading, with plenty of anecdotes and ample explanation of points. Moreover, one can rarely predict, on the basis of the

12 I almost never translate these interjectionary prayers, unless they add something to the meaning. As often as not (as I have observed in studying manuscripts), they were added by copyists.

literal meaning of the verse, the direction in which Maybudī will take the discussion. As a reference book, this commentary falls well short, but as a readable introduction to the riches of Islamic spirituality, it has few equals.

Even when Maybudī comments on two different verses that cover the same ground, he never repeats himself exactly and usually offers additional insights into the meaning. As an extreme example, one can mention the fact that he (like al-Qushayrī), offers a different explanation for every single instance of the formula “In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.” I have translated 25 of these (surahs 1, 5, 6, 10, 15, 18, 36, 38, 40, 41, 44, 50, 51, 53, 54, 60, 74, 76, 77, 78, 84, 95, 101, 103, 112).

William C. Chittick  
Mount Sinai, NY  
March 15, 2014



# THE COMMENTARY

## Abbreviations

DS. The divan of Sanā'ī.

KA. Maybudī, *Kashf al-asrār*.

LI. Qushayrī, *Laṭā'if al-ishārāt*.

RA. Sam'ānī, *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ fī sharḥ asmā' al-malik al-fattāḥ*.

## Surah 1: al-Fātiḥa

### 1:1 *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

In terms of allusion and in keeping with the tasting of the lords of recognition, the *bi* of *bism* [*“In the name”*] alludes to the “splendor” [*bahāʿ*] of Unity, the *s* to the “brilliance” [*sanāʿ*] of the Self-Sufficient, and the *m* to the “kingship” [*mulk*] of the Divinity. His splendor is self-standing, His brilliance self-sustaining, and His kingship everlasting. His splendor is eternal, His brilliance generous, His kingship tremendous. His splendor is with majesty, His brilliance with beauty, His kingship without decline. His splendor steals the heart, His brilliance increases love, His kingship has no annihilation.

O You whose majesty runs before all that is beautiful!  
O You whose perfection is far from deficiency’s blight!  
Venus rejoices on hearing Your music,  
the sun is jealous on seeing Your beauty.

*B* is His kindness [*birr*] to His servants, *s* His secret [*sirr*] with His friends, *m* His favor [*minna*] toward His yearners. If not for His kindness, how could the servant make ready for His secret? If not for His favor, how could the servant reach union with Him; how could the servant find a place at the threshold of His majesty? If not for the beginningless affection, how could the servant be endlessly familiar?

How could water and clay have the gall to love You  
had You not chosen them with Your beginningless gentleness?  
Love is Your Essence, O God, this is the friends’ belief—  
remembering Your description, O Lord, dispels the sorrow of the sorrowful! [DS 211]

This world is goodly only through His name, the afterworld goodly only through His pardon, and the Garden goodly only through His vision. If not for the message and name of God in this world, how could it be the servant’s home? If not for His pardon and generosity in the afterworld, the servant’s work would be difficult. If not for the heart-brightening vision of Him in paradise, what would make a poor man happy?

One of the pirs of the Tariqah said, “O God, we see through Your marks, we live in Your recognition, we flourish through Your name, we are happy in Your remembrance, we are joyful through finding You. It is we who are drunk with love from Your cup, we who are prey to passion in Your snare.”

Your perfumed chain is my heart’s snare,  
Your ambergris breeze enslaves my heart.  
Since the sermon of Your passion was read in my name,  
you’d say the whole world follows my heart’s pleasure.

*In the name of God.* It has been said that *name* [*ism*] derives from “brand” [*sima*]. In other words, he who says “*In the name of God*” receives that stamp and is marked by that brand.

Be the elect servant of the king—with his brand  
you’re safe from police by day and patrols by night.  
He who finds a name finds it from His threshold.  
Be one of His, brother—don’t worry about anyone else.

‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā said, “When the servant says, ‘*In the name of God,*’ its meaning is ‘I have branded myself with the brand of my Lord.’ O Lord, I have Your brand and am happy with it, but I lament at my own being. O Generous One, remove my being from before me, so that Your being may set all my work aright.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, when Your light lit the lamp of recognition, my heart increased. When Your testimony became my spokesman, my voice increased. When Your proximity lit the lamp of ecstasy, my aspiration increased. When Your desire put my work in order, my effort increased. When Your being set my work aright, my being increased. O God, what have I seen from my own being other than trial and trouble? From Your being all is bestowal and loyalty. O You who are apparent in kindness and plain in generosity, take what I have done as not done. Do as is fitting for You!”

Someone may say, “In the texts of the Book and the Sunnah God’s names are many, and all of them are great, beginningless, pure, and beautiful. What wisdom is there in beginning the tremendous Qur’an with these three? Of all of them, why did He choose these and not add any others?”

The answer is that He chose these three names and confined Himself to them for the sake of two meanings: First so that His servants’ work in His names would be easy and their reward would in no way be decreased. He knew that they do not have the capacity to remember and memorize all of His many names. Even if there are some who can do that, most cannot, and they would remain in regret at not doing it. Hence He combined the meanings of those names in these three names. Their meanings are of three sorts: one sort belongs to majesty and awe, another to blessing and nurture, and the third to mercy and forgiveness. All that is majesty and awe is placed in the name *God*, all that is blessing and nurture is in the name *All-Merciful*, and all that is mercy and forgiveness is in the name *Ever-Merciful*. Thus it is easy for the servant to say them. His rewards will be many, and God’s clemency and mercy are boundless.

The second reason is that the Lord of the Worlds sent Muṣṭafā to the creatures, and at that time the creatures were three groups: idol-worshippers, Jews, and Christians. The idol-worshippers knew something of the Creator’s name *God* and this name was famous among them. That is why He says, “*If thou wert to ask them, ‘Who created the heavens and the earth?’ they would say, ‘God!’*” [31:25]. Among the Jews, the name *All-Merciful* was recognized. That is why ‘Abdallāh ibn Salām said to God’s Messenger, “I do not see a name in the Qur’an that we were reading in the Torah.”

He said, “And what is that?”

He said, “The All-Merciful.”

Then God sent down, “*Call upon God or call upon the All-Merciful*” [17:110].

Among the Christians the recognized name was the *Ever-Merciful*. Since these three groups were being addressed and these three names were recognized among them, God sent down these three names at the beginning of the Qur’an in keeping with their knowledge and perception, and He did not add any to them.

As for the wisdom in beginning with *God*, then the *All-Merciful*, then the *Ever-Merciful*, it is this: He sent this down in keeping with the states of the servants, who have three states—first creation, then nurturing, and finally forgiveness. *God* alludes to creation at the beginning through power, *All-Merciful* alludes to nurturing through the continuity of blessings, and *Ever-Merciful* alludes to forgiveness at the end through mercy. It is as if God said, “First I created through power, then I nurtured through blessings, and at last I forgave through mercy.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, Your name is our permit and Your love our equipage. You are our security and we see Your gentleness face-to-face. O God, Your bounty is our banner and Your embrace our refuge. O God, You are the shelter of the weak and await the strivers at road’s end. You witness the faithful—what if You add and do not take away? O God, exalted is he whom You want! If he flees, You come into the road for him. Blessed is he to whom You belong—will You indeed ever be ours?”

**1:2 Praise belongs to God, the Lord of the Worlds.**

This is praise of the lovingly kind God, the Creator who provides daily provisions, the One in name and mark, the Lord who is found without seeking, recognized without being found, loved without being seen. He is powerful without contrivance, self-standing without the changing of states, safe from decline in kingship, transcendent in essence and attribute, without beginning and end, described by the description of majesty and the attribute of beauty. He saw the servants' incapacity to recognize His measure and He knew that as much as they tried, they would not arrive. As much as they hoped, they would not recognize. The exalted Qur'an gives witness to their incapacity: "*They measured not God with the rightful due of His measure*" [6:91]. In the perfection of His exaltedness, majesty, and holiness, He made them His deputies in laudation of Him, taught them how to praise Him, and gave them permission to do so. Otherwise, who would dream of saying "*Praise belongs to God*" if He had not said it Himself? Who in the whole world would have the gall to say, "*Praise belongs to God*"?

Her own face has itself as a moon,  
her own eye has itself as collyrium.

\*

Who knows You? It is You who know You, You.  
No one knows You—You alone know You.

O worthy of Your own laudation, O giver of thanks for Your own bestowal! In my essence I am incapable of Your service, and with my own intellect I am incapable of recognizing Your favor. In my entire self I am incapable of joy in You, and with my own ability I am incapable of what is worthy for You. O Generous! I am seized by the pain whose cure is You. I am a servant of the laudation that is worthy of You. What do I know of You? You know. You are what You said You are—that is You.

Know also that praise is two sorts: one at seeing blessings, the other at seeing the Beneficent. That which is at seeing blessings extols Him, puts His blessings to work through obedience, and girds up the loins in thanking Him so as to increase blessings today and convey to paradise tomorrow. Thus the Prophet said, "The first to be called to the Garden will be those who fully praise God in every state." This is the final end of him whose praise is at seeing blessings.

As for him whose praise is at seeing the Beneficent, the tongue of his state says,

"Poverty did not drive us from the land of our kinsmen—  
we came to find happiness at encountering You.

\*

"O idol, we didn't come to look at the world!"

Such a chevalier was given the wine of yearning and shamed by mutual seeing until he was annihilated from himself. He heard one, he saw one, he reached one. What did he hear? What did he see? What did he reach? He heard the remembrance of the Real, he saw the lamp of familiarity, he reached the First Day. He heard the response of gentleness, he saw the signet of friendship, and he reached the friendship of the Beginningless. The chevalier first found the mark and lost his heart, then was given access and became all heart, then saw the Friend and became lost in the heart.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "The two worlds became lost in friendship, and friendship became lost in the Friend. Now I cannot say that it is I, nor can I say that it is He."

I have an eye, all of it filled with the form of the Friend.  
Happy am I with my eye so long as the Friend is within it.  
Separating the eye from the Friend is not good—  
either He's in place of the eye, or the eye itself is He.

*The Lord of the Worlds*, that is, the nurturer of the world's folk and the one who assigns their daily provision. The portion of one is the nurture of the body, the portion of another the nurture of the

heart. He is nurturer of one person's body with blessings, nurturer of another's heart with the Patron of Blessings. Blessings are the portion of him who does not put aside struggle in service. The mystery of the Patron of Blessings is the portion of him whose hope is to see Him. Wanting to see the Friend is the attribute of the Men. Who is more victorious than he who sees the Friend face-to-face?

Great is the aspiration of the eye that wants to see You—  
is it not enough for an eye that You see him who sees You?

The nourishment of the friends' hearts, which they put to work as the nurture of their spirit and which is conveyed to them night and day from the Exalted Presence, is what was said by the world's paragon: "I spend the night at my Lord; He gives me to eat and drink."

He did not eat delicious foods and clear, filtered drinks, and he said to others, "Beware of blessings, for servants should not be self-indulgent."

They said to him, "Master, why do you not eat?"

He said, "I have been made so drunk by the wine of observing togetherness that I have no concern for your filtered drink." One hundred twenty-four thousand center points of sinlessness charged forth to his secluded cell so that perhaps they might find a draft of that wine. He showed them the back of his hand, saying, "I have a moment with God embraced by no proximate angel, nor any sent prophet." It was said, "This drink is specific to him in whose road the Greatest Signs were disclosed to his eyes, but he stayed with this courtesy: '*The eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass*'" [53:17].

O You whose visage is everyone's gazing place!  
All have fallen in the road before You.  
O Venus of the cities and moon of all!  
Your beauty takes away everyone's shine and rank.

*The Lord of the Worlds.* In other words, He nurtures the souls of the worshipers with confirmation, He nurtures the hearts of the pure with intensification, and He nurtures the states of the recognizers with *tawhīd*.<sup>1</sup> When someone has been nurtured by way of *tawhīd*, what use to him is the foodstuff of the world's folk?

When a viper strikes someone's liver  
they give him the antidote, not candy.

The world's folk want food, but food wants these chevaliers. °Utbat al-Ghulām was the student of Yazīd Hārūn. He commanded him not to eat dates. One day °Utba's mother went to see Yazīd Hārūn and saw him eating dates. She said, "Why then do you hold my son back from them while you eat them?"

Yazīd said, "Your son wants dates, but dates desire me. They are allowed for me, but not for him."

The creatures of the world want paradise, but paradise wants Salmān, as in the report: "Surely the Garden is yearning for Salmān." Therefore He will not give him to paradise tomorrow, for He will pass him over the Fire and set him down in the Presence of Unity at the station of face-to-face vision. "The patient poor will be God's sitting companions on the Day of Resurrection." If you want this day, come outside of yourself like a snake from its skin. Do not approve of anything for yourself but His threshold, for the settledness of the hearts of His friends is the courtyard of holiness.

You need to have °Adhrā's face and to sit at Wāmiq's door,  
you need to have Abū Dardā's passion and go forth like Salmān. [DS 482]

### **1:3 *The All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.***

He is *the All-Merciful* inasmuch as He vivifies, *the Ever-Merciful* inasmuch as He displays. The

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<sup>1</sup> The sentence is from LI 1:58.

vivification is through acts of kindness, the display through lights.<sup>2</sup>

He is the *All-Merciful* who eases the road of wage-earning, the *Ever-Merciful* who lights up the candle of friendship in the road of the friends. The wage-earner is always toiling in hope of hours and palaces, the friend is inundated by light in the sea of face-to-face vision.

The day I reach union with You  
I will disdain the state of the paradise-dwellers.

He is *the All-Merciful* who gives the strivers the success of struggle, and *the Ever-Merciful* who gives the finders the realization of contemplation. The former is the state of the desirer, the latter the state of the desired. The desirer goes forth with the lamp of success and reaches contemplation, the desired goes forth with the candle of realization and reaches face-to-face vision. Contemplation is the lifting of the barriers between the servant and the Real, face-to-face vision seeing each other such that the servant does not become absent for a moment: He gazes at love with the eye of response, he gazes at the Present with the eye of presence, he gazes at the Solitary with the eye of solitude. Through distance from himself he becomes near to His nearness, through losing himself he becomes familiar with His apparentness, through absence from himself he becomes present with His generous presence. For He is not far from the strivers, nor lost by the seekers, nor absent from the desirers.<sup>3</sup>

Have mercy on the creatures' hearts and come out from the veil  
so that the seventy-two creeds may end their disputes.

#### **1:4 *The owner of the Day of Doom.***

This alludes to the permanence of the kingship of unity and the subsistence of the all-compellingness of the divinity. In other words, the day of every king's empire ends and disappears, his kingship finishes, and his state changes. But God's kingship is permanent, today and tomorrow, for it never comes to an end or disappears. In the two worlds nothing and no one is outside of His kingship and ruling power. No one has a kingship like His kingship. Today He is the Lord of the Worlds and tomorrow the Owner of the Day of Doom, and none of the creatures is like this.

How wonderful! How can the servant do anything? For in the two worlds, ownership and kingship are God's, without associate, partner, requirement, or need. So where is the servant's choice? He who has no ownership has no ruling power. *And thy Lord creates what He wants and chooses. They have no choice* [28:68].

It has been said that *doom* here is reckoning and reward. He is saying, "The owner and caretaker of calling the servants to account am I." Thus no one else will become aware of the servants' defects, lest they be shamed. Even though calling to account is itself to drive home severity, not lifting the veil during the accounting is nothing but generosity. He wants to show generosity after He drives home severity. This is the custom of God: Whenever he strikes a blow of severity, He places on it the balm of generosity.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "Tomorrow at the standing place of calling to account, if I have anything and there is place to speak, I will say, 'Lord God, of the three things that I have, look at one of them: First, a prostration that has never wanted anything but a heart for You; second, an assent such that whatever You said, I said was true; third, a spirit and heart that have never wanted anything but You ever since the wind of generosity rose up.'"

I have no wish but serving Your face—  
I want no breath without You.

#### **1:5 *Thee alone we worship, and Thee alone we ask for help.***

This alludes to two of the religion's great pillars, around which revolves the traveling of the re-

<sup>2</sup> LI 1:59.

<sup>3</sup> This paragraph and the last sentence of the previous paragraph are based on *Ṣad maydān*, nos. 97-98 (331-32).

ligious. The first is to adorn the soul through worship and self-purification. It is to keep oneself adorned with a worship that has no eye-service and an obedience that has no hypocrisy. The other is to purify the soul of associating others with God and of paying attention to power and strength. It is to purify one's own soul, to keep it cleansed of associationism and corruption, and not to depend on one's own power and strength.

“Adornment” alludes to everything in the Shariah that ought to be, and “purification” alludes to everything in the Shariah that ought not to be.

Look carefully at these two short words: When someone's heart has familiarity and brightness, he will understand from them all the laws of the religion. The words of Muṣṭafā will be verified for you: “I was given the all-comprehensive words and my speech was made very concise.”

*Thee alone we worship.* It has been said that this is sheer *tawḥīd*, and that it is the belief that nothing other than God is worthy of worship. The worshiper knows that lordhood is fitting for God and that He is an object of worship without peer, for He is unique and one.

*And Thee alone we ask for help.* This is an allusion to the recognition of the recognizers. It is recognizing that He is solitary in all acts and that the servant cannot get along by himself without His help. The root of this *tawḥīd* and the basis of this recognition is that you recognize the Real's being and oneness; then His ability, knowledge, and loving kindness; then His beautiful doing, friendship, and nearness. The first is the foundation of the submission, the second the foundation of faith, the third the foundation of self-purification.

The road of the first recognition is to see the governance of the Artisan in loosening and tying the artifacts. The road of the second recognition is to see the wisdom of the Artisan in oneself and to recognize the correspondences. The road of the third recognition is to see the gentleness of the Patron in doing deeds and putting aside sins. This is the playing field of the recognizers, the alchemy of the lovers, and the path of the elect.<sup>4</sup>

Someone may ask, “What is the wisdom in putting the words *Thee alone* at the beginning? Why did He not say, ‘We worship Thee’? That would be more concise and have the same meaning.”

The answer is this: This is God's alerting the servant that he should not let anything come before God. When he looks, he should look from God to himself, not from himself to God. He should look from God to his own worship, not from his own worship to God.

The Pir of the Tariqah, Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī, said, “It is thus that the recognizer finds seeking from finding, not finding from seeking. He finds the cause from the meaning, not the meaning from the cause. The obedient person finds obedience from self-purification, not self-purification from obedience. The disobedient person finds disobedience from chastisement, not chastisement from disobedience.”

The reason for this is that the traveler has gone forth from what has preceded him—neither ability nor incapacity is in his hands. No one can get ahead of God in any deed. Anyone who fancies that he can get ahead of God knows nothing of God. This is why Muṣṭafā said to Abū Bakr when they were in the cave, “*Grieve not; surely God is with us*” [9:40]. He put the remembrance of the Worshipped One at the front and observed the courtesy of the address. Hence he was more excellent than Moses who said, “*Surely with me is my Lord*” [26:62]. Moses looked from himself to God, and Muṣṭafā looked from God to himself. The latter is the center point of togetherness, and the former dispersion itself. How different they are!

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “They should look from Him to Him, not from self to Him, for the eyes belong to what they saw at first and the heart to the first Friend.”

### **1:6 Guide us on the straight path.**

This is the wellspring of worship and the marrow of obedience. It is the supplication, asking, pleading, and imploring of the faithful. It is seeking straightness and firm fixity in the religion. It means: “Lead us to this path, make us travel upon it, and make us firm in it.”

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<sup>4</sup> This paragraph and most of the previous paragraph are derived from *Ṣad maydān*, no. 75 (314-15),

The faithful are saying, “O God, show us Your road, then make us go forth on the road, then take us from traveling to being pulled.” These are the three great roots: first showing, then traveling, then being pulled.

Showing is what the Exalted Lord says in “*He it is who shows you His signs*” [40:13]. Traveling is what He says in “*You shall surely ride stage after stage*” [84:19]. Being pulled is what He says in “*We brought him near as a confidant*” [19:52].

Muṣṭafā asked God for showing. He said, “O God, show us things as they are.” About traveling he said, “Travel! The solitary will be the preceders.” About being pulled he said, “One attraction of the Real is equivalent to all the deeds of jinn and men.”

In this verse, the faithful ask for all three of these from God, for not everyone who sees the road travels the road, and not everyone who travels the road reaches the destination. Many there are who hear but do not see, many there are who see but do not recognize, and many there are who recognize but do not find.

Many a prayerful shaykh has fallen from his steed!

Many a tavern-goer has saddled up a lion! [DS 110]

Concerning His words, “*Guide us,*” it has been said, “Cut off our secret cores from witnessing the others, display in our hearts the dawning lights, isolate our intentions from the defilement of traces, take us beyond the way stations of seeking and inference to the courtyards of proximity and union, prevent us from taking repose in likenesses and shapes by treating us with the gentleness of finding union, and unveil to us thereby the witnessing of majesty and beauty.”<sup>5</sup>

**1:7 *The path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those who incur wrath, nor of the misguided.***

It has been said that this is the road and traveling of the Companions of the Cave. The faithful want to say, “O Lord, complete for us our road without us, just as You were bountiful toward the Companions of the Cave and placed Your caress upon them. You placed them on the cushion of intimacy and You Yourself undertook to pull them. You said, ‘Go into this cave and sleep well, for We have taken your sleep to be as the worship of the world’s folk.’ O Lord, give us a portion of that blessing and caress! Just as You with Your bounty completed their work without them, so also with Your bounty complete our work without us. For, whatever we do is to our loss, and whatever You do is the foundation of exaltedness in the two worlds.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, we cannot complete this work without You, nor do we have the gall to complete it away from You. Whenever we fancy we have arrived, we fall back in the bewilderment of our account. O Lord, where will we find again that day when You belonged to us and we were not? Until we reach that day again, we will be in the midst fire and smoke. If we find that day again in the two worlds, we will profit. If we find Your being for ourselves, we will be pleased with our own nonbeing.”

It has also been said, “*Those whom Thou hast blessed* with the submission and the Sunnah.” He tied the submission and the Sunnah together because, as long as the two are not joined, the servant will not have the straightness of the religion. It is mentioned in the traditions that Shāfi‘ī said, “I saw the Real in a dream. He said to me, ‘Ask a favor of me, O son of Idrīs!’ I said, ‘Make me die in the submission.’ God said, ‘Say, “And in the Sunnah.” Ask for both from Me.’”

This is because there is no submission without the Sunnah, and whatever is with the Sunnah is the true religion. Hence Muṣṭafā said, “There are no words without deeds, no words and deeds without intention, and no words, deeds, and intention without hitting the mark in the Sunnah.”

It has been said that the submission is like a spring of water. Trees have no escape from a spring of water, and in the same way the submission has no escape from the Sunnah. Every breast that comes to be adorned with the exaltedness of the submission has become a place where the light of the Sunnah has appeared to the submission. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, “*Is he*

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5 LI 1:62.

*whose breast God has expanded for the submission, so he is upon a light from his Lord...*" [39:22]. It has been said that this is the light of the Sunnah.

It has come in the reports that tomorrow at the gathering place of the resurrection and the assembly of harshness, when the folk of the seven heavens and the seven earths are mustered, everyone's feet will be stuck in his own deeds, his head thrown down, helpless in his own work, confounded and bewildered, falling and getting up, thirsty and naked. All at once a fragrant and perfumed person will stroll out from the hiding places of the Unseen and disclose himself. The breeze of that fragrance will reach the nostrils of the folk of felicity. Everyone will become sweet smelling and will rejoice. They will say, "Lord God, what fragrance and comfort is this? What beauty and perfection is this?" The address will come, "This is the face of the beauty of Our Messenger's Sunnah. Whoever was a follower of the Sunnah in the house of the decree, I give him permission to set the foot of security in the pavilion of his exaltedness. Whoever was a stranger to the Sunnah in that house—I will send him down to the Fire. I will give him over to hell, for today also he is stranger and rejected."

Become a Sunni and keep to the religion so that you may live,  
for everything but the religion is death, all but the Sunnah is grief. [DS 489]

*Not of those who incur wrath, nor of the misguided.* O Lord, do not make us be among those whom You have turned over to themselves so that they have been wounded by the sword of separation and fastened by the nail of rejection.

Indeed, what burden can be pulled by a broken rope? What use is the striving of an unworthy servant, living in estrangement? Today he has fallen from the road and fancied the crooked road to be straight. Tomorrow the tree of despair will give fruit and disowned individuals will appear. The crier of justice will let out the call of disowning: "*Their effort was misguided in the life of this world, and they were reckoning that they were doing beautiful artisanry*" [18:104].

I said, "My luck has gone beyond the highest summit,  
my kingdom's throne is like that of Solomon."  
When I measured myself in the scale of intelligence,  
my bags were more empty than the storehouses of the lowly.

Let us now conclude the Surah of Praise with one of the subtle points of the religion. Know that this surah is called "the key to the Garden." It is the key to paradise because the gates of paradise are eight, and the opening of each door is specific to one sort of knowledge from the Qur'an. Unless you learn these eight sorts and unless you believe in them, the doors will not be opened to you. The Surah of Praise comprises those eight sorts that are the keys of paradise.

First is the mention of the Lord's Essence: *Praise belongs to God, Lord of the Worlds*. Second is the mention of the attributes: *the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful*. Third is the mention of the acts: *Thee alone we worship*. Fourth is the mention of the Return: *And Thee alone we ask for help*. Fifth is the mention of the purification of the soul from blights: *Guide us on the Straight Path*; and sixth is the adornment of the soul with good deeds. Both this adornment and that purification are clarifications of the Straight Path. Seventh is the mention of the states of the friends and God's approval of them: *The path of those whom Thou hast blessed*. Eighth is the mention of the states of the estranged and the Lord's wrath toward them: *Not of those who incur wrath, nor of the misguided*.

Each of these eight sorts of knowledge, by reason of the reports and traditions, is one of the doors of paradise, and all are found in this surah. Hence, if someone recites this surah with self-purification, the doors of the eight paradises will be opened to him—today the paradise of recognition, and tomorrow the paradise of approval in the neighborhood of the All-Merciful. "There will be nothing between them and gazing upon their Lord except the mantle of magnificence on His face in the Garden of Eden." This is a sound report from the Prophet.

## Surah 2: al-Baqara

### 2:1 *Alif lām mīm.*

Addressing one another with individual letters is one of the customs of lovers in their love. These are the lovers' secrets with each other so that no one watching will be aware.

Between them lovers have a secret not disclosed  
by word, nor does creation have a pen to record it.

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Of the sort of hidden message that He gave  
not one will be given up for a hundred thousand lives.

In the scroll of friendship there is the imprint of a script whose interpretation none but the passionate read. In the secluded cell of friendship, there is mystery between friends whose murmur none but the recognizers know. In the picture-gallery of friendship there is a color of colorlessness that none but the enraptured have the eyes to see.

If you want to see the beauty of the beloved's face,  
blind the eyes of your head and look with the eye of your intellect! [DS 495]

Though Moses heard a thousand words in a thousand languages, this mystery was given over to Muḥammad in the seclusion of *Or closer* [53:9] on the carpet of expansiveness: "*Alif.*"

I said to her, "Halt [*qifī*]." She said, "*qāf.*"<sup>1</sup>

Those thousands of words came to Moses, but the veil stayed in place. This mystery came to Muḥammad at the moment of face-to-face vision. Moses heard the words but did not see the Speaker, Muḥammad heard the mystery while gazing on the Keeper of the Mystery. Moses in seeking was delighted with the seeking; Muḥammad in the Presence was delighted with the Friend. Moses had not found the pleasure of contemplation, so he did not know its taste. He had not gone beyond listening and remembering; his repose was in hearing, which is why He spoke so much to him. But Muḥammad had gone beyond the limit of hearing to the center point of togetherness. The jealousy of the Remembered did not leave him in the remembrance and the wave of light lifted him up from love, so remembrance became lost in the Remembered and love in the Light. The spirit was lost in face-to-face vision, and face-to-face vision is far from explication. When a heart finds delight in His grasp and is inundated by face-to-face vision, what will it do with reports? When the spirit rests in the embrace, why should it busy itself with much remembrance?

For him who must have face-to-face vision, reports are the bane.

Why would a heart alone with face-to-face vision cling to reports? [DS 110]

It has been said that *Alif lām mīm* caresses the paragon of the world in the tongue of allusion. It means, "Isolate [*afrīd*] your secret core for Me, loosen [*layyin*] your limbs in My service, and stand [*aqim*] with Me, effacing your own traces and gaining proximity to Me!" O Master, pass all at once

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1 This Arabic hemistich is often cited to show that the Arabs used letters to make allusions. Qushayrī (LI 1:66) cites it in the passage from which Maybudī is drawing here. He explains: "She did not say, 'I have halted,' thus curtaining from the onlooker, nor did she say, 'I will not halt,' out of consideration for the lover's heart. No, rather, she said, '*qāf.*'"

beyond the curtain of Gabriel's intermediacy so that the attribute of passion may pull off the mask of inaccessibility and show you the wonders of the Treasuries and the pearls of the Unseen that He has prepared for you.

If Gabriel bothers you there, spill his blood—  
pay Gabriel's blood-price from mercy's treasure. [DS 592]

O paragon, take one step outside of dust so that, when face-to-face vision gives you access, you will be all set and released from others. O paragon, what those chevaliers [the Companions of the Cave] drank down in sleep over three hundred nine years—drink it down in one moment in wakefulness, for the house is empty, and the Friend is yours.

It's night, there's wine, and the lover's alone—  
get up and come, pretty idol, for tonight is our night.

It has been said that *alif* is an allusion to "I" [*ana*], *lām* to "My" [*lī*], and *mīm* to "from Me" [*minnī*].

I: It is I who am the Lord, I who join with the servant in love. I am the light of the name and the light of the message. I am the *repose and ease* [56:89] of hearts, I am the intimacy and rest of spirits.

My: Whatever was, is, and will be is all My kingdom and property, decreed by My prescription and subjugated to My determination. That which overpowers it is My command, that which penetrates into it is My will. It has its being by My keeping, it is preserved by My help.

From Me: Whatever has come has come from My power, whatever has gone forth has gone forth from My knowledge, whatever has been has been from My decree.

All this is to admonish the servants: "You should dismiss your own intellect and knowledge so that you may reap the fruit. Leave the work to Me so that you may take a portion. Keep your service limpid so that you may gain access. Take veneration as your companion so that you may be worthy of the gateway. Sit upon the mount of love so that you may quickly reach the Presence. Keep your aspiration one-pointed so that you may look first upon the Friend."

The Pir of the Tariqah, the beauty of the Folk of the Haqiqah, Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī, has some fine words in unveiling the mysteries of *alif* and removing its curtain of obscurity. He said, "*Alif* is the imam of the letters and is well-known among the letters. *Alif* does not join with the other letters, but the other letters join with *alif*. *Alif* has no need of the other letters, but all the other letters need *alif*. *Alif* is straight. At first it is one, and at last one. It has one color, but words are many-colored. *Alif* is the cause of recognition, but its straightness does not accept any cause. In the place where it finds a place, no other letter finds a place, but each letter has a known station in the tablet. In reality it is together, but in gazing it is separate. It descends into each of the stations of the one, so all are one, and duality is unreal."

It has also been said that each letter is a lamp lit from the Greatest Light. Each is a sun risen from the east of the Haqiqah that has advanced to the heaven of jealousy. All the attributes of the creatures and the opacities of mortal man are the veil of that light. As long as the veil is in place, hoping to find the light is an error.

The bride of the Qur'an will throw off her veil  
once she sees the kingdom of faith empty of tumult. [DS 52]

## **2:2 This is the writing in which there is no doubt, a guidance for the godwary.**

It has been said that *This is the writing* is an allusion to what God has written against Himself for Muḥammad's community: "Surely My mercy takes precedence over My wrath." God does that in His words, "*Your Lord has written mercy against Himself*" [6:54]. It has also been said that it is an allusion to the faith and recognition that God has written upon the hearts of the believers. Thus He says, "*He wrote faith in their hearts*" [58:22].

In this verse, it is as if God is saying, "My servant, I have written the imprint of faith in your heart, I have mixed in the perfume of friendship, I have decorated paradise for you, I have adorned

your heart with the light of recognition, I have lit up the candle of union with Me, I have stamped the seal of love on your heart, and I have written the inscription of passion in your awareness.”

“*He wrote faith in their hearts*: I wrote in the Tablet, but I wrote only your description. I wrote in your hearts, but I wrote only My description. I wrote your description in the Tablet, and I showed it to Gabriel. I wrote My description in *your* heart—how could I have shown it to an enemy? In the Tablet I wrote your loyalty and disloyalty; in your heart I wrote laudation and recognition. What I wrote about you has not changed. How could what I wrote about Myself change? Moses carved out a stone from the mountain, and, when I wrote the Torah therein, the stone turned into emerald. The recognizer’s heart was made of harsh stone—when I wrote My name therein, it turned into a notebook of exaltedness.”

*A guidance for the godwary*. In another place, He said, “*It is a guidance and a healing for those who have faith*” [41:44]. He is saying that this Qur’an is guidance for the godwary, healing for the faithful, the cause of familiarity, assistance for clarity, a key for the ears, a mirror for the eyes, a lamp for hearts, a healing for pain, a light for the eyes of the familiar, springtime for the spirits of the friends, admonition for the fearful, mercy for the faithful. It is a Qur’an whose eternity’s rising place is the brilliance of the Divinity, a book whose coming down was made easy by the Lordhood, a writing whose guardian and protector is the exaltedness of Unity by virtue of jealousy. It is found in the house of the decree and guarded inside the curtain of the Real’s guarding. God says, “*Surely it is We who have sent down the Remembrance, and surely it is We who are its guards*” [15:9].

Since you know that the Qur’an is guidance for the godwary, you should establish the lineage of godwariness so that it may take you inside the curtain of its protection. God says, “*Surely the noblest of you with God is the most godwary*” [49:13]. Tomorrow at the resurrection, every lineage will be broken except the lineage of godwariness. Everyone sheltered by godwariness today will be the neighbor of the Patron tomorrow. Thus it has been reported, “The people will be mustered on the Day of Resurrection. Then God will say to them, ‘It is a long time that you have been speaking and I have been silent. Today you be silent and I will speak. Surely I took away your lineages but you refused all but your own lineages. I said, ‘*Surely the most noble of you with God is the most godwary*,’ but you refused and said, ‘So-and-so, son of so-and-so.’ So I took away your lineages and put in place My lineage. Today I will take away My lineage and put in place your lineages. The Folk of the Gathering will come to know who are the possessors of nobility and where are the godwary.”

°Umar Khaṭṭāb said to Ka’b al-Aḥbār, “Speak to me about godwariness.”

He said, “O °Umar, have you ever passed through a field of thorns?” He said that he had. He said, “What did you do? How did you go into that field of thorns?”

°Umar said, “I set forth briskly, I kept my clothing close to me, and I avoided the thorns.”

He said, “°Umar, that is godwariness.”

Concerning it a poet said,

Let go of sins, the great and the small, for that is godwariness.

Be like a walker in a thorn bed, cautious with what he sees.

Do not look down on the small—a mountain is made of pebbles.

Then He begins with the attribute and adornment of the godwary. He says,

**2:3** *Those who have faith in the Unseen and perform the prayer and spend of what We have provided them.*

They love God without having seen Him. They attest to His uniqueness and they believe in His oneness in Essence and attributes. They hold firm to His Messenger without having seen him, they accept his messengerhood, and they walk straight on the road of his Sunnah. After five hundred years of blackness on whiteness, they accept him with spirit and heart. The message he conveyed, the reports he gave of the World of Dominion, the Lote Tree of the Final End, the Gardens of the Refuge, the Throne of the Patron, the outcome of this world—they bear witness to its truth and

they believe in all of it. They are the ones whom Muṣṭafā called his brothers: “Oh, the yearning to encounter my brothers!”

*And perform the prayer.* They do the prayer such that you would say they are gazing on God and whispering secretly with Him, confirming the truth of the Prophet’s words, “Worship God as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, surely He sees you.” He also said, “When the servant stands for the prayer, he is before the eyes of the All-Merciful. When he looks around, God says, ‘Child of Adam! At whom are you looking? Are you looking at someone better for you than I? Child of Adam! Look at Me, for I am better for you than the one at whom you are looking.’”

Strive at the time you come to the prayer to keep your thoughts in the prayer and to turn your heart away from the bazaar. Have courtesy, turn your heart away from blessings, and know the worth of whispering secretly with the Patron of Blessings. For it is person of low aspiration and meanness who finds secret whispering with the Patron of Blessings and then busies his heart with the blessings.

*And spend of what We have provided them.* He adds to the attributes of the godwary, saying that the caresses He has placed upon them and the blessings He has given them—they undertake to show gratitude for these blessings and, by the command of the Shariah, they caress the poor, give comfort to them, and consider them the Real’s deputies in receiving charity. This indeed is the road of Muslims generally, who discharge the obligatory or add something to it voluntarily.

As for the road of the folk of the Haqiqah in this regard, it is something else. Whatever they have they give away and still consider themselves to have fallen short. Someone asked Shibli, “Of two hundred dirhams, how much alms tax is mandatory?”

He said, “Are you asking about yours or mine?”

He said, “I did not know that my alms tax is one thing and yours something else. Explain that to me.”

He said, “If you give it, five dirhams is mandatory. If I give it, the whole two hundred, with five more as a token of gratitude.”

It is mandatory for the common people of the community to discharge the obligatory act of alms tax. The outcome of their work is that they say, “Lord God, are You approving and satisfied with what we have given?” The fruit of the deed of the elect, who give away all their possessions, is that God says, “My servant, are you approving and satisfied with Me in what you have done?” How far apart are the two!

The description of the state of Abū Bakr gives witness that this is so. After he had given away all of his possessions, he came one day into the Prophet’s presence draped in a white blanket with a pin of date-palm sticking out from the front of the blanket. Gabriel descended and said, “O Muḥammad, God sends you His greeting and says, ‘What is it with Abū Bakr that his cloak is pierced by a pin?’”

He said, “O Gabriel, he spent his possessions before the conquest.”

He said, “God says, ‘Give him My greetings and ask him if he approves of Me in this poverty of his, or is he angry?’”

He said, “What, should I be angry with my Lord? I approve of my Lord.”

It has been said that the servant stands upright and straight in his states through three things: heart, body, and possessions. As long as he does not have faith in the Unseen, his heart will not go straight in the religion and neither clarity nor familiarity will appear in him. As long as he does not discharge the obligatory prayers, the soundness and straightness of his body will not be set right with continuity. As long as he does not separate the alms tax from his possessions, these possessions will not settle down with him.

**2:4** *And those who have faith in what has been sent down to thee and what was sent down before thee and who are certain of the next world.*

This verse is also the attribute of the godwary and the affirmation of their faith in the Qur’an as well as in all the messages and marks that came down from heaven on the tongue of the prophets. The Lord of the Worlds praises them and approves of them because of that, and He accepts their faith.

Every eminence and nobility possessed by past communities He gave to them and added to it, and every burden and hardship they had He lifted away from them. Those had longer days of practice, but this community has more reward for obedience. Those had a moment for repentance, but then the punishment of the Hour, but this community's opportunity for repentance of sins extends to the moment of death, and punishment belongs to the Will.

Then too the Lord of the Worlds laid a favor on Muṣṭafā and said, "*Thou wast not on the side of the Mount when We called out*" [28:46]. O paragon, you were not present on that corner of the Mount when We were speaking of you to Moses and talking about your community."

Moses said, "Lord God, in the Torah I read the mention of a community extremely adorned, refined, and approved. They have beautiful conduct and flourishing secret cores. Who are they?"

God said, "That is the community of Muḥammad."

Moses began to yearn for this community and said, "Lord God, is there any way You can show them to me?"

He said, "No, for it is not the moment for them to come out. If you want, I will convey their voices to your ears." Then God Himself let out a call in the world, "O community of Muḥammad!" Everyone who would be his community until the coming of the Hour said, "Here I am, obeying Thee!" Since He called them out, He did not send them back without a gift. He said, "I bestowed upon you before you asked from Me, and I forgave you before you asked Me to forgive you." It is not surprising that God called out to Moses after he had come into existence and received the eminence of prophethood and messengership and whispered prayer at the edge of the Mount. More surprising is that He called out to a handful of the tainted, who were not yet created and still in the concealment of nonexistence, though existent in God's knowledge, and He caressed them as servants.

*And who are certain of the next world.* And they have no more doubt concerning the resurrection and the unseen states than Ḥāritha when Muṣṭafā asked of him, "How did you wake up, O Ḥāritha?"

He said, "I woke up with true faith in God. It was as if I was visiting with the folk of the Garden, as if I was howling with the folk of the Fire, and as if I was gazing on the Throne of my Lord standing forth."

Muṣṭafā said to him, "You have recognized. Cling to that!"

This is like °Amir ibn °Abd al-Qays saying, "Were the covering removed, I would not increase in certainty."<sup>2</sup>

## **2:5 Those are upon a guidance from their Lord.**

Here you have the great triumph and the worthy praise. Here you have good fortune without end and generous bounty without limit. He has opened up the door of perspicacity for them and put into effect the gaze of solicitude inside their hearts. He has lit up the lamp of guidance in their hearts so that what is unseen for others is apparent to them. What for others is a report is for them face-to-face vision. Anas ibn Mālik said that he went before °Uthmān °Affān, having seen in the road a woman and considered her beautiful traits. °Uthmān said, "One of you who has entered in upon me has the traces of adultery appearing in his eyes."

Anas said, "Is there revelation after God's Messenger?"

He said, "No, but there is insight, proof, and truthful perspicacity. The Prophet said, 'Be wary of the perspicacity of the man of faith, for he gazes with the light of God.'"

A pir was asked what perspicacity is. He answered, "Spirits that move about in the Dominion gazing on the meanings of the unseen things. Then they speak about the secrets of the Real with the speech of contemplation, not the speech of opinion and reckoning." In this meaning someone sang,

May I be a ransom for the men dwelling in the Unseen,  
their secret cores roaming in all that is there!

<sup>2</sup> This section of the commentary is taken from LI 1:70.

In the Unseen their secret cores crave from the Real  
a locus of witnessing to which the people have no access.  
They encounter the holy spirit in their secret cores  
and in meaning they remain dwelling with it.  
They are men who have proximity and presence in the Unseen,  
while their souls have been slain by their finding.

Sarī Saqaṭī was Junayd’s master. One day he said to Junayd, “Speak to the people and give them advice, for it is time for you to speak.”

Junayd said, “I did not see myself like that and saw no worthiness in myself. Then one night I saw Muṣṭafā in a dream, and it was the night before Friday. He said to me, ‘Speak to the people!’ That same night I got up and before morning went to the door of Sarī. I knocked at the door, and Sarī said, ‘You will not assent to me before they tell you to do so?’”

The next day Junayd sat in the congregational mosque and news spread in the city that he was going to speak. A young Christian man came in disguise and said, “O shaykh! What is the meaning of the Messenger’s saying, ‘Be wary of the perspicacity of the man of faith, for he gazes with the light of God’?”

Junayd looked down, then he lifted up his head to him and said, “Submit, for the time of your submission has arrived.” So the young man submitted.

Beware, do not object to their states, and do not deny their perspicacity, for this human substance is like a rusted mirror. As long as it has rust on its face, no form appears within it. When you polish it, all forms appear within it.

As long as the opaqueness of disobedience is on the faithful servant’s heart, none of the mysteries of the Dominion will appear within it. When the rust of disobedience is removed from it, the mysteries of the Dominion and the states of the Unseen will begin to show themselves. This is the “unveiling” of the heart.

Just as the heart has unveiling, the spirit has face-to-face vision. Unveiling is the lifting of the barriers between the heart and the Real, and face-to-face vision is mutual seeing. As long as someone is with the heart, he has reports. When he reaches the spirit, he reaches face-to-face vision.

The knower of the Path and leader of the Folk of the Haqīqah, Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī, has let out the secret here in the tongue of unveiling and lifted from it the seal of jealousy. He said:

“On the first day of the beginningless covenant a tale unfolded between heart and spirit. No one was there—not Adam and Eve, not water and clay. The Real was present, the Haqīqah was there. *And We bore witness to their judgment* [21:78].

“No one has heard such a marvelous tale. The heart was the questioner, the spirit the mufti. The heart had an intermediary in the midst, but the spirit had a face-to-face report. The heart asked a thousand questions from the spirit, and they all turned to nothing—with one word the spirit answered them all.

“For its part the heart did not have its fill of asking, nor the spirit of answering. The questions were not about deeds, nor were the answers about rewards. Whenever the heart asked about reports, the spirit answered from face-to-face vision. Finally, the heart came face-to-face. Then it brought back the report to water and clay.

“If you have the capacity to hear, listen. If not, don’t hurry to deny, just stay silent.

“The heart asked the spirit, ‘What is loyalty? What is annihilation? What is subsistence?’

“The spirit answered, ‘Loyalty is to bind the belt of love, annihilation is to be freed from selfhood, subsistence is to reach the reality of the Real.’

“The heart asked, ‘Who is the stranger, who the wage-earner, who the familiar?’

“The spirit replied, ‘The stranger is the one driven away, the wage-earner has stayed on the road, the familiar has been called.’

“The heart asked the spirit, ‘What is face-to-face vision? What is love? What is joy?’

“The spirit replied, ‘Face-to-face vision is the resurrection, love is fire mixed with blood, joy is the handhold of need.’

“The heart said, ‘Add to that.’

“The spirit answered, ‘Face-to-face vision does not get along with explanation, love is paired with jealousy, and wherever there is joy, the story is long.’

“The heart said, ‘Add to that.’

“The spirit replied, ‘Face-to-face vision cannot be explained, love takes the sleeper in secret, and anyone joyful in the Friend will never die.’

“The heart asked, ‘Has anyone ever reached that day by himself?’

“The spirit replied, ‘I asked that from the Real. The Real said, “Finding Me is by My solicitude. Fancying that you can reach Me by yourself is sin.”’

“The heart asked, ‘Is there permission for one glance? I am tired of the spokesman and the reports.’

“The spirit replied, ‘Here we have a sleeper, running water, his fingers in his ears. Will he hear the sound of the Pool of Paradise?’

“The discussion of heart and spirit was cut off. The Real began to speak, and spirit and heart listened. The tale unfolded until the words became elevated and the place was emptied of listeners.

“Now the heart finds no rest from joy, and the spirit from gentleness. The heart is in the grasp of generosity, the spirit in the embrace of the sanctuary. No mark of the heart appears, no trace of the spirit. Nonbeing is lost in being, and reports in face-to-face vision. From beginning to end the tale of *tawhīd* of simply this. ‘I am his hearing through which he hears’ gives witness that this is so.”

**2:6 Surely it is the same for those who disbelieve whether thou warnest them or thou warnest them not; they will not have faith.**

From the beginning of the surah to this point is an allusion to the Lord’s bounty and gentleness with familiars and friends. This verse alludes to His severity and justice toward the strangers and enemies.

God has both bounty and justice. If He acts with justice, that is fitting, and if He is bounteous, that is suitable for Him. But not everything that is fitting in justice is suitable for bounty, whereas everything suitable for bounty is fitting for justice. He calls one to bounty, and the decree is His. He drives another to justice, and the will is His. What is good is that bounty rules over justice, and justice is caught in bounty’s hand. Justice is silent before bounty, and the ring of union is in bounty’s ear. Do you not see that justice travels along with Him, and happy is he whose refuge is bounty? The fruit of bounty is felicity and triumph, and the result of justice is wretchedness and estrangement. Both are deeds already done. “The Pen has dried on what will be until the Day of Resurrection.” It is a beginningless decree and a work discarded and finished. “When someone’s lot has set him down, his eagerness will not stir him up.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, what will come of what You do not want? And when will he come whom you have not called? What does the unplanted get from water? What answer is given to the unworthy? What use to the bitter that sweet water is its neighbor? What gain to the thorn that the rose’s fragrance is next to it? The apportioning has gone before, nothing to be added or taken away. What can be done? The Greatest Judge wants it this way. Satan lived in the highest horizon and performed thousands of acts of worship. What profit did it have, for he was not worthy. ‘Since approval and wrath are beginningless attributes, there is no profit in shortened sleeves and determined steps.’”

One day °Umar Khaṭṭāb came across Iblis. He seized him by the collar and said, “I have been seeking you for a long time. I want to take you home so that the children can play with you.”

Iblis said, “O °Umar, have respect for your elders! I worshiped God in the seven heavens, in each heaven for one hundred thousand years. I kept on going up, and I fancied that my going up was an honor and a caress. When I looked closely, the meaning was that the higher I went, the worse and the harder I would fall. O °Umar, you did not see my seven hundred thousand years of worship, but I saw you prostrating yourself before an idol.”

°Umar let him go, while the tongue of Iblis’s state was saying in his abandonment,

“I said, ‘My heart wants to be Your comrade,  
so I will be worthy of thanks and applause.’  
By God, I did not think, O Spirit of the world,  
that all my hopes would come to this.”

**2:7 *God has sealed their hearts.***

The seal of estrangement was placed on someone’s heart, and he remained in unbelief. The seal of perplexity was placed on another’s heart, and he remained in lassitude. That one was a stranger, driven away, the road lost, and this one was helpless, stuck in the road, kept back from the Friend by other than the Friend.

Any talk that keeps you back from the road—let it be unbelief or faith.

Any picture that holds you back from the Friend—let it be ugly or beautiful. [DS 51]

Not everyone who escapes from unbelief joins with the Real, unless he has escaped from himself. Someone who escapes from unbelief reaches familiarity, but someone who escapes from himself reaches friendship. A thousand way stations stand between familiarity and friendship, and a thousand valleys between love and the Friend.

In love for You I have never arrived at a way station  
in which the mind was not bewildered at the arrival.

**2:8 *Among the people are those who say, “We have faith in God.”***

This is the story of the hypocrites. The secret of the hypocrites’ hypocrisy goes back to the eminence of Muṣṭafā in two respects, one in respect of jealousy and the other in respect of mercy.

Muṣṭafā was the Real’s beloved. His beauty and perfection passed beyond the limits of understanding and imagination, so by virtue of jealousy God kept him behind the curtain of His protection and made the hypocrites’ hypocrisy the mask of his beauty. He was veiled from the world’s folk so that no one recognized him in reality, and He did not show him to anyone as he was. *Thou seest them looking at thee, but they do not see* [7:198]. If the hypocrites’ hypocrisy had not been the mask of that shining face, all the creatures would have thrown dust on the light of the Unseen. With such a sun, such a light, and such a brilliance, a hypocrisy was needed such as that of ʿAbdallāh Ubayy Salūl and his likes. Otherwise, the radiance of that beauty would have done more to the Adamites than the beauty of Jesus did to his people such that they said, “*The Messiah is the son of God*” [9:30].

This can be said with a simile: The sun’s disk, whose rays shine forth from the fourth heaven, has turned its face toward the fifth heaven. God created angels and entrusted that disk to them, and He created deserts full of snow in front of those angels. They lift mountain after mountain of snow from those deserts and dash them against the sun’s disk so that its heat will be broken. Otherwise, the world would burn because of its shine and heat. In the same way, the hypocrisy of the hypocrites was thrown against the presence of that sun of good fortune. Otherwise, the creatures would all have bound the belt of associationism. But, that paragon of the world was all gentleness and mercy, as he said: “I am a guided mercy.” God says, “*We sent thee only as a mercy to the worlds*” [21:107].

**2:13 *And when it is said to them, “Have faith as the people have faith,” they say, “Shall we have faith as fools have faith?” Surely it is they who are the fools, but they do not know.***

O generous Lord, O renowned, wise Enactor! O You who are true in promise, pure in justice, complete in bounty, and eternal in love! Whatever You want You show, and as You want, You adorn. Each has a name, and in the heart of each is Your mark. The stamp of worthiness is upon some people, and the brand of unworthiness on others. The worthy are brought by the road of bounty on the steed of approval with the escort of gentleness in the time of generous bestowal at the turn of proximity. The unworthy are driven into the street of justice on the steed of wrath with the escort

of abandonment at the turn of deprivation. This deprivation and that proximity did not come from water or dust, for on the day when the two were written out, there was neither water nor dust. There was beginningless bounty and gentleness and everlasting severity and justice. That was the portion of the self-purifiers and this the portion of the hypocrites.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Alas for the apportioning that has gone before me! Alack for the words spoken by the Self-Seer! What profit if I am happy or distraught? I fear what the Powerful said in the Beginningless.”

The hypocrites, who had fallen under the garment of justice, approved of themselves and deemed themselves to have a good name. The purifiers, the truthful, and the Messenger’s Companions they called “fools.” The Lord of the Worlds in His generosity acted as their deputy in this and answered them: “Those are not the fools, the fools are those who call them fools.” Indeed, when someone does not belong to himself, God belongs to him. When someone tightens his belt in obeying God’s commands, God joins with him. “When someone belongs to God, God belongs to him.”

The unbelievers said to Muṣṭafā, “You are possessed: *O thou unto whom the Remembrance has been sent down, surely thou art possessed* [15:6].” God said to Muḥammad, “They call you mad, but you are not mad: *Thou art not, by the blessing of thy Lord, possessed* [68:2]. You are My friend, approved of by Me. What harm will come to you if they do not approve of you? What you must have is that I approve of you. The friend must be approved of by a friend, not by the city.”

**2:22 He who made for you the earth a carpet and the heaven a building, and who sent down from heaven water by which He brought forth fruits for you as provision. So do not set up peers for God knowingly.**

The wonders of power and the marvels of wisdom in earth and heaven are evidence of a Lord and Creator and witness to His oneness, knowledge, and ability. He placed those seven green domes upon the wind, one on top of one another, without pillar or joint, as a mark of His power. He placed these seven dust-colored hills on top of the water as a clarification of His wisdom. About the one He says, [*“We set in heaven constellations] and We adorned them for the gazers”*] [15:16] and about the other He says, [*“And earth,] We laid it out—what excellent spreaders!”*] [51:48].

Look then at this likeness: two doves, one black and one white, which have come forth within the space of the blue dome. On the wings of one is *Then We effaced the sign of the night* [17:12], and on the wings of the other *We made the sign of the day, giving sight* [17:12]. The black was born of the white, and the white appeared from the black: *He rolls up the night in the day, and He rolls up the day in the night* [39:5]. *He makes the night pass into the day and makes the day pass into the night* [22:61]. How pure and faultless is the God who brought forth the brightness of day from the pitch black night and made the darkness of the pitch black night appear from the brightness of day! More wondrous than this is that He placed the brightness of knowing in the center point of the black blood of the heart and the brightness of seeing in the center point of the eye’s pupil. Thus will you know that He is the perfectly powerful, the bountiful and bounteous bestower.

This bright day is the mark of the compact of good fortune, and this dark night is the likeness of the days of tribulation. He is saying, “O you who have the good fortune of ease in the day’s brightness, do not feel secure, for the darkness of tribulation’s night is upon its tracks. O you who have been without ease in tribulation’s night, do not despair, for the bright day is on its tracks.”

Such are the states of the heart: sometimes it is in the night of contraction, sometimes in the day of expansion. In the day of contraction there is awe and confoundedness, and in the day of expansion there is mercy and intimacy. In the state of contraction the servant has nothing but the weeping and the pleading of a wounded heart. In the state of expansion he is all delight and restfulness.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, if I weep for You, weeping is sweet, and if I delight in You, delight is sweet. O God, I am happy because I am weeping at Your threshold in the hope that one day I will delight in the field of Your bounty, that You will receive me and I may turn myself over to You. If You gaze at me once, I will throw the two worlds into the ocean.”

The lords of the realities have given this verse another commentary and have seen another intimation. They say that God has placed likenesses in this verse. The earth is the likeness of the body, the heaven the likeness of the intellect, the water that comes down from heaven is the likeness of the knowledge that is gained by intellect, and the fruits are the likeness of the servant's beautiful deeds done as the requisite of knowledge. He is alluding to the fact that God is the Lord who created you as a person, form, and body, and adorned the body with the beauty of the intellect. Then by means of intellect He bestowed knowledge, cleverness, and learning. From that knowledge great fruits grew forth. Those fruits are beautiful deeds, within which are found your soul's nourishment and your *goodly life* [16:97]. Since the Lord shows such loving kindness and mercy to you, why do you associate others in worship of Him and take partners along with Him? *So do not set up peers for God knowingly.*

**2:23** *If you are in doubt about what We have sent down on Our servant, then bring a surah the like of it.*

The previous verse was an affirmation of *tawhīd*, an argument against the Arab associaters. This verse is an affirmation of prophecy, an argument against the Folk of the Book and the Dhimma. The formula of the Shahadah comprises two sides: the affirmation of *tawhīd* and the affirmation of prophecy. As long as the servant does not acknowledge and believe in both and does not act as demanded by both, he has not entered into the circle of the submission.

Affirming prophecy is to know that Muṣṭafā is the chosen of the Real and the best of creatures. You accept his prophecy with spirit and heart. You take his words, deeds, customs, and conduct as your leader and guide. You know in reality that his words are the revelation of the Real, his explanation the road of the Real, his decree the religion of the Real, and his utterances and conveyance of the message in the state of life and death the argument of the Real. Adam was still inside the curtain of water and clay when the secret of Muḥammad's created disposition had bound its waist before the Exalted Threshold and the gaze of the Real's gentleness had reached his spirit. This is alluded to in his words, "I was a prophet when Adam was between water and clay."

*Then bring a surah the like of it.* This spreads the carpet of the Qur'an's exaltedness from the folds of its holiness. Thus the non-privy will place the hand of rejection on their breasts and He may remove the mask of its beauty for those burnt by passion.

Then you will see the unmasked beauty of the Qur'an's face—  
when it shows its face, speak with the tongue of remembrance. [DS 495]

**2:25** *And give good news to those who have faith.*

This verse is a caress for the friends, giving them hope for everlasting largesse and bliss, and an encouragement to the faithful, inciting them to obey and to seek increase of blessings. The previous verse warns the strangers against confusion in the heart and associationism on the tongue, and it threatens with the fire of punishment and the harshness of being cut off from the Real. The person of faith is he who becomes frightened and without ease when he hears the first verse and thinks about the chastisement of hell. He becomes happy when he hears the second verse, he makes his heart fast and his hope strong, and he brings ease into his heart. The Lord of the Worlds praises both the frightened and the one at ease. Concerning the frightened He says, "*The faithful are only those whose hearts quake when God is remembered*" [8:2]. Concerning the one at ease He says, "*Those who have faith and whose hearts are serene in the remembrance of God*" [13:28]. The custom of the Generous Lord is that whenever He sends a verse of fear with which He frightens the servants, after it He sends down a verse of hope and mercy to give ease to their hearts so that they will not despair.

*And give good news to those who have faith.* Let there be good news for all those who are today in the playing field of service, for tomorrow they will be in the assembly of *repose and ease* [56:89]. Not everyone who reaches the paradise of approval will reach the generous gift of *repose and ease*. The paradise of approval is the furthest limit of the pleasure of the worshipful servants,

and *repose and ease* is the kiblah of the spirits of the lovers. The paradise of approval is the High Chambers and the Abode of Peace. *Repose and ease* in the Presence of At-ness is the gift for the spirit of the passionate. Everyone who watches over his actions will reach the paradise of approval; everyone who watches over his breaths will reach *repose and ease*.

Who can explain this *repose and ease* and how can it be given expression!? When something does not come to the tongue, how can it be explained? A wind begins to blow from the World of the Unseen that is called “the wind of bounty.” Clouds begin to gather that are called “the clouds of kindness.” A rain begins to fall that is called “the rain of gentleness.” The rain brings forth a flood that is called “the flood of love.”

A flood must take away both worlds  
so that no one again may suffer the world’s grief.

The flood of love that is appointed for this makeup of water and dust leaves no mark of water, no news of dust. No name of mortal nature remains, no trace of human nature. Put aside every preoccupation that arises from water and clay and every confusion that comes from mortal and human nature so that you may reach nonbeing. Then pass beyond nonbeing to reach *repose and ease*.

I saw in secret the world and the root of the universe,  
I passed beyond defect and repute with ease.  
And that black light—know that it is beyond the non-pointed—  
that too I passed; neither this nor that remained.

**2:28** *How do you disbelieve in God, seeing that you were dead, and He brought you to life. Then He shall make you dead, then He shall bring you to life.*

By way of allusion He is saying, “O you who have lost the end of your own thread! O you who have fallen into the well of your own mortal nature! If you want the road clearer than this, why do you not go forward? If you want the field wider than this, why do you not mount up? If you want the candle brighter than this, why are you falling off the path? O you over whom so many years have passed and you have still not caught a scent! O you who have sat at so many tables and are still hungry! O you who have worn a thousand clothes and are still naked! O Muslim! The playing field is open, where are the mounted riders? The tribunal is open, where are the plaintiffs? The physician is present, where are the ill? The beauty is unveiled, where are the passionate?”

*You were dead, and He brought you to life.* “You were dead, but I brought you to life. Why do you not look? You were ignorant, but I made you knowers. Why do you not perceive? I showed you the road, why do you not go?”

It wants a man to catch the scent—  
otherwise, the world is full of the east wind’s fragrance.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, how can the servant overcome the beginningless decree? When he does not have, what can he do? What is the servant’s effort? The work is done by what You want. How can the servant save himself with his own effort?”

*Then He shall make you dead, then He shall bring you to life.* It is said that death is of three sorts: death by the curse, death by regret, and death by generous gift. Death by the curse belongs to the disbelievers, death by regret to the disobedient, and death by generous gift to the godway.

Life also is of three sorts: first the life of fear, then the life of hope, then the life of love. The life of fear appears in kindness, the life of hope appears in service, and the life of love appears in remembrance. Those who live in fear will be given security on the day of death: “*Fear not and grieve not!*” [41:30]. Those who live in hope will be caressed on the last day: “*Rejoice in the Garden that you were promised!*” [41:30]. Those who live in love will receive from the Friend this generous gift on the carpet of generosity in the session of intimacy: “*Return to thy Lord, approving, approved!*” [89:28].

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, O worthy of generosity and caresser of the world! There

is no happiness with other than You, and no grief along with Your remembrance. You are the plaintiff and the interceder, the witness and the judge. As long as I breathe along with Your love, I will be free of the bonds of existence and nonexistence, released from the bother of Tablet and Pen—the cup of happiness in hand again and again in the sitting place of intimacy!”

May there be no king in my heart’s kingdom but passion for You!

May no one be aware of the secret between me and You!

May passion for You never leave my wounded heart!

May my hand never fall short of Your long tresses!

**2:29** *He it is who created for you all that is in the earth, then He went up to heaven and proportioned it as seven heavens, and He is knower of everything.*

In another place He said, “*He subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all together, from Him*” [45:13]. He is saying, “I created everything in the empire of the earth for you and subjected it to you. My bestowal is not tiny, My generosity toward those who are burnt for Me is not trivial. There will never be any backsliding in My caressing you. Nor is it as if I limited Myself to the empire of the earth, for I also set up the heavens for your gaze, for the pleasure of your eyes, and as a storehouse for your daily provision. My servant! When you step into the street of My covenant, you do not know what good news reaches the heaven-dwellers and the earth-dwellers and how they congratulate each other. I know, for I know everything and reach everyone.” *And He is knower of everything.*

In this verse there is a subtle point. He did not say, “Who created you for all that is in the earth.” He said, “*Who created for you all that is in the earth.*” In other words, “I created everything that is in the empire of the earth and the heavens for your sake, and I created you for My sake.” Do you not see that He said specifically to Moses, “*I chose thee for Myself*” [20:41], and generally to the creatures, “*I created the jinn and mankind only to worship Me*” [51:56]? It was Muṣṭafā who understood the worth of this declaration and gave thanks for this one of His blessings. On the night of proximity and generosity when he was taken to the heavens, all of creation and the empires of the two worlds were scatted at the feet of his truthfulness. That paragon did not look at it from the corner of his eye. He said, “I was not created for this.” *The eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass* [53:17]. Hail to him!

Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī, who beautifully traveled in the road of Muṣṭafā’s Sunnah and beautifully observed courtesy toward the Presence, said, “I kept on crossing perils until I found the empires. Then I left the empires behind and arrived at the marks giving witness to the King. I said, ‘The prize.’

“He said, ‘I have given to you all that you have seen.’

“I said, ‘You are the desired.’

“He said, ‘Then I belong to you, just as you belong to Me.’”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, when a breeze blew from the garden of friendship, I made my heart its sacrifice. I found a scent of friendship’s treasury and called out in kingship over the world. Lightning flashed from the east of the Haqīqah, and with little thought of water and clay I left the two worlds behind. You gazed once, and in that gaze I burned and melted. Add another gaze and make it the salve of this burned one! Grasp this drowned man, for the remedy and salve of the wine-stricken is wine!” In this meaning Majnūn sang,

I treated love for Laylā with Laylā

just as the wine-drinker is treated with wine.

**2:30** *And when thy Lord said to the angels, “Surely I am setting in the earth a vicegerent,” they said, “What, wilt Thou set therein one who will work corruption there, and shed blood, while we glorify Thy praise and call Thee holy?” He said, “Surely I know what you do not know.”*

There was a world at ease. No heart burned with passion and no breast was deluded by mad fervor. Then the ocean of mercy began to boil. The treasuries of obedient deeds were full, and no dust of

lassitude had settled on the foreheads of the obedient in their obedience. The banner of their boastful claim, “*We glorify Thy praise,*” was raised to Capella.

All those in the cosmos who had any subtle substance began craving for their own selves. The majestic Throne was looking at its own tremendousness and saying, “Perhaps the script of these words is written for me.” The Footstool was looking at its own amplitude—“Perhaps this sermon is being read in my name.” The eight paradises gazed on their own beauty—“Maybe this rulership will be given to us.” None wanted anything to do with dust. Each fell into delusion, each caught by mad fervor.

Suddenly, from the Presence of Exaltation and Majesty, this report was given to the world of the angels: “*Surely I am setting in the earth a vicegerent.*” It was not that He was consulting with the angels. Rather, He was laying the foundation of Adam’s exaltation and tremendousness. He was not asking for help, but spreading the carpet of Adam’s dignity. He was saying, “The ruling property of My severity has acted. I have commanded the pen of generosity to write out an inscription from the beginning of the world’s ledger to its end. This resolution is written for the inhabitants of both worlds, from the top of the Throne to the bottom of the Carpet: ‘The dust-dwelling Adam is granted chieftainship over all the empires. His exalted breast will be bright with the light of recognition. In him the subtleties of My generosity and the artifacts of My bounteousness will become apparent.’”

This exalted declaration caused the hearts of the proximate angels to quake with awe. They said, “What is this all about? He has not yet been created.”

The exalted Qur’an was beating the drum of his vicegerency at the threshold of his beauty even though he had not yet entered into the bonds of creation. The majesty of predetermination was reporting on the basis of the hidden affairs of the Unseen: “You must not come around the field of Adam’s good fortune, for you do not recognize the secret of his innate disposition. No falcon of anyone’s mind has sat upon the branch of Adam’s good fortune! No eye of anyone’s insight has grasped the beauty of Adam’s limpid sun!”

Where did this eminence come from? From whence did this good fortune arise? It came from the fact that Adam was the oyster shell of the mysteries of lordhood and the treasury of the jewels of the empire. How many precious pearls and royal sparklers were placed in that oyster shell! Along with every pearl He arranged a black bead on the string. Along with the pearl of every prophet He placed a black bead as its counterpart: With a pearl like Adam the chosen was a bead like Satan the wretched; with a pearl like Abraham the bosom friend was a bead like Nimrod the rebellious; with a pearl like Moses of °Imrān was a bead like Pharaoh the unaided; with a pearl like Jesus son of Mary was a bead like the tribe full of misguidance and transgression; with a pearl like Muṣṭafā the Arab was a bead like Abū Jahl full of ignorance.

When the angels heard this terrifying declaration, settledness and repose fled from them and they lost the composure of their intellects and their patience. They all spoke up with questions and said, “*What, wilt Thou set therein one who will work corruption there, and shed blood? O Lord! O King! O Magnanimous! O Creator! This dust-dwelling Adam will stain the embroidered robe of proximity with disobedience. He will pull his head out from the collar of obedience. You have created us from holiness and declaring holy! You have adorned our breasts with reciting the formula of tawḥīd and glorifying! You have made all these our means!*”

It is said that a fire appeared from the hidden affairs of the Unseen and incinerated a tribe of the angels. This declaration was made with the attribute of exaltedness: “*Surely I know what you do not know.*”

“You who are gazers, just keep on gazing! What do you have to do with the secret treasuries of the divinity? How can you intervene in the hidden affairs of Our unseen lordhood? It is We who know the preparations of Our divinity and the hidden affairs of the mysteries of Our lordhood. How can insignificant minds, the sciences and intellects of anyone other than Us, defective understandings and newly arrived insights, find a way to the mysteries of Our divinity? *With Him are the keys to the Unseen—none knows them but He* [6:59].

“In the beginningless We decreed that We would light the lamp of the realities of recognition in the breast of the dust-dweller Adam, turn over to him the edict of rulership, and plant the flag of

the earthly empires in his soldierly heart.

“You who are the proximate angels of the Empire, be serving-boys, spread the carpet in front of the throne of Adam’s good fortune, and prostrate yourselves before him!

“You who circumambulate Our Throne, ask forgiveness for the not-yet-committed sins of Adam’s progeny, who have not yet come into existence! Ask for safety in their going forth, and say, ‘Peace be upon them, peace be upon them,’ so that when they come into existence, their feet will not slacken on the carpet of servanthood.

“You who are in charge of the veils, weep for the folk of heedlessness among Adam’s progeny so that We may conceal their disobedience with Our forgiveness because of your weeping!

“You who are the folk of the cushions, take up this pure water whose waves are lapping around Our Throne with water-bags of light and, when they lift up their heads thirsty from the earth on the Day of Resurrection, provide water for them!

“You who are the sinless of the Lote Tree of the Final End, wait until the Greatest Fright appears at the resurrection, when awe and punishment’s holding and grasping, taking and seizing, all come forth, and then give the faithful among them security from that Fright and convey to them Our greeting of *Peace!*

“We have commanded all this so that you angels may come to know the eminence of these dust-dwellers and make no protest at Our decree.”

There is a sound report that the Supreme Plenum and the proximate angels of the Exalted Threshold said, “O Lord, You have given the dust-dwellers the low world. Give us the high world, for we are the birds of the Presence and the peacocks of the Exalted Threshold.”

The answer came to them, “I will not make the wholesome progeny of him whom I created with My own two hands like those to whom I said, ‘Be!’, so they came to be.

“I am the intimate of passion, and you’re just passing by  
unaware of the tale and state of the passionate.  
Why do you grieve for the ugliness of My beloved?  
Come into My eyes and gaze upon him.”

### **2:34 And when We said to the angels, “Prostrate yourselves before Adam!”**

Majestic and all-compelling is the God of the world and the world’s folk, the Enactor, the renowned knower of the hidden, the eternal in beautiful doing and tremendous in rank, never ignorant of what He knows, never regretful for what He bestows, never at a loss over what He has done. He is a Lord who adorns what He disapproves for some and makes ugly what He approves for others. He created the despairing Iblis from fire, gave him a place in the Lote Tree of the Final End, and sent the proximate angels of the Presence to seek knowledge from him. Despite such distinction and level, He wrote out the inscription of wretchedness for him and bound his waist with the sash of the curse. He pulled Adam up from dark dust, made the Higher Plenum the bearers of his throne, clothed him in the cape of exaltedness, placed the crown of generosity on his head, and said to the proximate angels of the Presence, “*Prostrate yourselves before Adam!*”

It has come in the traditions that Adam was placed on a throne that had seven hundred legs, the distance of one leg to another a seven-hundred year journey. The command came: “O Gabriel, O Michael, you chiefs of the angels! Lift up Adam’s throne and carry it around the heavens so that his eminence and rank may be known to those who said, ‘*What, wilt Thou set therein one who will work corruption therein, and shed blood?*’” [2:30].

Then they placed that throne before the Majestic Throne. The command came to the angels, “All of you go to Adam’s throne and prostrate yourself before Adam.” The angels came and gazed upon Adam, and they all became drunk with his beauty.

A face adorned by the God of heaven  
has no need for a hairdresser’s touch.

They saw a beauty without end, the crown of “He created Adam in His form” on his head, the garb

of “*I have blown into him of My spirit*” [15:29] on his body, the embroidery of the solicitude of “*He loves them, and they love Him*” [5:54] on the sleeve of his sinlessness.

Though we’re strangers and our hearts are upset,  
we’re serving-boys of that world-adorning face.

Concerning the description of Adam, Wahab ibn Munabbih said, “When God created Adam, He created him in the most beautiful form and dressed him in the ornaments of the Garden. He put rings on ten fingers, anklets on his legs, and dressed him with bracelets on his arms. He attended to the crown and diadem on his head and forehead and gave him as title the most beloved of names to Him. He said to him, ‘O Abū Muḥammad! Go around the Garden and look to see if anyone is similar to you or if I created any creature more beautiful than you.’

“So Adam wandered around in the Garden and became conceited. He strode proudly in the Garden. God deemed that beautiful in him, so He called to him from beyond the Throne: ‘Be conceited, Adam, for the likes of you are conceited. I loved something, so I created it solitary for the Solitary.’ Then God conveyed that conceit to his offspring. It is arrogance in the ignorant, pridefulness in kings, and ecstasy in the friends.”

Good fortune in the spirit and the world is not a game, and felicity is not to be bought. Iblis saw the suffering of the passing days and the toil of the work, but Adam went to paradise. Iblis had obedience without cease, but Adam received this address:

**2:35 *Dwell thou and thy spouse in the Garden!***

It has been said that once Iblis met Adam and said, “Know that you have been given a white face and I a black face. Do not be deluded, for our likeness is that of an almond tree planted by a gardener. The tree bears fruit, and the fruit is taken to a grocery shop. Some of it is sold to a customer who is a happy man, and some to a customer who is afflicted. The afflicted man blackens the face of the almonds and scatters them on the casket of his dead one. The happy man mixes them with sugar and distributes them with their white faces in his happiness. O Adam! I am the black almonds scattered over caskets, and the almonds distributed by happiness are the work of your good fortune. But you should know that the gardener is one, and we have drunk water from the same stream. If someone should fall to the work of roses, he will smell roses, and if someone should fall into the gardener’s thorns, his eyes will be struck by them.”

I said, “In my passion I will be like Your hair,  
always before Your face.”  
I thought wrongly and fell far away—  
I’ll be the slaveboy of Your street’s watchman.

Dhu’l-Nūn Miṣrī said, “I was in the desert and saw Iblis, who had not lifted his head from prostration in forty days. I said, ‘Poor wretch, after disownment and the curse, what is all this worship?’

“He said, ‘O Dhu’l-Nūn, though I have been dismissed from servanthood, He has not been dismissed from lordhood.’”

O lovely one, my times and yours are in turmoil,  
talk of us has filled my city and yours.  
Union was apportioned in the beginningless,  
and now separation has come and the talk is of you and me.

Sahl ibn ʿAbdallāh Tustarī said, “One day I came across Iblis. I said, ‘I seek refuge in God from you.’

“He said, ‘O Sahl, if you are seeking refuge in God from me, I am seeking refuge in God from God. O Sahl, if you say that you are seeking help against the hand of Iblis, I say that I am seeking help against the hand of the All-Merciful.’

“I said, ‘O Iblis, why did you not prostrate yourself before Adam?’

“He said, ‘O Sahl, let go of these foolish words with me. If I have a road to the Presence, tell

me. Do you not want to lay the pretext on me? O Sahl, just now I was at the grave of Adam. I made one thousand prostrations there and placed the dust of his grave on my eyes. In the end I heard this call: “Don’t take the trouble. We don’t want you.””

I appear to You as so despoiled  
that all my obedience is taken as sin.  
If this story did not turn out like the moon,  
it is because my carpet’s color is black.

Sahl said, “Then he gave me a writing and told me to read it, and as I began to read it he disappeared from my eyes. On it was written this:

“Though I erred, destiny did not.  
Blame me if you want, Sahl, or leave me be.”

Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī said, “I asked God to show Iblis to me. I found him in the sanctuary at Mecca and began talking with him. He was speaking clever words. I said, ‘O wretch, with all this cleverness, why did you keep back from the Real’s command?’

“He said, ‘O Abū Yazīd! That was a command of trial, not of a command of desire. If it had been a command of desire, I would never have kept back.’

“I said, ‘O wretch, is it opposition to the Real that has brought you to these days?’

“He said, ‘Come now, Abū Yazīd! Opposition is one opposite against another opposite, but God has no opposite. Conformity is one similar with another similar, but God has no similar. Do you think that my conformity with Him is from me and my opposition to Him from me? Both are from Him, and no one has any power over Him. And I, despite what has come to be, hope for mercy, for He has said, “*My mercy embraces everything*” [7:156], and I am a thing.’

“I said, ‘That is followed by the condition of godwariness.’

“He said, ‘Come now! The condition is for him who does not know the outcomes of affairs, but He is a Lord from whom nothing is hidden.’ Then he disappeared from before me.”

### **2:36 Then Satan made them slip therefrom.**

Look at this wonder: First He caressed the servant and put all his little jobs in order, then He sent him into tumult and overthrew what He had done for him, and then He rebuked him.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, You show your friends to the enemies and You turn the poor ones over to heartache and grief. You make them ill, and then You take care of them Yourself. You make them helpless, and then You heal them Yourself.

“You made Adam out of dust, and then You acted so beautifully toward him. You placed his happiness at the top of the ledger and made him the guest in paradise. You sat him in the garden of approval, You made a compact with him not to eat the wheat, and in Your unseen knowledge You hid the fact that he would in fact eat the wheat. Then You put him in prison, and You made him weep for years. Your all-compellingness does the work of compellers, Your lordhood does the work of lords. All of Your rebukes and war are aimed at Your friends.”

The Pir of the Tariqah was asked, “What do you say: Was Adam more complete in this world or in paradise?”

He said, “He was more complete in this world, for in paradise he fell into suspicion because of himself, but in this world he fell into suspicion because of passion.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Take care not to have the opinion that Adam was taken out of paradise because of his lowliness. It was not that. Rather, it was because of the grandeur of his aspiration. The petitioner of passion came to the door of Adam’s breast and said, ‘O Adam, the beauty of meaning has been unveiled, but you have stayed in the abode of peace.’ Adam saw an infinite beauty, next to which the beauty of the eight paradises was nothing. His great aspiration tightened its belt and said: ‘If you ever want to fall in love, you must fall in love with that.’”

If there's no escape from feeding passion to the spirit  
I'll suffer passion's grief for the likes of You.

The command came, "Adam, now that you have stepped into the street of passion, leave paradise, for it is the house of ease. What do the passionate have to do with the safety of the Abode of Peace?" May the throats of the passionate always be caught in the noose of trial!

Your passion came to my door and began to knock.  
I didn't open it, so it burned it down.

Adam himself did not go—he was taken. Adam himself did not want—he was wanted.

The command came: "The veiled virgin of recognition wants a mate to be her fiancé." They sifted the eighteen thousand worlds looking for a mate without finding one, for the majestic Qur'an gives news that "*Nothing is as His likeness*" [42:11].

The cherubim and the proximate angels lifted up their heads at the Exalted Threshold hoping that this crown would be placed on their heads and the veiled virgin of recognition would become their fiancé. The call went out, "You are the sinless and the pure of the Presence, You are the glorifiers of the Exalted Threshold. If I make you the fiancé, you will say that it is because you match her in holiness and purity. Far be it from the Unity that it should have a match or an equal! *He begets not, nor was He begotten, and equal to Him is none* [112:3-4]."

The Throne with its tremendousness, paradise with its adornment, heaven with its elevation—each fell to wishing, but to no avail. The call came: "Since the veiled virgin of recognition has no match, We in Our bountifulness will lift up the thrown-down dust and make it her fiancé." *He fastened to them the word of godwariness, to which they have more right and of which they are worthy* [48:26].

This is like a king who has a daughter and can find no match for her in his empire. He raises up one of his slaves and bestows on him possessions, position, and exaltedness and appoints him to be the commander and leader of the army. Then he gives his daughter to him. Thus his generosity will appear, and the slave will have the worthiness for union.

The likeness of Adam the dust-dweller is exactly this. God made him the target of His arrow from the first. He fired one arrow of eminence from the bow of special favor with the hand of the attributes. The target of that arrow was Adam's makeup.

Take an arrow from the quiver in my name,  
then place it in Your mighty bow.  
If You need a target here's my heart.  
Yours—a strong shot. Mine—a sweet sigh.

The arrow reached the target. Hence Muṣṭafā reported this judgment to the world: "God created Adam in His form; his length was sixty cubits." It is a sound report that the Lord of the worlds took a handful of dust with which He sculpted Adam. Adam's boldness and nearness reached the place that, when He told him to travel from paradise to the earth, he said, "O Lord, travelers don't go without supplies. What supplies will You give me for the road?"

He said, "O Adam, your supplies in the land of exile will be My remembrance. After that, on the day of Return, I promise you will see Me."

**2:37 Then Adam received from his Lord some words.**

Then He spoke with the lid on, not letting out the details, lest the secrets of love fall into the open and so that love's story would stay concealed.

I said to her, "Halt [*qif*]." She said, "*Qāf*."

She did not say, "I have halted," thereby keeping the secret from the watchers. Nor did she say, "I will not halt," thereby showing consideration for the lover's heart.<sup>3</sup>

3 The half-line (quoted also under 2:1) and this sentence are from LI 1:66.

Although the tongue of commentary does not speak of it, the folk of allusion say that it is likely that at the moment of farewell lovers say, “‘When you depart from me, do not forget my covenant. Even if awareness of me dwindles one day, do not prefer another over me.’<sup>4</sup> O Adam! Do not forget Our compact and do not choose anyone over Me.” The tongue of his state replied,

“My heart is Your fellow-traveler and companion—  
how could it attach its love anywhere else?  
A heart for whom You are both spirit and awareness—  
how could it forget Your remembrance?”

**2:40 O children of Israel! Remember My blessings with which I blessed you. And be loyal to My covenant; I will be loyal to your covenant. And of Me have dread.**

This is an allusion to the Real’s gentleness, generosity, and loving kindness toward the servants. He reminds them of His favor toward them: “I am the generous Lord, the thankful, the forgiver of the servants. I have come forth with kindness despite every disloyalty, I invite the servants to praise Me despite all their offenses, and I ask them to be grateful for My blessings.” This is why He says to the children of Israel, “*Remember My blessings!* O children of Israel, be grateful for My blessings and recognize your duty toward Me so that you will be worthy of increase and have good name and good fortune.”

There is a great difference between the children of Israel and this community. To them He said, “*Remember My blessings!*” To this community He said, “*Remember Me!*” [2:152]. He gave them blessings and He gave this community companionship. He kept those away from Himself by the witnessing of blessings, and He kept these with Himself by stipulating love. The tongue of this state says,

“I traveled to you seeking the highest things,  
but others traveled seeking a good life.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, the one who does the work is he who has work with You, the one who has a friend is he whose friend is the likes of You. How could he who has You in the two worlds leave You aside! The wonder is that he who has You weeps more than anyone else. He who has not found weeps at not having found—why then does he who finds also weep?”

When the like of You is someone’s friend,  
if he complains, that’s disgraceful.

*And be loyal to My covenant; I will be loyal to your covenant.* There are many verses like this in the Qur’an: “*Supplicate Me; I will respond to you* [40:60]. *So remember Me; I will remember you* [2:152]. My servant! Open a door so that I may open a door. Open the door of turning back so that I may open the door of good news: *They turned back to God, and for them is good news* [39:17]. Open the door of expending so that I may open the door of replacement: *Whatever you expend, He will replace it* [34:39]. Open the door of struggle so that I may open the door of guidance: *Those who struggle in Us, We will guide them on Our paths* [29:69]. Open the door of asking forgiveness so that I may open the door of forgiveness: *And then asks forgiveness of God, he will find God forgiving, ever-merciful* [4:110]. Open the door of gratitude so that I may open the door of increased blessings: *If you give thanks, I will surely increase you* [14:7]. My servant, come back to My covenant so that I may come back to your covenant: *Be loyal to My covenant; I will be loyal to your covenant.*”

It has been said that God has many covenants with His servant and, in each covenant in which the servant has loyalty, the Lord of the Worlds has a loyalty as its counterpart. First is that the servant makes manifest the words of the Shahadah. Its counterpart from the Lord of the Worlds is the rightful due of blood and property. That is in His words, “When someone says ‘No god but God,’ his wealth and property are protected from Me.” The last is that if the servant keeps his gaze pure and watches over his thoughts, its counterpart from the Lord of the Worlds will be this: “I

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4 LI 1:95.

have prepared for My wholesome servants what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what has never passed into the heart of any mortal.” Between that beginning and this end are many intermediaries, and these are God’s covenants with the servant in which the servant’s part is deeds and words, and God’s part is reward beyond reckoning.

Among these intermediaries are these, as one of them has said: “*Be loyal to My covenant by presence at the gate; I will be loyal to your covenant with great reward. Be loyal to My covenant by guarding the secrets; I will be loyal to your covenant with My beautiful acts of kindness. Be loyal to My covenant by not preferring any other to Me; I will be loyal to your covenant by not holding back My gentleness and good. Be loyal to My covenant with beautiful struggle; I will be loyal to your covenant with constant contemplation. Be loyal to My covenant by truthfulness in love; I will be loyal to your covenant with perfect proximity. Be loyal to My covenant in the abode of My tribulation on the carpet of serving Me by venerating Me; I will be loyal to your covenant in the abode of My blessings on the carpet of proximity with the joy of union. Be loyal to My covenant that you accepted on the Day of the Compact; I will be loyal to your covenant that I have assured for you on the Day of the Encounter. Be loyal to My covenant by saying endlessly, ‘My Lord!’; I will be loyal to your covenant by saying to you, ‘My servant!’*”<sup>5</sup>

*And of Me have dread.* This is the same as His saying, “*And of Me be wary*” [2:41]. Dread and wariness are two of the stations of the fearful. There are six degrees of the fearful in the road of the religion: the repenters, the worshipers, the renouncers, the knowers, the recognizers, and the sincerely truthful.

The repenters have fear, as He says: “*They fear a day when eyes and hearts will be turned about*” [24:37]. The worshipers have quaking: “*Those whose hearts quake when God is remembered*” [8:2]. The renouncers have dread: “*They were supplicating Us in eagerness and dread*” [21:90]. The knowers have fright: “*The only ones of His servants who are frightened of God are the knowers*” [35:28]. The recognizers have trembling: “*Surely those who tremble in fear of their Lord*” [23:57]. The sincerely truthful have awe: “*And God warns you of Himself*” [3:28].

Fear is the fear of the repenters and beginners, the fortress of faith, and the cure-all and weapon for the person of faith. Anyone without this fear has no faith and has no way to security. Anyone who has it has faith in the same measure.

Quaking is the fear of the living-hearted. It releases them from heedlessness, opens up the road of self-purification to them, and curtails their wishing.

Just as quaking is greater than fear, dread is greater than quaking. Dread cuts off a man’s delight in life and cuts him off from people. In the world it separates him from the world. When someone fears like this, he sees his own soul as a debt to be paid, all his words as complaint, and all his acts as offenses. Sometimes, he seeks aid like the drowning, sometimes he beats himself in the head like the mourning, sometimes he sighs like the ill.

The fear of the recognizers, which is trembling, appears from quaking. This is a fear that places no veil before supplication, no mask before perspicacity, and no wall before hope. It is a melting and killing fear that does not relax until this call is heard: “*Fear not and grieve not, and rejoice!*” [41:30]. This fearful person is sometimes burned, sometimes caressed, sometimes called, sometimes killed. He does not sigh from the burning, nor does he complain of the killing.

How You kill me! And how I love You!

O marvel! How I love the killer!

After trembling comes awe, the fear of the sincerely truthful. This fear rises up from face-to-face vision, the other fears from reports. Something flashes in the heart like lightning. The body cannot bear it, and the spirit does not have the capacity to remain with it. Mostly this happens during the time of ecstasy and listening [*samāʿ*], just as it happened to Moses at the Mount: *And Moses fell down thunderstruck* [7:143]. Never say that this awe comes from threats; rather, it comes from being aware of the Compeller.

<sup>5</sup> This paragraph is taken from a much longer passage juxtaposing the two halves of the verse in LI 1:96-97.

When a speck of actual face-to-face vision is unveiled,  
neither heart escapes nor spirit, neither unbelief nor faith.

It is this that is alluded to in the Prophet's words, "His veil is light. Were it removed, the glories of His face would burn away everything perceived by the eyes."

**2:42 *And confuse not truth with falsehood.***

Be careful not to mix truth and falsehood. Do not put truthfulness together with lying, the approved together with the unapproved. I do not say not to recognize falsehood. You must recognize it so as to avoid it, and you must recognize truth so as to go after it. Muṣṭafā said, "O God, show us truth as truth and provide us with choosing it, and show us falsehood as falsehood and provide us with avoiding it."

Concerning the verse, "*And confuse not truth with falsehood,*" the masters of the realities have said that the meaning is that you should not mix together the share of the soul and the food of the heart, for the two do not get along. The owner of the heart is elated at the rightful due of truth, but the servant of the soul is bound by the share of the soul. How can the two come together? This world is trifling and the next world precious. How can the two get along? Friendship with the Creator is beginningless and endless felicity, but friendship with the created is a ready bane. How can the two come together? *God has not given any man two hearts in his breast* [33:4]. God-worship and self-worship are opposites. How can the two be brought together in one makeup?

Love for both self and the loving Friend won't reach you.  
Want either this or that—you won't reach both.

**2:45 *And seek help in patience and the prayer, though it indeed is hard, except for the humble.***

The command came to him, "O Master, tell your community to have patience in their affairs so that they may reach what they desire. 'Patience is the key to relief.'"

If someone does not have the patience of the Men, let him not come to the Men's playing field.

You have not the legs of men—don't put on men's clothing!

You have not the means of no means—don't brag of selflessness! [DS 491]

Once that paragon of the world stepped into this playing field, he was not left for one hour without sorrow and grief. If he sat for a while cross-legged, the address came, "Sit like a servant!" If once he put a ring on his finger, the whip of rebuke would come down: "*What, did you reckon that We created you aimlessly?*" [23:115]. If once he placed his foot on the ground boldly, the command would come, "*Walk not in the earth exultantly*" [17:37]. When the work reached the limit and he was being tried from every corner, he sighed and said, "No prophet whatsoever has been tormented as I have been tormented."

The address came from the Exalted Presence, "O paragon! When someone's heart and spirit witness Me, will he complain of the burden of trial?" All the venom of grief in the treasuries of the Unseen was poured into one cup and placed in his hand, and then a curtain was lifted from his secret core: "O paragon! Drink all this venom while contemplating My beauty! *And be patient with thy Lord's decree, for surely thou art in Our eyes* [52:48]." The tongue of the state was saying,

"Were the Beloved's hand to pour poison for me,  
poison from His hand would be sweet.

\*

"Though Your hand is fire, it is my bed of roses.  
All that comes from You is sweet, whether healing or pain."

*Though it indeed is hard, except for the humble.* Humbleness is a stipulation of the prayer. It is a mark of the servant's need. The humble in the prayer are praised by the Real and chosen among the creatures. *Prosperous are the faithful, those who are humble in their prayers* [23:1-2]. Humbleness in the prayer is both outward and inward. The outward is that you keep your limbs within the

stipulations of courtesy. You do not look right and left. You keep your eyes on the spot of prostration while standing, on the feet while bowing, on the tip of the nose while prostrating, and on your side while bearing witness. God's Messenger said that looking around during the prayer is to give Iblis a portion of it. He also said, "When the servant stands to pray, he is before the eyes of the All-Merciful. When he looks around, God says, 'Child of Adam! At whom are you looking? Are you looking at someone better for you than I? Child of Adam! Look at Me, for I am better for you than the one at whom you are looking.'"

Inward humbleness is the fear of the heart, whether from remembrance and reflection or intoxication and gratitude. When God's Messenger prayed, his inward humbleness was such that everyone heard his heart's boiling, as has come in the report: "His breast used to boil like a cooking pot from weeping."

One day the Messenger passed by a man in prayer whose hand was playing with his hair. He said, "If his heart had humbleness, his limbs would be humbled." If this man's heart had fear, his hands would stay firm in the attribute of humbleness.

It has come in the traditions that in one of the battles, °Alī was struck by an arrow. The arrowhead was so stuck in his bone that as much as they tried, it could not be separated. They said, "Unless the flesh and skin is taken away and the bone broken, this arrowhead cannot be separated." His elders and young ones said, "If this is the case, we must wait until he is praying, for we always see that in the devotions of the prayer it is as if he has no awareness of the world."

They waited until he was finished with the obligatory acts and customs of the prayer and began with the supererogatory and additional acts. The physician came, opened up the flesh, broke the bone, and took out the arrowhead while °Alī remained as he was in the state of prayer. When he gave the greeting to complete the prayer, he said, "My pain has eased."

They told him what had happened to him while he was unaware. He said, "When I am in whispered prayer with God, the world might turn upside down, or they might strike me with swords and spears, but I would not be aware of the bodily pain because of the pleasure of the whispered prayer."

This is not so strange, for the splendorous revelation reports that when the women of Egypt blamed Zulaykhā for being in love with Joseph, she wanted to make them pay for that blaming. She invited them, prepared a place for them, sat them down in order, and gave each of them a knife in the right hand and an orange in the left. Thus He says, "*She gave each of them a knife.*" Once they had settled down, she brought Joseph in his finery and told him to pass by them: "*Go out to them!*" When the women of Egypt saw Joseph with that beauty and perfection, he appeared magnificent to them: *When they saw him, they admired him greatly* [12:31]. They all cut their hands and, because of contemplating Joseph's beauty and gazing on his perfection, they were unaware of having cut them.

So we know that in reality the contemplation of God's majesty, beauty, exaltedness, and awesomeness by the heart and secret core of °Alī's spirit was greater than the contemplation of the created Joseph by the estranged women. They became selfless like that and were unaware of their own pain. If it happened that °Alī's flesh and skin were cut open and he was unaware of the pain, this is not strange or marvelous.

### **2:53 And when We gave Moses the book and the discernment.**

He gave Moses' folk the discernment outwardly, and He placed the discernment in the inwardness of Muḥammad's folk in addition to their outwardness. The inner discernment is a light in the heart of the friends through which they separate truth from falsehood. It is alluded to in His words, "*If you are wary of God, He will appoint for you a criterion*" [8:29]. This is why Muṣṭafā said to Wābisa, "Ask for a pronouncement from your heart!" He also said, "Be wary of the perspicacity of the man of faith, for he gazes with the light of God." When this discernment appears in someone's inwardness, his drinking and aspiration are purified of the dust of others; the walkway of his desire is protected from the debris of customs, the carpet of his days is shaken loose of the opacities of mortal nature, and the eyes of his moment are kept away from the hand of newly arrived things.

Then, things that are reports for others are for him face-to-face vision; what had been the knowledge of certainty becomes the eye of certainty. No newly arrived thing enters existence in the empire without his heart being aware of it. Muṣṭafā was asked if this has a mark. He said, “When light enters the heart, the breast is expanded.” Its mark is that the breast is opened up to the divine light. When the breast is opened up, the aspiration becomes high, every sorrow is comforted, scatteredness turns into togetherness, the carpet of subsistence is spread, the rug of annihilation is rolled up, the corner of heartaches is closed off, and the door to the garden of union is opened. In joy and coquetry, he says with the tongue of the state,

“In the quarter of hope, I have a delightful home,  
in the story of passion, I have a delightful problem.  
Why do you ask details about my heart, O spirit of the world?  
Know, in short, that I have a delighted heart.”

**2:54** *When Moses said to his people, “O my people, you have wronged your souls by taking up the calf, so kill your own souls! That is better for you with your Creator.”*

Moses said to his people: “Take care not to suppose that your worship of the calf has harmed the majesty of the Self-Sufficient or that it is a defect for His kingship and lordhood. Rather, the harm and bad fortune belong to you. If something bad has happened, it has happened to you by your being held back from a Lord like Him. Otherwise, He has plenty of servants like you.

Sahl °Abdallāh Tustarī said, “God spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, and the exaltedness of the Lord God’s speech made that mountain like carnelian. Moses’ turned his gaze to himself: ‘Who is like me? For the God of the world and the world’s folk is talking to me without intermediary, and my standing place has turned into carnelian!’

“God did not let that pass. He said, ‘O Moses, look once right and left. What do you see?’

“Moses looked around and saw a thousand mountains of carnelian like Mount Sinai, on each mountain a man in the form of Moses, wearing a blanket like him, a hat on his head, a staff in hand, and talking to the Lord of the universe.” The tongue of Moses’ state was saying,

“I fancied that you were one body with me.  
How could I know that you’re everyone’s familiar?”

A poor man was seen whispering secretly with God and saying, “O God, approve of me as your lover. If You do not approve of me as a lover, approve of me as Your servant. If You do not approve of my as a servant, approve of me as Your dog.” He was saying, “O Lord, accept me for friendship. If I am not worthy of friendship, accept me for servanthood. If I am not worthy of servanthood, accept me for doghood, so that I may be the dog of Your threshold.”

O Friend, if you do not give me the forefront of respect,  
at least keep me outside the door like the dogs.

*So kill your own souls! That is better for you with your Creator.* By way of inwardness, this is addressed to the chevaliers of the Tariqah: “Cut off the heads of your souls with the sword of struggle so that you may reach Me. *Those who struggle in Us, We will guide them on Our paths* [29:69].”

Be careful not to say that this killing of the soul by way of struggle is easier than the killing that happened among the Children of Israel. Their killing was only once, and after that, everything was ease and repose.<sup>6</sup> But these chevaliers have a killing at every hour and every moment.

He who dies and reaches ease is not dead—  
the truly dead is dead among the living.

What is strange is that the more they see the blows of trial’s sickle, the more their passion increases

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6 In Stage Two, Maybudī explains that at God’s instruction, Moses commanded those who had not worshiped the calf to execute those who had. When he became deeply sorrowful at all the killing, God revealed to him, “Will you not be content that I will place both the killed and the killers in the Garden?”

day by day. Like a moth with the candle, every day they are more troubled by their trouble.

You are my heart's light, though You pair me with fire,  
my head's crown, though You keep me in dust,  
As dear as the eye, though You keep me lowly—  
You make me happy, though You keep me mourning.

It is as if every hour the postman of the Presence sends a message of inspiration from the Exalted Threshold to the spirit of these dear ones: "O chevaliers, the beginning of this work is killing and the end is joy. The outwardness of friendship is peril and its inwardness mystery. 'When someone loves Me, I kill him, and when I kill him, I am his wergild.'"

The wergild of him killed by hand is dinars,  
the wergild of him killed by passion is seeing.

**2:57 And We shaded you with clouds.**

This is an allusion to the Lord's gentleness and generosity. His loving kindness toward the servants is such that the Lord of the Worlds says, "O hapless child of Adam! Why do you not love Me? For I am worthy of love. Why do you not trade with Me? For I am munificent and bounteous. Why do you not engage in transactions with Me? For I am a bestower who is ample in bestowal. My mercy is not tight, nor do I hold back blessings from anyone.

"Look at what I did with the Children of Israel, how many blessings I poured down upon them, how much I caressed them in that empty desert! After they had turned away and disobeyed My command, I did not let them go to ruin. I commanded the mist to cast a shadow over them, I commanded the wind to place roasted birds in their hands, I commanded the clouds to rain down manna and honey on them, I commanded the pillar of light to give them brightness on the nights when there was no moon. When a child came into existence from its mother in that empty desert, it came into existence with the set of clothes that it needed. Then, as the child grew up, those clothes never became too old for it, nor did they become dirty. In the state of that person's life, the clothes were his ornament, and in the state of his death, his shroud. What blessing was there that I did not pour down upon them? In what manner did I fail to caress them? Yet they did not know My measure, nor did they show gratitude for the blessings.

"O hapless one! No one wants you the way I want you. When you come, no one will buy you the way I buy. When you sell yourself, others will buy only the faultless, but I buy the faulty. Others call out for the loyal, but I call out for the disloyal. If you come in old age, I will adorn the whole empire to honor you, and if you talk to Me in the fullness of youth, I will take you into My shelter tomorrow on the Day of Resurrection."

People disobey for a lifetime, then return in shame—  
We say to them, "Welcome, be at ease, greetings!"

**2:67 And When Moses said to his people, "God commands you to sacrifice a cow."**

This story of the cow of the Children of Israel in these verses and the mention of its attributes is one of the subtle points of wisdom and exalted pearls of the Qur'an. The Qur'an itself is the all-encompassing ocean. Many are the kingly pearls and night-brightening gems found in the ocean's depths.

You should read everything that the Exalted Lord said about the cow of the Children of Israel as an allusion to your own attributes. Then you will reach the station of worthiness to dive into this ocean and He will give you access to its deposited wonders and unseen pearls.

Altogether the attributes that He clarified in these verses are three: first, *neither old nor virgin* [2:68]; second, *golden, bright her color* [2:69]; third, *not abased to plow the earth* [2:71].

First, *neither old nor virgin*. He says it should not be broken down and old, nor newly born and immature. In other words, the feet of these chevaliers will go straight in the circle of the Tariqah when the intoxication and greediness of youth no longer veil them, and when the weakness of old age does not hinder them. Do you not see that revelation reached Muṣṭafā when he was not

a newly born youngster, nor had his days reached *the worst state of life* [16:70]? If there had been a state more complete, revelation would have reached him at its time.

Whenever desire for God pairs itself with the intoxication of youth, there is fear of the highwaymen. It is rare that a youngster in his new desire remains secure from the highwaymen. If it does happen in the empire, it seldom does. This is why Muṣṭafā said, “Your Lord marvels at a young man who has no youthful fervor.”

The second attribute is *golden, bright her color, gladdening the gazers*. When the chevaliers step into the field of the Tariqah in the state of the perfection of mortal nature and stand straight in it, the Unity will bring them into the color of love, and the color of love is colorlessness. It will wash them of anything mixed with colors—*We shall strip away all the rancor that is in their breasts* [7:43]. They will become pure spirit. Their makeup and their meanings will all take on one attribute. Any eye that gazes on them will be brightened, and any heart that ponders their work will feel familiarity.

Sufyān Thawrī became ill and was taken to a Christian physician. The Christian examined him and meditated. Then he said, “This is a wondrous state I see. This man’s liver is bleeding because of his fear of God, and the blood is coming out with his water. The religion that he has can only be true. I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His Messenger.”

When that Christian physician looked at the evidence, he felt familiarity. When someone looks at the faces of the Real’s friends with pure belief and meditates on their conduct, what will happen to the love in his heart? This is why He says, “*bright her color, gladdening the gazers.*” The color that makes lookers happy is the color of familiarity and friendship. Today He brings them forth in the color of familiarity and friendship, and what color is more beautiful than that? *Who is more beautiful in color than God?* [2:138]. Tomorrow He will color them with His own color. The Prophet said, “They will be colored with the light of the All-Merciful.”

The third attribute is what He says: “*not abased to plow the earth or to water the tillage, secure with no blemish on her.*” They are pure, virtuous, fortunate, beautiful in conduct, increasing day by day. They have not been tainted by the defects of the mimickers, nor have they fallen to the station of low in aspiration, nor have they been inscribed by friendship for the others or branded by the secondary causes. The sultan of mortal nature does not hold them in its hand, nor does the judge of appetites issue its rulings to them. They do not incline to figures and likenesses, nor do they lean on their own choice and contrivance. Just as they recognize that He who is worshiped is one, so also they know that the Intended is one, the Witnessed one, the Found one.

Everyone’s busy with his own affairs  
and I aspire to the helping Friend.

\*

Each has a prayer-niche in some direction,  
but Sanā’ī’s prayer-niche is Your street. [DS 1004]

**2:74** *Then your hearts became hardened after that, so they were like stones or even harder. And there are stones from which rivers come gushing, and among them are those that split and water comes forth from them, and among them are those that fall down in fear of God.*

In the case of the ignorant, the hardening of the heart is unkindness, lack of mercy, and distance from the path of the Real. In the case of the recognizers, the purifiers, and the limpid, hardening is the strength of the heart, the state of stability, the perfection of knowledge, and the state of limpidness. Abū Bakr used to show it from himself. Whenever he saw that someone was weeping and twisting in himself because of listening to the Qur’an, he would say, “I was like that until the *hearts became hardened.*”

This hardening is an allusion to the perfection of the state of the recognizers and the majesty of the level of the sincerely truthful. At the beginning of the work and the outset of desire the beginners shout, wail, cry, and weep, for passion has not yet fully established its rulership. When

the work reaches perfection, the limpidness of recognition becomes strong and the ruling power of passion fully establishes its rulership. Then that shouting and wailing are put aside, and joy and revelry arrive. With the tongue of their state they say,

“At first when passion for that beauty was new  
 my neighbors did not sleep at night because of my weeping.  
 Now I weep less because my passion has increased—  
 When fire takes over, there’s little smoke.”<sup>7</sup>

*There are stones from which rivers come gushing, and among them are those that split and water comes forth from them, and among them are those that fall down in fear of God. He made hard stones more excellent than cruel hearts and superior to them. He is saying, “Water comes from stone, and it becomes soft, and in fear of God it falls into the desert. But a cruel heart in the makeup of an estranged man does not moan in fear of God or weep in remorse, nor do mercy and tenderness enter into it.”*

The stories say that one of God’s prophets was passing through a desert and saw a small stone from which was flowing a great deal of water, much greater than the measure of the stone. The prophet stood there and wondered at its state. “What is the state of this stone? What is this water flowing from it?”

The Exalted Lord brought that stone into speech for him. It said, “O prophet of the Real! This water you see is my weeping. From the day it reached me that the Exalted Lord says, ‘*Its fuel is men and stones*’ [66:6], I have wept in remorse and fear.”

The prophet said, “Lord God, give it security from the Fire!”

Revelation came to him, “I have given it security from the Fire.”

The prophet went away and came back another day. He saw that the stone was weeping just like before—the water was flowing. He remained in wonder at that. The Exalted Lord made the stone speak again. It said, “O prophet of God! Why do you wonder at my weeping? God has given me security from the Fire. My first weeping was from remorse and sorrow, but this weeping is from happiness and gratitude.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, I have a long weeping in my head. I do not know if I weep from remorse or from joy. Weeping from remorse is the portion of an orphan, weeping from joy the portion of a candle. What is it to weep from joy? That story is long.”

## **2:77 Do they not know that God knows what they keep secret and what they announce?**

This is the speech of the Lord who is worshiped by the *tawhīd*-voicers, responds to those who call, knows the state of the servants, is aware of the apparent and hidden, and calls back those who have turned away. One He calls with explicit expressions, presenting Himself as the Nurturer. He says, “*Be penitent toward your Lord!*” [39:54]. Another He calls with His exalted allusions and turns the face of his heart away from others to Himself. He presents His lordhood and kingship to him and says, “*Do they not know that God knows what they keep secret and what they announce?*” For the recognizers, this is sufficient allusion. When the Lord of the Worlds says that He knows the secret cores and is aware of the hidden things, they sweep the dust of the others from their secret cores and give scatteredness no way into their hearts. When He says that He knows the apparent, they bring truthfulness to bear in their outward interaction with God’s creatures. This is why the folk of allusion have said that *He knows what they keep secret* is a command to watchfulness between servant and Lord, and *what they announce* is a command to truthfulness in interactions and settling accounts with the creatures.

In one of God’s books has come, “If you do not know that I see you, that is a defect in your faith. If you do know that I see you, why do you make Me the lowliest of gazers upon you?”

Equivalent to this verse is what the Exalted Lord says: “*He knows the treachery of the eyes and what the breasts conceal*” [40:19]. There are diverse treacheries in the eyes of the lookers, because the travelers are diverse.

7 The quatrain and most of the preceding paragraph are derived from Aḥmad Ghazālī, *Sawānīh*, p. 23.

The treachery of the eyes of the worshipers is that in the dark night, when it is time for whispering to God, they fall asleep and the intimacy of seclusion is lost to them. The prophet David received the revelation, “O David, he who claims to love Me is a liar if night comes, and he goes to sleep on Me. Does not every lover love to be secluded with his beloved?”

God praised Abraham for this attribute when He said, “*When night darkened over him*” [6:76]. When night came over him, sleep fled from his eyes. All his vision was turned toward the traces of His handiwork, and he found solace in that. God lauded the believers and praised their arising at night with his words, “*Their sides shun their couches* [32:16]. They are awake, they rise up at night—all the world goes to sleep and they tell Me secrets. They talk of their grief and joy. I will give them whatever they want, and I will keep them secure from whatever they fear.”

The treachery of the eyes of the recognizers is that they do not weep the bloody tears of grief when they fail to find union with the Friend. A man claimed to love a creature, and the two of them were separated. When they were turning away from each other, one eye of the lover shed tears, the other did not. He closed that eye for eighty-four years and did not open it. He said, “An eye that does not weep at separation from the friend is worthy of no punishment less than this.” In this meaning they composed these poems:

My eye wept tears on the morning of separation,  
but the other was stingy with weeping.  
I punished the one that was stingy  
by shutting it the day we met.

\*

One of my eyes wept at separation from my friend  
and the other became stingy and did not weep.  
When the day of union arrives, I will give it its recompense—  
“Well, you didn’t weep, so you mustn’t look.”

They say that one must weep so much in separation from the Friend that you imagine that the Friend is mixed with the tears and that He will fall to your side with the teardrops.

From the time, O my Life, You took up residence in my heart,  
I made my eyes rain down pearls.  
Perhaps once as companion to my tears  
You will come by way of my eyes to my side.

The treachery of the eyes of the sincerely truthful is that something in the universe should appear beautiful to them and they should gaze at it. When love for God is someone’s reality, his eyes are sewn toward all others. This is why Muḥammad said, “Your love for a thing makes you blind and deaf.”

O light of my eye, ask my eye: “Have you feasted on  
a beautiful scene since I parted from you?”

## **2:78 And among them are the unlettered.**

In this verse the attribute of unletteredness is a censure of the estranged and a mark of their shortcoming. In the verse where He says, “*Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet*” [7:157], it is a praise of Muṣṭafā and a mark of his perfection. This alludes to the fact that having the same name does not mean being of the same kind. The congruence of names does not require the congruence of meanings. The position of the Folk of the Sunnah in affirming the attributes of the Real was established according to this rule: the agreement of one name with another does not bring about the agreement of meanings. God has attributes and descriptions fitting for Godhood, and creatures are far from that. Created things have created attributes, and God is pure of that. Do you not see that “exalted” is a name of God, and He called Joseph *exalted* [12:78]? God’s exaltedness is worthy of Him and the created thing’s exaltedness is worthy of it.

By the agreement of the Muslims and the attestation of most of the unbelievers, God is existent and the creatures are existent. But, the creatures exist by God's existence-giving, and God exists by His own abidance and His own being and subsistence. The Muslims agree that God is alive, and there are many living things among the created. The created thing is alive through breath and through appropriate and timely nourishment, but God is alive through His life and subsistence and through His firstness and lastness—without when, how many, or how. All the opponents of the Folk of the Sunnah say that God is maker and the created thing maker. But the created thing is maker through artifice, instrument, striving, and measure, and God is maker through power and wisdom—whatever He wants, as He wants, and whenever He wants.

There are many similar things in the Qur'an. In short, God knows how He is, and He is just as He said He is, but the servant is incapable of knowing His howness. What God said about Himself should be accepted from the eyeteeth and assented to from the depth of the spirit. When someone fancies that having the same meaning is to be of the same kind, that is to go by the road of the roadless, and it is nothing but rebellion. Hoping to grasp God by imagination and seeking is absurd, and everything gained in this way will be faulty. Safety in the religion lies in accepting the message, approving of him who conveyed it, bowing the head, and putting aside seeking. Anyone who has this as his belief has gone on the right path, and his outcome will be as the Exalted Lord says:

**2:82** *Those who have faith and do wholesome deeds—those are the companions of the Garden, and they shall be there forever.*

It has been said that *those who have faith* is an allusion to the tree of faith and its being planted in the heart of the faithful. *Do wholesome deeds* is an allusion to the branches of that tree and its nurturing and growing. *Those are the companions of the Garden* is an allusion to the produce of the tree and the ripening of its fruit. This is the tree about which the Lord of the Worlds speaks and reports in another place: *“Its roots fixed, and its branches in heaven. It gives its fruit every season by the leave of its Lord”* [14:24-25]. The fruit of this tree is not like the fruit of other trees, which bring forth fruit once year after year. Rather, this tree brings forth new fruit every hour, or rather every moment. Each has another color, another taste, and another fragrance. The sweetness of worshipers is a fruit of this tree, the feast of the desirers' heart is a fruit of this tree, the limpidness of the recognizers' present moment is a fruit of this tree. Today in the house of service on the carpet of obedience they have the paradise of recognition, neither turned aside from them nor veiled. Tomorrow in the house of union on the carpet of friendship they will have the paradise of approval, *neither cut off nor withheld, and upraised carpets* [56:33-34].

**2:97** *Say: “Whoever is an enemy of Gabriel—he it is who sent it down upon thy heart.”*

Magnanimous and beautiful is the Qur'an that Gabriel brought down from the All-Merciful. It is the repose of the spirit of the friends, the healing of the hearts of the ill, a mercy to the faithful. This is why God says, *“he it is who sent it down upon thy heart.”* Elsewhere He says, *“Brought down by the trustworthy spirit upon thy heart”* [26:193-94]. When Gabriel conveyed the pure revelation, sometimes he came in the form of a mortal man, sometimes in the form of an angel. Whenever he brought verses about permitted and forbidden and the explication of the shariahs and rulings, he would be in human form, and there was no talk of the heart. Thus He says, *“He it is who sent down upon thee the Book”* [3:7]; *“Does it not suffice them that We sent down upon thee the Book?”* [29:51].

Then again, whenever there was talk of love, the attributes of passion, and the intimations of friendship, he would come in the form of an angel, spiritual and subtle, and he would join with Muṣṭafā's heart. He would convey the revelation of the Qur'an secretly to his secret core, and no one else was aware of him. When he returned and left behind the realm of his heart, Muṣṭafā would say, *“He broke away from me while I was aware of him.”*

It is said that when he was inundated by contemplation in this speech, the revelation would first descend to his heart, for He said to him, *“who sent it down upon thy heart.”* Then it would turn away from his heart to his understanding and his hearing. Then he would descend from the summit

of companionship to the lowland of service for the sake of the people's shares. This is the level of the elect. It may also happen that revelation descends on the hearing of certain people first, then on their understanding, then on their hearts, advancing from the lowness of struggle to the highness of contemplation. This is the level of the wayfarers and desirers. How far apart they are!

**2:106 *Whatever verse We abrogate or cause to be forgotten—We bring better than it or its like.***

By way of allusion He is saying, "We never make you advance from the locus of servanthood without setting you down in the courtyards of freedom. We never remove from you any of the attributes of mortal nature without making you abide through one of the marks that give witness to the Divinity."<sup>8</sup>

In terms of allusion He is saying, "O paragon of the horizons, O messenger to jinn and men, O quintessence of predetermination, O luminous full moon, O totality of perfection, O kiblah of prosperity, O basis of bounteousness, O displayer of gentleness and majesty, O you whose branch of union is blooming and whose star of exaltedness is always shining, O you whose good fortune has gone beyond the clouds of being and become specific to the marks giving witness to the Lordhood and the confirmation of the Divinity! Instant by instant the work of your good fortune is advancing. What others have as crowns, you have as sandals.

"The sandals that your steed threw from its feet  
became the crown of sultans—and may it ever be so! [DS 838]

"O paragon! Even though the stations beyond which We make you advance are the beautiful deeds of all the friends and the limpid, they are your ugly deeds as long as you remain within them. When you pass beyond them, ask forgiveness for them!"

Muṣṭafā said that he asked forgiveness for them seventy times a day: "My heart becomes clouded, so I ask forgiveness from God seventy times a day."

Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq said, "Would that I could witness that for which God's Messenger asked forgiveness!"

Concerning His words, "*Whatever verse We abrogate,*" it has also been said, "That is, the servant is not transferred from a state without being given what is above and beyond it. 'Whenever We abrogate any trace of worship, We replace it with one of the lights of servanthood. Whenever We abrogate one of the lights of servanthood, We put in its place something of the moons of servitude.'"<sup>9</sup> So he continues, being transferred from the lower to the higher, until he falls under one of the attractions of the Real. And "One attraction from the Real is equivalent to all the deeds of jinn and men."

When someone is lifted up by the court of Lordhood and received by the marks bearing witness to Divinity, Unity nurtures him in the domes of exaltation with the attribute of love and takes him from state to state, conveying him from this station to the next station until he falls under the attraction of the Real. After having been a traveler, he is snatched away. Then, wherever he may have gone in his whole life in the state of traveling, he is taken beyond that at the first step in the state of being pulled, for "One attraction from the Real is equivalent to all the deeds of jinn and men." Indeed, just as He is not similar to anyone, so also His pulling is not similar to the traveling of the creatures. To the lords of traveling, He says, "Preserve the commands and prohibitions." To the commands and prohibitions He says, "Preserve the lords of attraction, for in the world of realities the descendents of Adam remain alive through them. The well-trodden path of truthfulness is filled with the firm fixity of their feet."

In the world of realities they are called "the strangers among the tribes"—like Bilāl from Abyssinia, Ṣuḥayb from Byzantium, Salmān from Persia, and Uways from Qaran. How beautifully has this been said by that chevalier:

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8 LI 1:124.

9 There are textual problems with this Arabic quotation, so I have corrected them by following the original text as given in LI 1:123. The three degrees of worship, servanthood, and servitude are explained by Qushayrī in his *Risāla* as pertaining respectively to the common people among the faithful, the elect, and the elect of the elect.

Nothing comes from a handful of frivolous seekers of leadership—  
learn being a Muslim from Salmān and religion's pain from Abū Dardā. [DS 55]

It is they who knew the worth of Muṣṭafā's Shariah and recognized the rightful due of his Sunnah. When the limpidness of the secret core of such sincerely truthful men shines on a thorn, it becomes the jasmine of the religion. If it shines on the obedient, they are accepted; if it shines on the disobedient, they are forgiven; and if it shines on the ungodly, they become friends. Thus it is told that Ḥātim Aṣamm and Shaqīq Balkhī went on a journey. An ungodly old man, a minstrel, became their companion in the road. Most of the time he was busy with the tools of corruption and the instruments of ungodliness. Ḥātim kept on waiting for Shaqīq to prevent him from doing that and to blame him, but he did not do so, and the journey came to an end. At the moment of parting, the ungodly old man said, "What kind of people are you? I have never seen anyone heavier. You never danced once, you never clapped your hands."

Ḥātim said, "Excuse us. I am Ḥātim, and that's Shaqīq."

When the old man heard their names, he fell to their feet in repentance and became their disciple, eventually becoming one of the friends. Afterwards Shaqīq said to Ḥātim, "I saw with the patience of Men and I hunted with the hunting of Men."

**2:112** *No, whosoever submits his face to God, doing the beautiful, shall have his wage with his Lord, and no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they grieve.*

The work is the work of the purifiers, the good fortune the good fortune of the truthful, the conduct the conduct of the pure, and the hard cash the hard cash in their purse. Today they are on the carpet of service with the light of recognition, tomorrow on the carpet of companionship with the joy of union. *Surely We purified them with that which is pure* [38:46]. He is saying, "We made them pure and brought them forth pure from the crucible of testing so that they would be worthy for the Presence," for the Pure Presence gives access only to the pure. "Surely God is goodly and accepts only the goodly." Nothing is of any use with the Pure Presence save pure activity and pure speech. Then you must become so purified of that pure activity that you do not seek it out in this world or the afterworld. Then you may reach God pure. *Surely he shall have nearness to Us, and a beautiful return* [38:40].

The secret of this talk is what was said by Abū Bakr Zaqqāq: "The defect in the purity of every purifier is to see his purity. If God desires to purify his self-purification, He will eliminate the seeing of his self-purification from his purification. Then he will be 'purified' [*mukhlaṣ*], not 'purifying' [*mukhliṣ*]." He is saying that your self-purification will be pure when it is pure of your seeing it.

Know also that this self-purification is not in your hands, nor in your capacity or possession. Rather, it is a secret of the Lord placed there by the Glorified. No one is aware of it, and no one else has any access to it. The Unity says, "It is one of My secrets that I deposit in the hearts of those whom I love among My servants." He is saying, "I choose a servant and approve him for My love, then I place my deposit in the core of his heart. Satan has no access to it so as to destroy it, nor does the soul's caprice see it so as to change it, nor does the angel reach it so as to write it down."

This is why Junayd said, "Self-purification is a secret between God and the servant. No angel knows it that he might write it down, no satan that he might corrupt it, and no caprice that it might make it deviate." Dhu'l-Nūn Miṣrī said, "When this deposit is placed within someone, his mark is that people's praise and censure have the same value. He sees their applause and their curses in one color. He does not become happy from the former, nor does he shrivel from the latter."

Thus on the night of proximity and generosity, all creatures were reciting the edict of Muṣṭafā's ruling authority, but he did not look at anything from the corner of his eye. He was saying, "You who are the proximate of the Presence are saying, 'Peace be upon the wholesome Prophet, who is the best of those in heaven and earth.' But I am waiting to be taken back to the doorstep of the cruelty of Abū Jahl so that he may say, 'O sorcerer! O liar!' Just as I strike the 'best of those in the heaven and earth' against the touchstone, so also I strike it against 'sorcerer, liar.' If the two do

not have the same value, I will take off the hat of my claims.”

Go, you’re still in bond to attributes, still in love with yourself,  
if you find the pulpit’s exaltation sweeter than the gallows’ abasement. (DS 210)

Someone like this is called “purified,” not “purifier,” as Abū Bakr Zaqqāq said: “Then he will be purified, not purifier.” The purifier is someone in a whirlpool in the middle of the perilous ocean. The life-snatching sharks come to him from right and left. He cuts through the water and he is fearful about how and when he will reach the shore of security. This is why the great ones of the past have said, “The purifier is in great peril.”

The purified is he who has reached the shore of security. The Lord of the Worlds has shown that Moses had both states. He says, “*Surely he was ‘purifier/purified’ and he was a messenger, and prophet*” [19:51]. This has been read as both *mukhlīṣ* and *mukhlaṣ*.” If you read it as *purifier*, then it is the beginning of his work. If you read it as *purified*, then it is the end of his work. He was a purifier when the work of prophethood joined with him and the caress of Unity showed its face to him. He became purified when the work of prophethood took flight and he became bold toward the Exalted Presence. This is indeed the state of someone who first had traveling and then reached the pull of the Real.

What a difference there is between him and our prophet Muḥammad! The difference between Muḥammad and Moses is such that he was protected by the lasso of the Real’s pull before the era of Adam’s clay, as he said: “I was a prophet when Adam was molded of clay.” This is why Shiblī said, “Everyone will have an antagonist at the resurrection, and I will be Adam’s antagonist, for he made my road steep, because I was stuck in his mire.”

Concerning this Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, “Do you know when the realizer reaches the Real? When the flood of lordhood arrives and the dust of mortal nature disappears, when the Haqiqah increases and the pretext decreases. Body does not remain, nor heart, nor spirit. He stays limpid, released from water and clay. Light is not mixed with dust, nor dust with light—dust is with dust, and light with light. The tongue is lost in remembrance, remembrance in the Remembered. The heart is lost in love, love in the Light. The spirit is lost in face-to-face vision, and face-to-face vision is far from explication.”

If you want this day, come out of yourself like a snake from its skin. Abandon yourself, for it is not beautiful for you to be ascribed to yourself. This is exactly what that chevalier said:

“Endless passion has nothing to do with a heart  
that stays firm in its own attributes.  
No friend in passion’s road has ever embraced  
the realm of meaning along with the realm of form.” [DS 209-10]

## **2:114 Who does greater wrong than he who bars God’s places of prostration?**

In terms of allusion, He is asking, “Who does greater wrong than he who ruins the homeland of worship with appetites? Who does greater wrong than he who ruins the homeland of recognition with attachments? Who does greater wrong than he who ruins the homeland of contemplation by glancing at others?”

The homeland of worship is the soul of the renunciants, the homeland of recognition the heart of the recognizers, and the homeland of contemplation the secret core of the friends.

When someone keeps his soul away from appetites, the homeland of his worship flourishes and his name is written in the register of the renunciants. Thus Mālik Dīnār lingered in Basra for forty years and never ate or tasted the dates of Basra, dried or fresh, before he died. He was asked about that and he said, “The possessor of appetite is veiled from his Lord.”

When someone keeps his heart pure of attachment, the homeland of his recognition flourishes and he belongs to the ranks of the recognizers. Thus one of them said about Ibrāhīm Adham, “I was with Ibrāhīm Adham in a journey, and we were afflicted with hunger. After we settled in a mosque he brought out some sections of the Qur’an he had with him and said, ‘Go and pawn these sections and bring us something to eat, for hunger has stricken us.’ I went out, and someone came

forward to me in front of a fully laden mule. He was saying, ‘The one I am seeking is a light-complexioned man called Ibrāhīm ibn Adham.’”

“I said, ‘What do you desire from him?’

“He said, ‘I am the slave of his father, and these things belong to him.’ So I led him to him. He entered the mosque, put his head and hands on the ground and kissed him. Ibrāhīm said, ‘Who are you?’ He said, ‘I am your father’s slave. Your father has died, and I have with me 40,000 dinars, your inheritance from your father. I am your slave. Command me as you wish.’

“Ibrāhīm said, ‘If you speak the truth, then you are free, for the sake of God. And what you have with you is all a gift to you. Leave us.’ After he left, he said, ‘My Lord, I spoke to You about a loaf of bread, so You showered this world down upon me. By Your rightful due! Even if You make me die from hunger, I will not again undertake to seek anything.’”

When someone keeps his secret core pure of glancing at others, the homeland of his contemplation flourishes and he becomes one of the friends. Thus Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī turned the eyes of his aspiration completely away from all others, stuffed the ears of striving, and pulled the tongue of loss into the mouth of disappointment. He extracted the intrusion of the commanding soul, put himself in the ballista of meditation, shot himself into every valley, melted his body with the fire of jealousy in all the crucibles, and drove the horse of seeking into the space of every desert. With the tongue of solitariness he was saying,

“People are wishing for repose and comfort,  
but I, O Exalted One, wish to encounter You empty.

\*

“Each has a prayer-niche in some direction,  
but Sanā’i’s prayer-niche is Your street.” [DS 1004]

Abū Yazīd said, “When this claim appeared from my makeup, the Unity made me taste the blow of jealousy. He questioned me with awesomeness to show me how to come out of the furnace of testing. He said, ‘Whose is the kingdom?’ [40:16].

“I said, ‘Yours, O Lord.’

“He said, ‘Whose is the free choice?’

“I said, ‘Yours, O God.’

“When He saw and knew my weakness and need, He was aware that my attributes had reached His attributes. He said, ‘O Abū Yazīd! Now that you have come to have nothing, you have everything. Now that you have come to have no tongue and no spirit, you have tongue and spirit.’”

Other than this tongue we have another tongue,  
other than hell and paradise, we have another place.  
Men of free lineage live with another spirit—  
their pure substance has another source.

“Then He gave me a tongue of self-sufficient gentleness, a heart of light, and an eye of divine artisanry such that if I speak, I speak with His assistance. I walk with His strength, I see with His light, I take with His power, and I sit in His session: ‘I am his hearing and he hears through Me, his eyesight and he sees through Me.’

“When I reached this station, my tongue became the tongue of *tawhīd* and my spirit the spirit of disengagement. I do not speak for myself, nor do I come back to myself. In reality the speaker is He, and I am a spokesman in the midst.” This is what the Unity said: ‘*Thou didst not throw when thou threwest, but God threw*’ [8:17].”

“I am his hand and he takes through Me” is this, if you have recognition.

The outside of both worlds is the inside of my heart—  
my place is one step beyond the created world.  
Tribulation lies only in the makeup of my water and clay.  
What was before water and clay? That is what I will be.

**2:116** *They say, “God has taken a son.” Glory be to Him! Rather, to Him belongs what is in the heavens and the earth; all are devoted to Him.*

He is pure, without fault, incomparable, the one Lord—one in forbearance, one in loyalty, one in love.

If the servant does harm, He does not cut off from him, for He is one in forbearance. If the servant inclines toward another, He does not so incline, because He is one in loyalty. If the servant breaks the covenant, He does not break it, because He is one in love.

He is one in Essence, one in attributes, rid of causes, incomparable with obsequiousness, praised by all expressions, fitting for all allusions, the creator of time and the hours, the determiner of instants and moments. His artisanry has no defect, His determining no contrivance, His description no likeness. He is a determiner who has always been.

Powerful, Knowing, Alive, Desiring,  
Hearing, Seeing, clothed in majesty,  
Hallowed beyond having an equal,  
transcending opinion and talk.

\*

O Essence of perfection lacking nothing!  
The effusion of generosity comes from Your hand alone.

He is a lord without associate or partner, a king without equal or need. His promise is no lie, His name is no metaphor. The door of withholding is shut and the door of His munificence open. He is a forgiver of sins, a caresser of the faulty. He knows without cause, He is able without artifice. He is alone without paucity, spreader of the creed, outside of number, artisan without toil, self-standing until the Endless, hallowed beyond envy. His name is Subtle, Self-Standing, and *Self-Sufficient*; *He begets not, nor was He begotten, and equal to Him is none* [112:2-4].

So much are You face-to-face in my heart,  
so much hidden from my eyes,  
that your describer cannot describe You—  
in Your attributes You are as You are.

A renowned Lord, caring for His servants—ears are open to His name, hearts imprisoned by His message, *tawhīd*-voicers fallen into His snare, yearners drunk with the love from His cup. He is the lovingly kind such that no one in the universe is like Him in loving kindness. The disobedient and destitute have hope in Him, and the poor are happy in the subsistence of His majesty. Their domicile is at His threshold, their sitting in hope of union with Him, their being in bonds to His loyalty, their ease with His name, marks, and remembrance.

The two hundred spiritual worlds are the luster of His bounty,  
the two hundred luminous worlds are from the light of His beauty.

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, “O God, for a while I delighted in remembering You—then I chose resurrection. Who is fitting for this work like me? Enough for me that I am worthy of Your companionship.

“O God, there is no heart aside from remembering You, no spirit aside from finding You. How can one live without heart and spirit?”

“O God, I have remained apart from the world’s folk, for my eyes are empty of You and I see You face-to-face!”

“You are not empty of me, but I do not see Your face.  
You are a spirit with me, but not seen by me.

“O good fortune of the heart and life of the spirit! O found without being perceived and face-to-face without being seen! Your remembrance is in the heart and on the tongue, Your love in the midst of secret core and spirit. Finding You is a day that comes forth suddenly by itself. He who finds

You busies himself with neither happiness nor grief. O Lord, complete for us the work that cannot be expressed! Finish for us the work with You that is hidden from the two worlds!”

The folk of wisdom have spoken of a marvelous intimation and a beautiful subtlety in the verse, “*They say, ‘God has taken a son.’ Glory be to Him!*” This subtlety is that God has made apparent a seed and set up a successor for everything in the world headed for annihilation. Thus its species will remain in the world and it will not totally cease to be. This is the universal motivation for the existence of the child—so the species may remain, the child may succeed its father, and descendants will not be cut off. Do you not see that the sun, the moon, the stars, and their likes have no way to annihilation in the redoublings of the days until the resurrection? Hence He did not make seeds for them or set up successors. In contrast, since the species of plants and the kinds of animals are annihilated during the days, it was imperative for them to have seeds and successors. From here it is known that it is not fitting for God to take a child, and He has no use for a successor. He is a living one who subsists and an enactor who continues. The defect of annihilation has no way to Him, blight and disappearance have no place in His majesty, and the fault of defectiveness does not fit into His perfection. He always was and always will be. Why should He need a child? How should that be appropriate? Greatly exalted is God beyond that!

Then He added to the argument and said, “*Rather, to Him belongs what is in the heavens and the earth; all are devoted to Him.*” If a child is needed, it is needed to serve the father, to support and help him. Thus the Exalted Lord says, “*He has made for you from your wives children and grandchildren*” [16:72]. Also, a father is not complete in himself, nor can he do without helpers. He needs others to make up for his poverty and weakness. So, what need does the Lord of the Worlds have for children? He has neither poverty to be made up for by someone, nor incapacity to take help from someone. Along with His lack of needs, the heaven, the earth, and everything within them are His possession and kingdom. All are His slaves and servants. All serve Him and obey Him, whether willingly or unwillingly. He alludes to this with His words, “*To God prostrate themselves all in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly*” [13:15].

**2:121 *Those to whom We have given the Book and who recite it with the rightful due of recitation.***

The rightful due of recitation is that you recite the Qur’an with burning, need, limpidness of heart, and pure belief, with a remembering tongue, a believing heart, and a limpid spirit—the tongue in remembrance, the heart in grief, the spirit with love; the tongue with loyalty, the heart with limpidness, the spirit with shame; the tongue in the work, the heart in the mystery, and the spirit in joy.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “In the remembrance the servant reaches a place where the tongue reaches the heart, the heart reaches the spirit, the spirit reaches the secret core, and the secret core reaches the Light. The heart says to the tongue, ‘Silence!’ The spirit says to the heart, ‘Silence!’ The secret core says to the spirit, ‘Silence!’ God says to the traveler, ‘My servant, you have been speaking for a while. Now I will speak, you listen.’”

**2:124 *And when his Lord tried Abraham with some words.***

It has been narrated from al-Ḥasan that he said, “God tried him with the stars, the moon, and the sun, and he spoke beautiful words in that, for he knew that His Lord was constant and never ceasing. He tried him with the sacrifice of the son, and he was patient in that and did not fall short.” He is saying that the shining stars and brilliant sun were adorned, and Abraham was tested. “That was so that the one tried would know, not that the one trying him was ignorant.” In other words, this was to show him what comes from him and how he was walking on the road of servanthood.

Abraham came out of it extremely virtuous, fortunate, and felicitous. He said, “*This is my Lord*” [6:76]. It is said that here there is an ellipsis. He means, “They say, ‘*This is my Lord.*’ These estranged ones say that this is my God. But it is not, for this is one of the low ones, those taken down. I do not love the low ones and the taken down.”

Well done Abraham! He spoke a splendid point. It rose up from the low, but he knew that the Lord is high, beyond His servants. Again, when it went down, he turned away from it and said, “I do not love the low ones, for they are not worthy of Godhood.”

Here the lords of realization have voiced another intimation and have seen another subtle point. They say that from the first Abraham's dust was mixed with the water of bosom friendship, his secret core was burned with the fire of passion, his spirit was lit up with the love of eternity, and the ocean of passion was stirring up waves inside him. Then at dawn, at the moment of the morning draft of the passionate, the shouts of joy of the drunkards, and the uproar of those who have lost their hearts, he opened his eyes from the giddiness of the wine of bosom friendship and the drunkenness of passion and said, "*This is my Lord.*" This is as they say:

Your image has so taken my eyes  
that wherever I look I fancy it's you.

Both drunkenness and passion are paths of trial and the basis of trouble. Do you not see where passion by itself threw Joseph of Canaan, and what drunkenness by itself did to Moses of °Imrān? In the case of Abraham, both were together. Why then is it strange that drunkenness and the uproar of heart-lostness should make him gaze on the moon and the stars and say, "*This is my Lord*"? This is exactly what they say about a drunkard—that he does not know what he is saying. If he did know, then how could he be drunk?

You said, "I'm drunk." By my soul if you are—  
he who is drunk does not know drunkenness.

As for Abraham's being tried by the sacrifice of his child, that is because he gazed on the beauty of Ishmael and began to pay regard to him, for the sword of Ishmael's beauty wounded Abraham's heart. The command came, "O Bosom Friend! Did We preserve you from Azar and Azari idols so that you could gaze on the face of Ishmael? The stamp of bosom friendship with Me and glancing at others cannot be combined, whether you gaze at the Azari carvings or Ishmael's face.

Any talk that keeps you back from the road—let it be unbelief or faith.  
Any picture that holds you back from the Friend—let it be ugly or beautiful. [DS 51]

It was not long before a sword was placed in his hand and it was said, "Sacrifice Ishmael, for two friends will not fit in one heart."

With two kiblāhs you can't walk straight on the road of *tawhīd*—  
either the Friend's approval, or your own caprice. [DS 488]

In terms of the outward meaning, the story of the sacrifice is known and famous. Concerning the inward meaning and in the tongue of allusion, it has been said, "Cut off your heart's attachment to your child with the sword of truthfulness." "Truthfulness is God's sword in His earth. He does not place it on anything without cutting it."

Abraham heard the command and with the sword of truthfulness cut his heart off from his child. He separated love for Ishmael from his heart. The call came, "O Abraham, '*Thou hast been truthful to the vision*' [37:105]. The tongue of the state was saying,

"I separated from creatures, sharpening my love for You.  
I made my child an orphan in order to see You."

**2:129** *"Our Lord, and raise up amidst them a messenger from among them, who will recite Thy signs to them, teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them. Surely Thou art the Exalted, the Wise."*

**2:130** *And who shrinks from the creed of Abraham but one foolish in himself? We chose him in this world, and in the next world he shall be among the wholesome.*

One of these two verses is in praise of the Beloved [Muḥammad], the other in praise of the Bosom Friend [Abraham]. Although both are caressed and worthy prophets, adorned by the generous bestowal and the bounteousness of the Lord, there is a difference between the Beloved and the Bosom Friend! The Bosom Friend is the desirer, and the Beloved the desired. The desirer is the wanter,

and the desired the wanted. The desirer is the traveler, and the desired is the snatched away. The desirer stands in the station of service in his traveling, and the desired stands on the carpet of companionship in the pulling of the Real. When someone is in his own traveling, his road will not be empty of deception. This is why the Bosom Friend's road, despite the greatness of his state, was not empty of deception. Thus, when the star of deception came into his road, he said, "*This is my Lord*" [6:76]. In the same way, the Lordhood kept on opening up ambushes of deception by means of the moon and the sun. Finally protection took the reins of his bosom friendship and pulled him to itself from the world of deception. He said, "*Surely I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth, unswerving*" [6:79].

Muṣṭafā, however, was in the pull of the Real. The ambush of deception was not able to make his road steep. Rather, on that night everything that was not and then came to be sought his help from deception. They had recourse to the lights of his Shariah against deception and backsliding. He was confirmed by the Real's pull to such an extent that he did not look at any of that from the corner of his eye. *The eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass* [53:17].

There is as much difference between the Bosom Friend and the Beloved as there is between the traveler and the snatched away. The Bosom Friend had the attribute of servitors at the threshold of Lordhood, standing on his own feet: "*Surely I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth, unswerving.*" The Beloved was sitting in joy in the Presence of Unity in the row of the near and the confidants: "The blessed salutations and the goodly prayers belong to God." This sitting is the place of the snatched away, and that standing is the station of the travelers. The Bosom Friend was in his own traveling when he said, "*And who I hope will forgive me my offense on the Day of Doom*" [26:82]. The Beloved was in the pull of the Real when it was said to him, "*So that God may forgive thee thy sins*" [48:2]. The Bosom Friend said, "*Disgrace me not on the day when they are raised up* [26:87]: O Lord, do not shame me on the day of the Uprising." About the Beloved He said, "*The day when God will not disgrace the Prophet* [66:8]: We will not shame him." The Bosom Friend said, "*God suffices me*" [39:38]. It was said to the Beloved, "*O Prophet, God suffices thee*" [8:64]. The Bosom Friend said, "*Surely I am going to my Lord*" [37:99]. It was said about the Beloved, "*Who took His servant by night*" [17:1]. What a difference between the two!

The Bosom Friend is the one who acts so that God will approve of him. The Beloved is the one for whom God decrees what is approved and desired by him. This is why He says, "*Thy Lord shall bestow upon thee so that thou shalt approve*" [93:5].

*Our Lord, and raise up amidst them a messenger from among them, who will recite Thy signs to them, teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them.* Concerning the reason for the arrangement of the words of this verse, the folk of the meanings have said that the first way station of Muṣṭafā's prophethood is that he made manifest the signs and marks of his prophethood to the people and recited God's Book to them. This is why He says first, "*who will recite Thy signs to them.*" Then, after reciting the Book, teaching is needed, that is, he should teach the Book's realities and meanings to the people so that they may perceive them and put them into practice. Teaching them the Book conveys them to wisdom. For, if someone recites the Book, perceives its realities, and puts it into practice, inescapably the knowledge of wisdom will show itself to him. Then through the knowledge of wisdom he will become pure and virtuous, worthy of the neighborhood of the Real. This is the reason for the arrangement of the verse—first He said recitation, then teaching, then wisdom, then purification. And God knows best.

### **2:131** *When his Lord said to him, "Submit," he said, "I submit to the Lord of the Worlds."*

When the Bosom Friend began to travel, the command came from the Exalted Presence, "O Abraham, anyone who wants Me must belong to Me totally. As long as a sliver of mortal desires and soulish resistance remains with you, you will not pass from the suffering of striving to the ease of the pull. 'The ransomed slave stays a slave so long as a dirham is owed.'"

If you want Me, you must want what I desire.  
You must leave aside yourself totally.

The Bosom Friend said, “O Lord, Abraham no longer has any self-governance, any free choice. Now I have come on the feet of poverty, in the state of brokenness, to see what You command. *I submit*. I have overthrown myself and entrusted my work to You. I have come back to You entirely.”

The command came, “O Abraham, that is a very great claim. Every claim must have a meaning, and everything rightfully due a reality. Now watch out for the testing!”

He was tested by other than himself, by part of himself, and by his whole self. The test by others was that he had plentiful possessions. They say he had 70,000 sheep in seven thousand herds. Each herd had a dog with a gold collar around its neck. He was commanded to detach his heart from all of it and to toss it away in the path of God. The Bosom Friend tossed it all away and left nothing for himself.

In the traditions it has come that the angels said, “Lord God, ever since this call was given out in the World of the Dominion, ‘*And God took Abraham as a bosom friend*’ [4:125], our spirits have been in a whirlpool and our gall-bladders have been melting because of this special favor. How is the Bosom Friend worthy of this generosity?”

The call came, “Gabriel, open up your peacock-feathers and go from the top of the Lote Tree to the summit of that mountain and test the Bosom Friend.” With the divine determination and facilitation Gabriel came down in the form of a child of Adam. He stood beside that mountain and shouted, “O Holy One!” The Bosom Friend fainted from the pleasure of hearing that. When he came to, he said, “O servant of God! Say that name again, and this herd belongs to you.” Gabriel again shouted out, “O Holy One!” The Bosom Friend was rolling in the dust like a half-slaughtered chicken. He was saying, “Say it again, and another herd belongs to you!”

You spoke of Him to me, O Sa<sup>c</sup>d, and you increased  
my madness. So increase that speaking, O Sa<sup>c</sup>d!

In this manner he was asking for loans, and each time he gave to him a herd with the dog and the gold collar, until he gave it all and lost it all. When he had lost all of it, the knots became tighter, passion and destitution joined together. The Bosom Friend said, “O servant of God! Recite the name of the Friend one more time, and my spirit is yours!”

Wealth, gold, things—gamble them away for nothing.  
When the work reaches your spirit, gamble it away!

Gabriel became happy. He spread his peacock feathers and said, “He was right to take you as a bosom friend. If there is any shortcoming, it is in our eyes. You have passion to perfection.”

When Gabriel appeared to him, he said to him, “O Bosom Friend, I have no use and no need for these sheep.”

The Bosom Friend said, “Even if you have no use for them, there is no option in chivalry to take them back.”

Gabriel said, “Then let us scatter them in the deserts and the wildernesses so that they may pasture as they desire. The world’s folk will benefit from that until the resurrection.” The mountain sheep that are now scattered throughout the world all come from that lineage. Until the resurrection anyone who hunts and eats one is a guest of the Bosom Friend and consumes the food at the table of the beautiful doing of that majestic angel’s presence.

As for Abraham’s being tested by a part of himself, it is that he was shown the sacrifice of his child in a dream and instructed to do that. The whole of that story will be told in its own place, God willing.

As for his being tested by his whole self, it is that the rebellious Nimrod was persuaded to light up a fire and build a mangonel in which to throw him. The divine address came to the fire: “*O fire, be coolness and safety*” [21:69]. In that state, Abraham began to weep. The angels thought that Abraham was weeping because he had been thrown into the fire. Gabriel came and said, “O Abraham, why do you weep?”

He said, “Because I am being burnt and beaten, but the Real has called out to the fire! O Gabriel, if I were to be burnt a thousand times and the call was for me, I would love that more.

O Gabriel, this weeping is not for the loss of the spirit and the burning of myself, it is for the loss of the gentle subtleties of the Real's call."

It is said that Gabriel came to him and said, "Have you any need?" He answered, "Of you, no." Gabriel said, "No doubt you have need of God. Ask from Him."

He said, "I am surprised at you. Is He asleep such that I should wake Him up? Is He uninformed such that I should let Him know? Sufficient asking from Him is His knowledge of my state."

The angel of oceans and storms came and said, "O Bosom Friend, do I have permission? Hold firm and I will bring this fire to nothing with one glance and I will destroy the estranged."

The Bosom Friend said, "All are His servants and creatures. If He wants to destroy them, He Himself can do it."

In heaven an uproar fell into the ranks of the angels: "Lord God, on the face of the earth it is Abraham who recognizes You and attests to Your oneness. But You know better. Will You burn him?"

The command came from the threshold of unneediness, "Be still and at ease. You have no news of the secrets of this work. He is seeking a secluded place of friendship. For a moment he wants to busy himself with Me in that secluded place without the intrusion of others."

That is why, when the Bosom Friend was asked later, "What was your sweetest and most congenial day?"

He said, "The day when I was in Nimrod's fire. My present moment was empty and my heart limpid. I was near to the Real and far removed from the creatures."

How blessed was the time of Your covenant, without which  
my heart would have no place for ardor!

When Abraham was brought forth pure from the crucible of testing and said, "*I submit truthfully,*" the Lord of the Worlds wrote out the inscription of bosom friendship for him and commanded the world's folk to be his followers. He said, "*So follow the creed of Abraham, an unswerving man, and he was not of the associaters*" [3:95].

**2:137** *If they have faith in the like of that in which you have faith, they will have found guidance; but if they turn away, they will have split from you. God will suffice you against them; He is the hearing, the knowing.*

"O master of the east and west and messenger to men and jinn! We have placed these tasks in your tracks and commanded the world's folk to follow you. We wrote the Compact of Love for your servitors and brought them under Our gaze. We threw your opponents into the lowland of abasement and feebleness. Whoever opposes you is on the side of the enemies, and whoever serves you is on the side of the friends. When someone wants you, We want him and give him access to Us. When someone turns away, We burn him and throw him down. *Whoso obeys the Messenger has obeyed God* [4:80].

"O paragon! Do not let your heart be tight because these estranged people have turned away and spoken ill. We will suffice you against their business and We will remove their torment from you. *God will suffice you against them.*"

**2:138** *God's color—and who is more beautiful in color than God?*<sup>10</sup>

"Then We will bring a people who have come out in the color of *tawhīd* and who are adorned with the attribute of love and clothed in *God's color*, which is colorlessness. Whoever is pure of the color of the color-mixers is colored by *God's color.*"

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10 The verse is often translated "*The baptism of God; and who is better than God in baptism?*" Maybudī and other commentators explain that the verse refers to a Christian practice of baptism with yellow water. The Qur'an is saying that God's color is better than the color of baptismal water. In Stage Two Maybudī says the verse can also be interpreted as a reference to the notion of *fiṭra*, the innate disposition or original creation that inclines to *tawhīd*, in keeping with the hadith, "Every child is born according to the *fiṭra*, and then its parents turn it into a Jew, a Christian, or a Zoroastrian" (KA 1:382).

He who has painted a thousand worlds with color—  
why would He buy my color and yours, O bankrupt man!

So, when someone reaches *God's color* and falls back on Him, He colors him in His own color. In the same way, the elixir makes copper and iron the same color as itself and they become precious. If the estranged fall back on Him, they become His familiars, and if the disobedient fall back, they become obedient.

On this topic many stories are told about the shaykhs. One of them is narrated from Ibrāhīm Khawāṣṣ. He said, "Once I went into the desert and saw a Christian, who had his sash around his waist. He asked if he could accompany me, so we walked for seven days. He said, 'O monk of the unswerving folk! Bring forth what you have of expansiveness, for we are hungry.'

"I said, 'O God, do not disgrace me before this unbeliever.' Then I saw a tray, upon which were bread, roast meat, dates, and a pitcher of water. We ate and drank, and we walked for seven days. Then I became hasty and I said, 'O monk of the Christians, bring what you have, for my turn is finished.' He leaned on his staff and supplicated, and lo there were two trays with double what there had been on my tray.

"I was bewildered and upset, and I refused to eat. He insisted, but I did not respond to him. He said, 'Eat, for I have two pieces of good news to give to you. One is that I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is God's messenger,' and he took off the sash. 'The other is that I say, "O God, if there is any danger here, then I will begin with this.'" So he began.

"We ate and we walked, and then we made the hajj and took up residence in Mecca for a year. Then he died, and was buried in al-Baṭḥā—God have mercy on him."

**2:143** *Thus We appointed you a midmost community.... Surely God is clement, ever-merciful toward the people.*

It is the wise Lord, the knowing King, whose power and existence-giving bring forth beings. The newly arrived things exist through His exaltedness and His making them manifest, and the earth and the heavens stand forth through His keeping. He created the newly arrived things and chose from among them the animals. From among the animals He chose the Adamites, from the Adamites He chose the faithful, from the faithful He chose the prophets, and from the prophets He chose Muḥammad. He chose his community above the previous communities. This is why Muṣṭafā said, "I was brought forth from the best generation of the children of Adam, generation after generation, until I came to be in the generation in which I am." He also said, "Surely God chose my companions above all the world's folk save the prophets and the envoys. He chose four of my companions and made them the best of my companions—and in all of my companions there is good—Abū Bakr, °Umar, °Uthmān, and °Alī. He chose my community over the other communities, so He sent me forth in the best generation. Then there will be the second and third in succession, then the fourth, one after another."

What is understood from this report is that Muṣṭafā is the best of the Adamites, the chosen from among the world's folk, the leader of the creatures, the adornment of the world, the weighty one of the time, the lamp of the earth, the full moon of heaven, the shelter of the disobedient, the interceder for the sinners, the master of all the messengers and their seal.

After Muṣṭafā the best of all creatures is Abū Bakr the sincerely truthful. The Lord of the Worlds placed the cushion of his imamate on the throne of Muṣṭafā's Shariah, turned the lodging place of his servanthood into self-purification and truthfulness, and made trust and certainty the keeper of the rank of his friendship.

After him the best of creatures is °Umar Khaṭṭāb. The Lord of the Worlds placed the reins of lowering and raising the legal rulings in the hand of his sufficiency and pulled the robe of his rulership over the forehead of the creed. With his harshness and awesomeness the smoke of associationism was subdued by its own misfortune.

After him the best of creatures is °Uthmān °Affān. The Lord of the Worlds spread the carpet

of his dignity and honor in the seven heavens and in the era of his reign the lights of Islam were lit up in the regions of east and west.

After °Uthmān the best of creatures is °Alī Murtaḍā. The Lord of the Worlds unveiled the realities of the Shariah and the marks bearing witness to the Tariqah through his conduct and secret core and made trust and godwariness his watchword and blanket.

Muṣṭafā placed each of these masters and caliphs in a rank and gave each a specific characteristic. Concerning Ṣiddīq he said, “O Abū Bakr, God has bestowed upon you the Greatest Approval.”

It was said to him, “O Messenger of God, what is the Greatest Approval?”

He said, “God will disclose Himself generally to His faithful servants on the Day of Resurrection and specifically to Abū Bakr.”

Concerning °Umar he said, “Were there to be a prophet after me, it would be °Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.”

Concerning °Uthmān he said, “Every prophet has a close friend, and my close friend in the Garden will be °Uthmān.”

To °Alī he said, “In relation to me in my community you are like Aaron in relation to Moses, except that there will be no prophet after me. You are of me, and I am of you.”

Concerning all of his Companions generally he said, “None of my companions, dying in the earth, will be stirred up on the Day of Resurrection without having a leader and a light.”

He said, “My companions in my community are like salt in food—food is not wholesome without salt.”

He said, “Fear God, fear God in my companions! Fear God, fear God in my companions! Do not take them as extraneous after me! When someone loves them, I will love him with my love. When someone hates them, I will hate him with my hate. When someone troubles them, he has troubled me. When someone troubles me, he has troubled God. And when someone troubles God, he will be quickly taken to task.”

He said, “Do not revile my companions, for by Him in whose hand is my soul, were any of you to expend the like of Mount Uḥud in gold, you would not reach the extent of one of them, or half.”

All of this he said concerning the Companions specifically. Concerning the whole community he said, “There is no community but that some are in the Fire and some in the Garden, but all of my community will be in the Garden.”

He said, “The Garden will be forbidden to the prophets until I enter it, and it will be forbidden to the communities until my community enters it.”

He said, “Surely my community will be shown mercy. When the Day of Resurrection comes, God will bestow on every man in this community a man from the unbelievers and will say, ‘Here is your ransom from the Fire.’”

Anas said, “I went out with God’s Messenger, and suddenly a sound was coming from a ravine. He said, ‘O Anas, go and see what that sound is.’

“I went and there was a man performing the prayer before a tree and saying, ‘O God, make me belong to the community of Muḥammad, those to whom mercy and forgiveness are shown, those whose prayers are answered and rewarded.’ I came to God’s Messenger and told him about that. He said, ‘Go and say to him that God’s Messenger greets him with peace and asks who he is.’ I went and told him what God’s Messenger had said. He said, ‘Greet God’s Messenger with peace from me and tell him that his brother al-Khiḍr asks him to ask God to make him belong to your community, those to whom mercy and forgiveness are shown, those whose prayers are answered and rewarded.’”

It was said to Jesus, “O Spirit of God! Will there be a community after this one?” He said yes. He was asked which community, and he said the community of Aḥmad. He was asked what is the community of Aḥmad. He said, “Knowers, wise, pious, and godwary, as if in their knowledge they are prophets. They will be content with little provision from God, and He will be content with few deeds from them. He will take them into the Garden by their witnessing that there is no god but God.”

The Exalted Lord did not give these eminent qualities and generous bestowals to Aḥmad's community because they have a precedent obedience or the rightful due of service. Indeed, no service comes from them that would be worthy of God, nor does God's lordhood and kingship need any connection with their obedience. No matter how He may caress, He does so by His own bounty; no matter what He gives, He gives it by His own generosity; no matter what He prepares, He prepares it with own His mercy and loving kindness. For He is a Lord who is recognized as servant-caressing and described by loving kindness. This is why He says at the end of the verse, "*Surely God is clement, ever-merciful toward the people.*"

God is great in bestowal toward His servants and always lovingly kind. The bestowal of creatures is from time to time and the bestowal of the Real is everlasting. The mark of the Real's bestowal and loving kindness is that He does not give the servant the ability to disobey and He does not put him face-to-face with sin, so the servant does not become worthy of punishment. In terms of mercy, this is more efficacious than forgiving disobedience.

He may also place the servant before disobedience and put the traces of abasement in his outwardness so that people find him repellent. Then the precedent mercy in the beginningless wisdom arrives and takes his hand. In this meaning a story is told about Ayyūb Sakhtyānī. He said, "I had a neighbor who was an evil man. The traces of slipping and disobedience were obvious in his outwardness, and I was exceedingly repelled by him. In the end he left this world. When they lifted his bier, I went off to the corner. I did not want to pray for him. Then someone else saw that evil man in a dream, in a beautiful state and a pleasing guise. He asked him, "What did God do with you?"

He said, "He forgave me with His mercy and He passed over all those improprieties." Then he said, "Say to Ayyūb the worshiper, 'If you owned the storehouses of my Lord's mercies, you would hold them back in fear of spending them.'"

It may also happen that He brings the causes of tribulation around the servant and shuts the door of ease and solace to him until, once despair appears, He opens the door of mercy and clemency, as the Exalted Lord said: "*He it is who sends down the rain after they have despaired and spreads forth His mercy*" [42:28]. In this meaning it has been narrated from one of the wholesome that he said, "I saw one of them in a dream and said to him, 'What did God do with you?'"

"He said, 'He weighed my beautiful and my ugly deeds, and the ugly deeds preponderated over the beautiful deeds. Then a purse came from heaven and fell into the pan of good deeds, and it preponderated. I opened the purse, and within it was a handful of dust that I had thrown into the grave of a Muslim. Glory be to Him! How clement He is to His servant!'"

**2:144** *We have seen thy face turning about in heaven. Now We shall turn thee toward a kiblah that thou shalt approve.*

He had let him know that he was in the sight of the Real so that he would model his courtesy on the Real's courtesy. When he put courtesy into practice, he did not ask the Real for what his heart wanted and did no more than gaze upon heaven. Then He gave him better than what He gives to those who ask.

When the Lord is generous and the servant exalted, He keeps the servant within the stipulations of courtesy, shows him the road of deeds, and gives him success. Then He rewards him for the deeds and praises him for his veneration. He says, "*How excellent is the wage of the doers!*" [3:136]. "*How excellent a servant he was; surely he kept on returning*" [38:30].

In the same way, He reported to Muṣṭafā, "You are in My vision and My exalted witnessing. Be careful to recognize the respect due to the Presence and to ask in keeping with courtesy." Hence when his heart was intent on the kiblah, he did not make this manifest, in keeping with courtesy. He kept that wish in his heart and then the Exalted Presence addressed him: "*Now We shall turn thee toward a kiblah that thou shalt approve.* We have come to know that wish in your heart and We have admired your beautiful courtesy in not asking. We will bestow upon you that of which you approve in the work of the kiblah. O Muḥammad! All the servants in the world are seeking My approval, but I am seeking your approval. All are searching for Me, but I am calling for you.

All wish for My caresses, but We are caressing you. *Thy Lord shall bestow upon thee so that thou shalt approve* [93:5]. Now consider the Kaabah as the kiblah of your soul and Me as the kiblah of your spirit.”

When those caresses came forth from the Presence of Unity and those generousities reached him, the tongue of his state said in his yearning,

“When your heart reaches out once in love for me,  
suffering separation from You becomes easy, sweetheart.”

Abū Bakr Shiblī said, “The kiblans are three: the kiblah of the common people, the kiblah of the elect, and the kiblah of the elect of the elect. The kiblah of the common people is the Kaabah at the middle of the world. The kiblah of the elect is the Throne on top of heaven, upon which is sitting the God of the world. The kiblah of the elect of the elect is the heart of the desirers and the spirit of the recognizers, for they are gazing on their Lord with the light of their hearts.”

I said, “Where should I seek You, O heart-stealing moon?”

He said, “My resting place is the spirit of the friends.”

It has been said that when Muṣṭafā supplicated at the beginning of revelation and the outset of messengerhood, he would speak with explicit expressions of the tongue, and the supplication would be answered immediately. Thus the Exalted Lord recounts about the Day of Badr that Muṣṭafā wanted help for the army of Islam. He says, “*When you sought the aid of your Lord, He responded to you*” [8:9]. Afterwards his state reached a place such that the Exalted Presence would respond to his delicate allusions without explicit expression, as He says in this verse: “*We have seen thy face turning about in heaven.*” Then he became such that He would respond to his mere thought, without allusion or expression. Thus it came to his mind, “What would it matter if these sinners of my community were forgiven?” This verse came in keeping with this thought: “*Our Lord, take us not to task if we forget or make mistakes*” [2:286]. Then the work reached the point that neither allusion nor the heart’s thought was needed. Thus once it was heavy on his heart that the Companions were sitting in his room. The Lord of the Worlds sent down the verse that says, “*When you have eaten, disperse*” [33:53].

## **2:148 Everyone has a direction to which he turns.**

The creatures have five kiblans. First is the Throne, second the Footstool, third the Inhabited House, fourth the Holy House [Jerusalem], and fifth the Kaabah. The Throne is the kiblah of the angels who carry it. The Footstool is the kiblah of the cherubim. The Inhabited House is the kiblah of the spirituals. The Holy House is the kiblah of the prophets. The Kaabah is the kiblah of the faithful. The Throne is of light, the Footstool of gold, the Inhabited House of carnelian, the Holy House of marble, and the Kaabah of stone.

This is an allusion for the faithful servant: “If you cannot come to the Throne to circumambulate, or to the Footstool to visit, or to the Inhabited House to worship, or to the Holy House to serve, then at least you can turn your face five times a day toward this stone, which is the kiblah of the faithful, and receive the reward for all of them.”

*Everyone has a direction.* One of them has said that the allusion here is this: “All people have been distracted from Me by something that has come between Me and them. So, O faithful, belong to Me and be through Me.”<sup>11</sup>

In terms of allusion, He is saying, “All the people have turned away from Me. They have become familiar with others without Me. They have made their sweetheart other than Me and accepted the other in friendship.

“You who are the chevaliers of the Tariqah and claim friendship with Me, lift up your eyes from anything beneath Me, even if it be the highest paradise. Then you will go straight in following the Sunnah and conduct of Muṣṭafā and you will perform the rightful due of emulating that

11 LI 1:147.

paragon of the world. For, as the greatest of the prophets, his conduct was to turn his eyes away from all beings and not to see any refuge nor to approve of any resting place other than the shelter of Unity.”

When a man wears down his spirit in passion’s road  
he’d best incline toward none but the Friend.

In passion’s road the passionate  
must not think of hell or paradise.

When someone puts himself right in following Muṣṭafā, the candle of friendship with the Real will be lit in his road and he will never fall away from friendship’s avenue. To this is the allusion in the verse, “*Follow me; God will love you*” [3:31]. Whenever someone goes straight on friendship’s avenue, he will be secure from all the directions that are the kiblāhs of the mimickers. One of the distracted said in his state,

“So what if I don’t have the world’s kiblāh—  
my kiblāh is the Beloved’s street, just that.  
Take this world, that world, and all that exists—  
the passionate have the Beloved’s face, just that.”

Ḥallāj alluded to the kiblāhs of the mimickers when he said, “The desirers have been turned over to what they desire.” Everyone has been sat down with his own beloved.

The truth of this work is that all creatures have claimed friendship with the Real, but there was no one who did not want to be someone in His court.

Whoever finds a name for himself finds it from that Court—  
belong to Him, brother, and think of no one else.

Since all claim friendship with the Real, He strikes them with the touchstone of trial in order to show them to themselves without Him. He threw something into them and made it their kiblāh, so they turned their faces to it. In one it was wealth, in another position, in another a spouse, in another a lovely face, in another boasting, in another knowledge, in another renunciation, in another worship, in another fancy. He threw all these into the people, so they busied themselves with them, and no one spoke of Him. They all stayed empty of the road of seeking Him.

This is why Abu Yazīd Baṣṭāmī said, “I passed by His gate, but I did not see any crowding there. The folk of this world were veiled by this world, the folk of the afterworld were veiled by the afterworld, and the Sufi claimants were veiled by eating, drinking, and begging. There were others among them of a higher level who were veiled by music and lovely faces. But the great leaders of the Sufis were not veiled by any of these. Rather, I saw that they were bewildered and intoxicated.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said something with the taste of these words: “I recognize the drinking place, but I’m not able to drink. Heart-thirsty, I weep in hope of a drop. The fountain cannot quench me—I’m seeking the ocean. I passed by a thousand springs and rivers in hopes of finding the ocean. Have you ever seen someone drowning in fire? I’m like that. Have you ever seen someone thirsty in a lake? That’s what I am. I’m exactly like someone lost in the desert. I keep on saying, ‘Help! I’m at wit’s end! I’ve lost my heart!’”

**2:152 *So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful for Me and not ungrateful toward Me.***

This is to remember the lovingly kind Friend, the heart’s ease and the spirit’s food. Remembrance is the polo-ball and familiarity with Him is the bat. Its steed is yearning and its field love. Burning for Him is the rose, and recognizing Him the garden.

This remembrance makes the Real apparent. It is joined with the Haqiqah and separate from mortal nature. This remembrance is the watering place for the tree of *tawḥīd*, the fruit and produce of which is friendship with the Real. This is why the Lord of the Worlds said, “My servant does not cease remembering Me, and I remembering him, until he is passionate for Me and I passionate for him.”

This is not the remembrance of the tongue that you know—this is inside the spirit. The time came when Abū Yazīd was remembering little with the tongue. When he was asked about that, he said, “I am in wonder at this remembrance of the tongue, and I am more in wonder at him who is a stranger. What would a stranger be doing in the midst? Remembrance of Him is in the midst of the spirit.”

In the story of passion for You, many are the hardships.  
I’m with You, but many are the stations between us.

\*

I wonder at him who says, “I remember my Lord.”  
Should I forget, then remember what I forgot?

That great man of his time said in a whispered prayer, “O Lord! How can I remember You when You Yourself are remembering and I am crying out from forgetfulness. You are the remembrance and the remembered, You are the help in finding Yourself.

“O Lord! When someone reaches You, his sorrows are finished; when someone sees You, his spirit laughs. Who has more joy in the two worlds than he who remembers You? Who is more worthy of happiness in You than the servant?”

O poor man, you are remembering yourself. What do you know about remembering Him? Not having traveled, what do you know about the way stations? Not having seen the Friend, how can you be aware of His name and mark?

You are your own object of worship—you worship yourself:  
whatever you do, you do it for yourself.

If you pass into the spirit, you will gain dignity. If one day you pass by the street of the Haqiqah and remember Him in your secret core, you will see “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what has never passed into the heart of any mortal.”

Just once pass by Our street  
and gaze on Our subtle artisanry.  
If you want roses, pass into the spirit  
and make the heart aware of union with Us.

It is written in one of God’s scriptures, “‘My servant! You will remember Me when you have tried out the others. I am better for you than anyone else.’ My servant, when you have seen and tested others, then you will know My worth and recognize My rightful due. In other words, once you have seen their lack of loving kindness and you have grasped My loving kindness and loyalty, then you will know that I am more lovingly kind to you than anyone else and I am more useful.

“‘My servant, did I not remember you before you remembered Me?’ My servant, one mark of My loving kindness is that I remembered you first, then you remembered Me.

“‘Did I not love you before you loved Me?’ First, I wanted you, then you wanted Me.

“‘My servant, have you turned away from Me and toward another because you are ashamed to face Me? Where are you going? My door is open, My gifts are bestowed on you.’” This is as someone said:

You have all your brightness from Me,  
you wander around, then you come back to Me.

By the exaltation of the Exalted! If you take one step in His path, a thousand generosityes will reach you from Him. “From you a little service, from Him much blessing! From you a bit of obedience, from Him great mercy!”

The Prophet alluded to this in recounting from God: “When someone remembers Me in himself, I remember him in Myself; and when someone remembers Me in an assembly, I remember him in an assembly better than his. When someone comes near to Me by a span, I come near to him by a cubit, and when someone comes to Me walking, I come to him rushing.”

*And be grateful for Me and not ungrateful toward Me.* It has been said that “I was grateful for Him” is gratitude at seeing blessings and in respect of activity. But “I was grateful to Him” is gratitude at seeing the Patron of Blessings and contemplating the Essence. The latter is the gratitude of the folk of the end, and the former is the gratitude of the companions of the beginning.

The Lord of the Worlds knew that most servants do not have the capacity for the gratitude of the folk of the end. He made the work easy for them and put aside the great gratitude. He did not say, “Be grateful to Me,” but rather, “*Be grateful for Me.*” In other words, be grateful for My blessings, recognize what is rightfully due for them, and then, by recognizing what is rightfully due, despair of what is rightfully due for Me in the contemplation of My Essence. That is not the work of water and clay, nor the talk of spirit and heart. Indeed, what weight has clay, what trace has heart, in this talk? Throw both into the ocean, and give union with the Beloved access to yourself!

How long with low aspiration will we make our homes in the spirit?

Let us pack our bags from spirit and aim for the Beloved!

The mark of “*Fear not!*” [41:30] has come out from behind the mask.

Lift your heads, cloak-wearers, so that we may throw away our spirits!

**2:154** *Say not of those who are slain in the path of God, “They are dead.” No, they are alive, but you are unaware.*

The life of this world has left them behind, but they have reached endless life.<sup>12</sup> What have they lost by being released from this world’s abasement? They have reached union with the exaltedness of the Patron.

If I die, don’t say about me, “He’s dead.”

Say, “The dead man came to life in the Friend who took him.”

Alive is the one who lives through Him, not through the spirit. Whoever comes to life in the Friend lives forever.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O Lord, if someone is occupied with You, how could his occupation come to an end? When someone lives through You, how could he ever die? If the spirit in the body is deprived of You, it is like an imprisoned corpse. Alive in reality is he who lives with You. God’s praise be on those slain concerning whom the King says that they are alive.”

*No, they are alive, but you are unaware.* The cloak of awe is on the shoulders of their exaltedness, the shadow of the Tremendous Throne is their resting-place of intimacy, and the Presence of the Real’s majesty is the place of their spirit’s repose, in a *seat of truthfulness, at an Omnipotent King* [54:55].

**2:155** *And We will indeed try you with something of fear and hunger, and decrease of wealth, souls, and fruits; and give good news to the patient.*

The custom of the Lord is that whenever He threatens the servant and shows harshness in a verse, then, right after that or before it, He caresses the servant and gives him hope. Thus in this verse He breaks the servant by mentioning those harsh things and varieties of trial. Then He gives good news, He caresses, and He says, “*and give good news to the patient.*” And, at the beginning of these verses He says, “*Surely God is with the patient*” [2:153]. Glory be to Him! How gentle and how merciful He is to His servants!

*And We will indeed try you.* He says, “We will test you, sometimes with fear, sometimes with dread, sometimes with poverty, sometimes with hunger, sometimes with outward affliction, sometimes with inward sorrow.” The outward trial and evident affliction are in fact easy work, for sometimes they are there and sometimes not, like the trial of Abraham and the trial of Job. The complete trial is inward sorrow, which does not leave its place for a moment. When someone is closer, more worthy of friendship, and more suitable for union, his sorrow is more. Such was Muṣṭafā’s sorrow. He had no capacity for it on the highest horizon, nor did he have any rest from

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<sup>12</sup> LI 1:150.

it on the expanse of the earth. He was like a moth before a lamp: It does not have the capacity to stay with the lamp, nor the remedy of staying away from the lamp. With the tongue of his state he was saying,

“In separation I make do because of shame before Your image,  
in union I burn in fear it will cease.

Such is the state of the moth with the candle—  
in separation it burns and in union it burns.”

“Yes, everyone who seeks union with Me and wants proximity with Me has no escape from taking on the burden of tribulation and tasting the drink of sorrow.”

Āsiya, the wife of Pharaoh, sought for the Real’s neighborhood and asked for His proximity. She said, “*My Lord, build for me a house with Thee in the Garden* [66:11]. O Lord, I want a room in Your neighborhood, for it is beautiful to have a room in the street of the Friend.”

“Yes, it is beautiful, but its price is very expensive. Everything is sold for gold and silver, but this is sold for spirit and heart.”

Āsiya said, “That’s nothing to fear. And if its price were a thousand spirits instead of one, there would be no holding back.”

So they crucified Āsiya and drove iron nails into her eyes. But she, in that chastisement was laughing and happy. This is as they say:

When it’s the heart-taker’s desire,  
one thorn is better than a thousand dates.

Bishr Ḥāfī said, “I was passing through the bazaar in Baghdad. They were whipping someone with one thousand strokes, but he did not let out a sigh. Then they took him to prison. I went in his tracks and asked him, ‘Why all those blows?’ He said, ‘Because I am entranced by passion.’

“I said, ‘Why did you not weep so that they might lighten them?’ He said, ‘Because my beloved was watching. I was so drowned in the contemplation of my beloved that I had no concern for weeping.’

“I said, ‘If you had been gazing on the Greatest Beloved, how would that have been?’ He cried out once, then he died.”

Yes, when passion is truly there, trial takes on the color of blessing. This is great good fortune: the beauty of the Beloved gives you access to itself so that in contemplating Him, you will take all severity as gentleness. But,

Not just any piece of straw comes near You—  
to suffer grief for You it needs a man.

**2:163 And your God is one God. There is no god but He, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.**

This is the description of the one Lord, the one Lord God and King. He is one in magnanimity and governance, one in forbearance and beautiful doing, one in generosity and peerlessness, one in loving kindness and servant-caressing. Every magnificence is the mantle of His majesty, and in that He is one. Every tremendousness and all-compellingness is the shawl of His lordhood, and in that He is one. He is one in Essence, one in attributes, one in deed and mark, one in loyalty and compact, one in gentleness and caressing, one in love and friendship.

On the day of apportioning, who was there but He, the One? Before the day of apportioning who was there? That same One. After the day of apportioning, who handed over those portions? That same One. Who shows? That same One. Who adorns? That same One.

He is more apparent than everything in the world of apparentness, and in this apparentness He is one. He is more hidden than anything in the world of hiddenness, and in this hiddenness He is one.

O You who are more face-to-face than anything in the world!  
You are more hidden than the world’s most hidden thing!

O You who are more distant than all that the servants suppose!

You are closer to the servants than the spirit's vein.

How disloyal the Adamite who does not know the worth of this declaration and the exaltedness of this ascription! God says, "*And your God is one God.*" The wonder is not that He ascribed the servants to Himself, joined them to Himself, and said, "*Surely My servants*" [15:42]. The wonder is that He ascribed Himself to the servants and joined His name to their name, saying, "*Your God.*" This is not because His lordhood must be joined to the servant's servanthood, or that the servants are deserving of that. Rather, in generosity and loving kindness He Himself is unique and one. In magnanimity He is worthy of every generous bestowal and every gift.

In the place of our Heart-taker's beauty and loveliness,  
we are not suited for Him—He is suited for us.

*And your God is one God.* There was no world and no Adam. There were no tracks and no traces, there was no one in the house. He was the care-taking and loving Lord, writing out your good fortune and accepting you to be His friend while you were still in nonexistence.

O You who were there for me  
when I was not there for You!

On the night of the Prophet's ascent to God, when secrets were told to the Master of the world, one of them was this: "Belong to Me as you always were, and I will belong to you as I have always been." Belong totally to Me and be nothing, just as you were; then I will be for you as I was in the Beginningless.

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said in his whispered prayers, "I am happy that You were there at first and I was not. Your work took effect and mine did not. You put forth Your worth and You sent Your Messenger.

"O God! Whatever You have given us without our seeking—do not ruin it with what we deserve! Whatever good You have done for us—do not cut it off because of our defects! Whatever You have made without our worthiness—do not separate it from us by our unworthiness!

"O God! Do not bring to fruit what we ourselves have planted! Keep blights away from what You planted for us!"

*There is no god but He, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.* Other than He there is no Lord, and other than He there is none worthy of worship, for no one caresses and bestows bounty like Him. He is the All-Merciful who gives when they ask of Him, and He is the Ever-Merciful who becomes angry when they do not ask. A report has come, "When someone does not ask from God, God becomes wrathful toward him."

He is the All-Merciful who accepts the servants' obedience, even if it is little, and He is the Ever-Merciful who forgives their disobedient acts even if they are great. He is the All-Merciful who adorns outwardness and sculpts the form, and He is the Ever-Merciful who makes inwardness flourish and guards the hearts in His grasp. He is the All-Merciful who makes subtle lights appear in your face, and He is the Ever-Merciful who places the deposits of secrets in your heart.

**2:164** *Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of the night and the day, the ships that run on the sea with what benefits people, the water that God sends down from heaven giving life to the earth after its death, the scattering of every beast therein, the shifting of the winds, the clouds subjected between heaven and earth—there are signs for a people who have intellect.*

In this verse the Lord of the Universe shows the generality of people the road to Himself, so that they will gaze upon the wonders of the dominion of heaven and earth and on the artisanries of land and sea and then recognize the Artisan and attest to His oneness.

Ibn ʿAṭāʾ said, "He made Himself recognized to the common people with His creation, to the elect with His attributes, and to the prophets and the elect of the elect with His Essence." The gaze of the common people is on the artisanry, the gaze of the elect on the attributes, and the gaze of

the prophets and the elect of the elect on the Essence. The generality of the faithful look at the artisanry and from the artisanry reach the Artisan. The elect among the faithful know the attributes and from the attributes reach the Object of attribution and from the name the Named. Thus it was said to the Children of Israel, “*Sacrifice a cow*” [2:67], but they did not recognize it. So the cow was described to them, they recognized it, and they sacrificed it.

As for the prophets and the sincerely truthful, they recognize Him through Him, not through other than Him. They look from Him to Him, not from the other to Him. God alludes to this state when He says, “*Dost thou not see thy Lord, how He stretched out the shadow?*” [25:45]. He did not say, “Look at the shadow so that you may see My artisanry.” He said, “Look at Me so that you may see My artisanry. O paragon of the world! Look not at Gabriel’s coming, look at My sending. Look from Me to him, not from him to Me.”

Consider for a moment the female companions of Joseph. When the very entity of Joseph was unveiled to them, they were annihilated from themselves and became absent from Joseph’s attributes. *When they saw him, they admired him greatly* [12:31] and they cut their hands instead of the oranges. They were unaware of themselves and made absent from Joseph’s attributes. At the moment of face-to-face vision they said, “*This is no mortal!*” [12:31]. They saw Joseph as an angel and were unaware of his human attributes. They were so busy contemplating Joseph that they did not attend to the attributes. If the essence of a created thing can have this sort of effect on the heart of female companions, what wonder is it that the self-disclosure of the Creator’s Essence to the secret core of the elect should do much more?

Then, at the end of the verse, He says, “*there are signs for a people who have intellect.*” There are all of these, but it wants clever people to know, it wants seers to see. From every side is a road to the Real’s courtyard—it wants travelers! The whole world is table upon table, dish upon dish—it wants eaters! The beauty of the endless Presence is unveiled—it wants gazers!

It wants a man to catch the scent—  
otherwise, the world is full of the east wind’s fragrance.

Intellect [*‘aql*] is the fetter [*‘iqāl*] of the heart. In other words, it ties the heart back from everything but the Beloved and prevents it from unworthy follies. In the creed of the Sunnis, intellect is a light and its place is the heart, not the brain. It is the precondition for being addressed by God, not the cause of being addressed. It is merely the instrument of recognition, not the root. The basis and profit of intellect is that the heart comes to life through it: *that he may warn whosoever is alive* [36:70], that is, whosoever has intellect. Hence, those who have no intellect are not counted among the living. Do you not see that the mad man is not addressed, nor the corpse? This is because they have no intellect.

Intellect is three letters: *‘a* means it “recognizes” [*‘arafa*] the Real in the unreal; *q* means it “accepts” [*qabila*] the Real; *l* means it “clings” [*lazima*] to the Real.

The servant’s intellect is a divine bestowal and a lordly gift. The servant’s obedience is earned, but obedience cannot be set right without that bestowal, and that bestowal is useless without God’s success-giving. Thus it has been reported that the Exalted Lord created the intellect. He said to it, “Stand up.” It stood up. He said, “Sit.” It sat. He said, “Come.” It came. He said, “Go.” It went. He said, “See.” It saw.

Then He said, “By My exaltedness and majesty, I have created nothing more eminent and honored than you. Through you I shall be worshiped and through you I shall be obeyed.”

Because of these caresses, intellect began to admire itself. The Lord of the Worlds did not let that pass. He said, “O intellect, look behind yourself. What do you see?” The intellect looked behind itself and saw a form lovelier and more beautiful than itself. It said, “Who are you?” The form said, “I am that without which you are useless. I am success-giving.”

O intellect, though you be eminent, become low!  
O heart, no longer be heart, but blood, blood!  
Enter the curtain of that waxing sweetheart!  
Come in without eyes, leave without tongue!

**2:165** *Among the people are some who take peers apart from God, loving them as if loving God. And those who have faith are more intense in love for God.*

If this were the only verse in the whole Qur'an about the faithful and God's friends, their eminence and honor would be complete, for the Lord of the Worlds is saying, "They love Me intensely and more completely than the unbelievers love their objects of worship." Do you not see that every once in a while the unbelievers set up another idol and take up another object of worship. Like poor people, they are content with something carved of wood. Then, when they can, they take down the wooden one and make another from silver or gold. If their love for their object of worship is real, why do they turn away from it toward another?

They say that a man met a woman recognizer, and her beauty exercised its influence over his heart. He said, "My all is busy with your all.' O woman! I have lost myself in love for you."

She said, "Why don't you look at my sister, who is more beautiful and lovely than I?"

He said, "Where is your sister so that I may see her?"

She said, "Go, idler! Passion is not your work. If your claim to love me were true, you would not care about anyone else."

*And those who have faith are more intense in love for God.* The Lord of the Worlds says, "The love of the faithful for Me is not like the unbelievers' love for idols, such that every once in a while they incline toward another. Rather, the faithful never turn away from Me and never incline toward anyone else. For, if they did turn away, they would never find someone like Me, no matter how much they sought."

Poor man, God has many servants like you. If something bad is to occur for you, it will occur. How can you turn away, for you will not find a Lord like Him.

Shiblī said, "I learned Sufism from a dog that was sleeping at the door of a house. The owner came out and was driving the dog away, but the dog kept on coming back. I said to myself, 'How base this dog is! He drives him away, and he keeps on coming back.' The Exalted Lord brought that dog to speech and it said, 'O Shaykh! Where should I go? He is my owner.'"

I will not leave the Friend at a hundred iniquities and cruelties.

Even if He increases them, I will not be troubled,

It is I who chose Him over everyone else;

if I complain about Him, I will have no excuse.

**2:166** *When those who were followed declare themselves quit of those who followed them.*

The unbelievers loved idols in keeping with caprice and nature, not reality. Hence, when they see the beginnings of the chastisement at the resurrection, they will know that they have no place on which to stand and will disown the idols. As for the faithful, their friendship is the fruit of the Real's friendship—as He says, "*He loves them, and they love Him*" [5:54]. Therefore the steep roads and trials that come to them do not bring any defect into their love, so they do not turn away from the Real.

First they see the agonies of death. Then their pure spirit is snatched away from them. They are kept for many years in the dust. Then they are frightened many times at the resurrection in those diverse stations. They are rebuked while severity of many sorts is shown to them, and then they are kept for a time in hell. Despite these tribulations and trials that come into their road, at each moment they fall more into passion and expend their spirits and hearts even more in friendship for the Real. With the tongue of the state they say,

"If You're happy with my grief, give me grief upon grief!

Away with a passion that decreases with a hundred cruelties!"

This is why He says, "*Those who have faith are more intense in love for God*" [2:165].

**2:177** *Piety is not that you turn your faces to the east and the west. Rather, piety is he who has faith in God, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets; who gives wealth despite loving it to kinsfolk, orphans, the indigent, the son of the road, beggars, and slaves; and who per-*

***forms the prayer and gives the alms tax; those who are loyal to their covenant when they make a covenant; those who are patient in misfortune, hardship, and moments of peril. It is they who have been truthful, and it is they who are the godwary.***

You have learned what the Shariah stipulates in terms of the outward meaning of this verse. Now listen to the inner meaning in the tongue of allusion and recognize the signs of the Haqiqah, for the Haqiqah is to the Shariah as the spirit is to the body. What is a body without a spirit? Such is the Shariah without the Haqiqah.

The Shariah is the house of the servitors. All the people are gathered there. They keep it flourishing with service and worship.

The Haqiqah is the house of the sanctuary. The recognizers are gathered there. They keep it flourishing with veneration and contemplation.

The distance from service and worship to veneration and contemplation is the same as that from familiarity to love. Familiarity is the attribute of wage-earners, and love is the attribute of recognizers.

The wage-earner brings all the varieties of piety mentioned in the verse. Then he says, “Oh, if the wind blows against it, or something of it is taken away, I will lose the wage for that.” The recognizer performs all of it according to its stipulations. Then he says, “Oh, if any of it remains, I will be held back from good fortune.”

Any talk that keeps you back from the road—let it be unbelief or faith.

Any picture that holds you back from the Friend—let it be ugly or beautiful. [DS 51]

The wage-earner says, “My prayer, my fasting, my alms-giving, my patience in trials, my loyalty to covenants!” The recognizer says in the tongue of abasement,

“Who am I to wear the cloak of loyalty to You,  
to have my eyes carry the burden of Your disloyalty,  
To have the spirit’s scent come from my lips and speak of You,  
to grow an exalted branch in my heart and suffer Your trial?” [DS 933]

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “How should I have known that the share of the wage-earner is everlasting paradise, and the hope of the recognizer is one glance? How should I have known that the wage-earner is wishing for houris and palaces, and the recognizer is inundated by light in the sea of face-to-face vision?”

When he was dying, Abū ‘Alī Rūdbārī said to his sister, “O Fāṭima, look, the doors of heaven have opened, the Gardens have been adorned! The maid-servants have gathered at the battlements and they are saying, ‘Enjoy yourself, O Abū ‘Alī! All this was built for you!’”

The tongue of Abū ‘Alī’s state was answering, “O God, how could I be joyful with paradise and houris? If You give me one breath, from that breath I will build a paradise!”

Your rightful due is that I look on no one else  
with the eye of love until I see You.

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I will close my eyes and not open them  
until the day of visiting You, O exalted Friend!

*Piety is not that you turn your faces.* Piety, in brief, is of two sorts: belief and deeds. Belief is to realize the roots, and deeds are to obtain the branches. Inescapably anyone who truly consolidates the roots and performs the stipulated branches is one of the pious. The station of the pious is the Abode of Settledness. That is in His words, “*Surely the pious are in bliss*” [82:13].

What the Lord of the Worlds clarifies in the course of this verse is exactly that belief and those deeds. He says, “*he who has faith in God, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets.*” Up to this point He clarifies belief and lays down the foundations of the roots, and from here on He begins the mention of the deeds. These He set down in two sorts:

One sort is taking care of people: keeping company with them, caressing the far and the near, and giving comfort to them. Thus He says, “*who gives wealth despite loving it to kinsfolk, orphans, the indigent, travelers, beggars, and slaves.*” He begins first with relatives, for their rightful due takes precedence over the rightful due of others. This is why the Prophet said, “Charity will not be accepted if a womb relative is in need.” Then come orphans, who are the most helpless of people and have no kin. Then the poor, who have no possessions, neither present nor absent. Then the wayfarers, who have nothing in hand, though they may have wealth elsewhere. Then the beggars, who are the poor, both those who speak truthfully and those who lie. Then slaves, who have masters to take care of them and attend to them. The Lord of the Worlds preserved the order of their need and worthiness. Whenever someone is more helpless, more needy, and more fitting for charity, He mentions him earlier, for his rightful due is greater. What a generous Lord, who keeps everyone in his own place and conveys to everyone what is fitting as needed! He says, “I govern My servants through My knowledge; surely of My *servants* I am *aware, seeing* [35:31].”

The other sort of deeds is specific to the worshipful servant and does not go beyond him to anyone else, like performing the prayers, having truthfulness and self-purification in the deeds, coming back to loyalty in covenants, and having patience in trials. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, “*who performs the prayer*” to His words “*and moments of peril.*” Then He says, “*It is they who have been truthful, and it is they who are the godwary.*” They are the ones who, in the half of piety that is belief, are truthful, and, in the half that is deeds, put godwariness into action. Truthfulness and godwariness are the perfection of faith. They are the ones concerning whom God says, “*They are the faithful in truth*” [8:4].

The most complete report from Muṣṭafā that is appropriate to this verse and brings together the varieties of piety—the part that is faith, the part that is deeds, and the part that is noble character traits—comes by way of Suwayd Ḥārith. He said,

“I was sent as the seventh of seven from my tribe to God’s Messenger. When we entered in upon him and spoke to him, he admired what he saw of our appearance and dress. He said, ‘What are you?’

“We said, ‘We are faithful.’

“God’s Messenger smiled and said, ‘Every word has a reality. What is the reality of your words and your faith.’

“I said, ‘Fifteen traits. We were commanded by your messengers to have faith in five of them. We were commanded by your messengers to put five of them into practice. We were characterized by five of them in the time of ignorance. We will keep to these, unless you dislike any of them.’

“God’s Messenger said, ‘What are the five traits in which my messengers commanded you to have faith?’

“We said, ‘Your messengers commanded us to have faith in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the uprising after death.’

“He said, ‘And what are the five that they commanded you to put into practice?’

“We said, ‘Your messengers commanded us to say together “There is no God but God and Muḥammad is God’s messenger,” to perform the prayer, to give the alms tax, to make a pilgrimage to the House if one has the way to do so, and to fast during the month of Ramadan. We are doing that.’

“He said, ‘And what are the five traits by which you have become characterized?’

“We said, ‘Gratitude in ease, patience in trial, truthfulness in encounters, approval with the decree where it falls, and fighting against enemies.’

“God’s Messenger smiled and said, ‘Courteous, understanding, intelligent, and wise! With your understanding you are almost prophets. Oh, what traits! How eminent and embellished they are!’ Then God’s Messenger said, ‘I will counsel you to five traits so that you will have twenty traits in total.’

“We said, ‘Counsel us, O Messenger of God!’

“He said, ‘If you are as you say, then do not gather what you do not eat, do not build that in which you do not reside, do not be rivals in anything that will pass away, be eager in that in which

you are setting off and in which you will be forever, and be wary of God, to whom you will be returned and to whom you will be shown.”

**2:178** *O you who have faith! Written for you is retaliation in the case of the slain.*

He is addressing the body, heart, and spirit and saying, “O totality of the servant! If you want to step into the street of friendship, first detach your heart from life and toss away everything you know about states and deeds, for in the shariah of friendship your life will be taken as retaliation, and everything you know will be the wergild, though more is needed. Such is the shariah of friendship. If you are the man for the work, enter! Otherwise, nothing will get done with self-love and defilement.”

In the tracks of manliness plane trees live long,  
in the tracks of defilement jasmine goes fast.  
Throw away your life, travel the road, live upright, and be a man!  
Then you will subsist—when you empty your skirt of these ruins.

Yes, it’s a marvelous work, the work of friendship! It’s a wonderful shariah, the shariah of friendship! Whenever someone is killed in the world, retaliation or wergild is mandatory against the killer. In the shariah of friendship, both retaliation and wergild are mandatory for the person killed.

The Pir of the Tariqah, “How should I have known that there is retaliation for those killed by friendship? But, when I looked, that was Your transaction with the elect. How should I have known that friendship is sheer resurrection and that those killed by friendship should ask for wergild? Glory be to God! What work is this, what work!? He burns some people, He kills some people, and no one burned has regrets, no one killed turns away.”

How You kill us and how we love You!  
O marvel! How we love the killer!

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May my eyes’ light be the dust beneath Your feet!  
May my heart’s rest be Your curly locks!

In passion for You, may my justice be Your cruelty!  
May my life be sacrificed in grief for You!

One person is burnt and left unsettled, another slain and perplexed in the field of solitariness. One is hanging on reports, another mixed with face-to-face vision. Who planted these seeds? Who stirred up this tumult? One is in a whirlpool, another wishing for water, but the drowned is not sated, the thirsty has no sleep.

**2:180** *It is written for you, when death is present for one of you and he is leaving behind some good, to make a will for parents and kinsfolk honorably, as something rightfully due from the godwary.*

The testament of the lords of wealth is one thing, and the testament of the lords of states is something else. The testament of the lords of wealth goes out from the wealth, and the testament of the poor men from the states. At the end of their lives, the rich give out one-third of their wealth,<sup>13</sup> and the poor give out limpidness of states and truthfulness of deeds.

As much as the disobedient person is afraid for himself because of his bad deeds, the recognizer is afraid for himself ten times more because of the truthfulness of his deeds and the limpidness of his states. But there is a difference between the two: The disobedient person is afraid of the outcome and in dread of punishment, and the recognizer is afraid of the Real’s majesty and awareness.

13 In Stage Two Maybudi explains that this verse was revealed before the verses that designate the specific portions of a person’s wealth that should be given to various relatives. Given the existence of those verses, most commentators agree that it is not necessary to make a will. But, if a person does so, he should not set aside more than one-third of his wealth; that he can do “honorably.”

When the recognizers are afraid, this is called “awe,” and when the disobedient are afraid, it is called “fear.” Fear occurs because of reports, and awe occurs because of face-to-face vision. Awe is a fear that puts no veil before supplication, no blindfold over perspicacity, and no wall before hope. It is a fear that melts and kills. As long as he does not hear the call, “*Fear not and grieve not!*” [29:33], he will not reach ease. The owner of this fear is shown generosity, but he burns in dread of losing it. His light is increased, and the terror of alteration is thrown into him.

Abu Sa‘id Abi’l-Khayr had this state at the time of death. When he put his head on the pillow of death, they said to him, “O Shaykh, you were the kiblah of those burned, emulated by the yearners, the sun of the world. Now that you have turned your face to the Exalted Presence, give some advice to these burnt ones, say some words that will be their reminder.” The Shaykh said,

“My two eyes full of water, my liver full of fire,  
my hands full of wind, my head full of dust!”

Bishr Ḥāfi had the same state at the time of going. He began to weep and wail. They said, “O Abū Naṣr, is it that you love life and dislike death?”

He said, “No, but stepping forth to God is hard.”

This is the state of a group who are overpowered by awe and confoundedness at the time of going because of the disclosure of God’s majesty and exaltedness. Until they hear the call “*Fear not,*” they do not reach ease.

There is another group who come forward to the disclosure of God’s beauty and gentleness at the time of going. The lightning of intimacy flashes and the fire of yearning flares up. Thus someone came before the shaykh of the Folk of Blame, ‘Abdallāh Munāzil, and said to him, “O Shaykh, I saw in a dream that you have a year of life left.”

He struck himself in the head and said, “Oh! I have to wait another year!” Then he stood up and started moving around in his ecstasy and finding. He was agitated and passed away from himself. He said, “Oh! When will the sun of felicity rise and the moon-faced beauty of good fortune arrive?!”

“When will I throw off this cage  
and build a nest in the divine garden?!”

Makḥūl-i Shāmī was a manly man, unique in his era, and overcome by the pain and grief of this talk. He never laughed. During his dying illness a group came to see him and he was laughing. They said, “O Shaykh! You were always full of grief. Right now grief is even more fitting for you. Why are you laughing?”

He said, “Why shouldn’t I laugh? The sun of separation has reached the top of the wall and the day I’ve been waiting for has arrived. Right now the doors of heaven are open and the angels are clearing the way: ‘Makḥūl is coming to the Presence!’

“Union has come—I’m freed of the fear of separation.  
I’m sitting with my beloved, my heart’s desire fulfilled!”

## **2:183 O you who have faith! Written for you is fasting.**

In the tongue of allusion and the clarification of wisdom, He is saying, “O you who have faith, fasting has been written for you. It has been written because you will be the guests of the Real, and tomorrow in paradise He wants to take hungry guests to a banquet. When the generous take someone to a banquet, they like the guests to be hungry so that the feast will be sweeter in their hearts. The Lord of the Worlds created paradise and everything within it for the faithful. None of it is of any use to Him, nor does He have any need for it.”

A pir of the Sufis sent out an invitation, but no one came. The pir lifted up his hands and said, “Lord God, if you send your servants into the fire tomorrow, paradise and perfect bliss will be like my table!”

The value of a table is for people to sit there and eat. Indeed, the Lord of the Worlds created all the treasuries of blessing for the faithful and the eaters, but He Himself does not eat. This is why

He says, “Fasting belongs to Me, and with it I recompense.” One of them said, “In other words, ‘Self-sufficiency belongs to Me. I do not eat or drink. I reward those who fast without reckoning, for they sought conformity with Me by not eating. They sought friendship with Me, for the first station in friendship is conformity.’”

Know then that when you gain conformity with the angels by saying “Amen” at the end of the Surah of Praise, your past and future sins are forgiven—as has come in the report. Hence by means of your conformity with God in not eating—even though your not eating is by self-exertion and temporary, and God’s not eating is a beginningless attribute—you should know what eminence and nobility accrue to your heart and religion!

It has been said that by saying “Fasting is Mine,” He ascribed fasting to Himself so that the hands of the plaintiffs would fall short of that. Tomorrow at the resurrection, when those plaintiffs gather around you and take away your acts of worship by calling you to account for your acts of wrongdoing, the Lord of the Worlds will keep your fasting in the treasury of His bounty and say to the plaintiffs, “This belongs to Me—you have no hand in this.” Then, in the end, He will give it back to you. He will say, “I ascribed it to Myself so that I could keep it for you.”

Another wisdom has also been spoken of in the case of the fasting person. It is that the lords of blessings should know the state of the poor and hungry and should give comfort to them. This is why He made Muṣṭafā an orphan from the first—so that he would act beautifully toward orphans. Then He made him a stranger so that he would remember his being a stranger and have mercy on strangers. He did not let him have any wealth so that he would not forget the poor.

The generosity We showed to you in your poverty and orphanhood—  
 you show the same, O generous in character, to Our creatures!  
 Be a mother to orphans, nurture them with gentleness,  
 be noble to askers, fulfill their requests. [DS 36]

You have heard about the fasting of the common faithful in the tongue of the Shariah. Now hear about the fasting of the chevaliers of the Tariqah in the tongue of the folk of the Haqiqah and know its fruit and final end: Just as you make your body fast and hold it back from food and drink, so also they make their heart fast, holding it back from all created things. You fast from morning until night, and they fast from the beginning of their lifetimes to the end. The playing field of your fasting is one day, and the playing field of their fasting is one lifetime. Someone came before Shiblī, and Shiblī said, “Do you consider it beautiful to fast forever?”

He said, “How would that be?”

Shiblī said, “You make your whole lifetime one day and you fast. Then you will open up to the vision of God.”

[Concerning the hadith] “Fast upon seeing [the moon] and break the fast on seeing it,” the lords of finding and the chevaliers of the Tariqah have said that in terms of allusion, this points to the Real.

There are great differences among those who fast. Tomorrow, someone who fasted in his soul will see the wine of Salsabil and ginger from the hands of the angels and serving boys, as He said: “*Therein they are given to drink of a cup mixed with ginger, therein a spring named Salsabil*” [76:17-18]. Someone who fasted in his heart will receive a pure wine in the cup of love on the carpet of proximity from the hand of the attributes, as He said: “*And their Lord will pour for them a pure wine*” [76:21]. A wine, and what a wine! The spirit of anyone who drinks a draft of this wine will fly in the air of solitariness. From that wine comes the scent of the Beloved. If you busied two hundred spirits with it, that would be appropriate—the wine upon which the Beloved’s love has put His seal. You would give all loves to that one love, all desires to that one desire; hoping for it you would gamble away the two worlds along with heart and spirit.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, my need at this Threshold is a day when You pour a drop of that wine on my heart! How long will You keep me mixed with water and fire? O my good fortune, you are a resurrection from the Friend.”

**2:185** *The month of Ramadan is that wherein the Qur'an was sent down as guidance.*

In other words, the month of Ramadan has come to you. He is saying, "Now the month of Ramadan has turned to the friends. It is a month that both washes and burns. It washes the hearts of the sinners with the water of repentance and burns the bodies of the servants with the fire of hunger."

The word *Ramaḍān* is derived either from *ramḍā*<sup>3</sup> or *ramaḍī*. If it is from *ramḍā*<sup>3</sup>, it means hot stone, which burns whatever is placed upon it. If it is from *ramaḍī*, it means rain, which washes whatever it meets. Muṣṭafā was asked, "What is Ramadan?" He replied, "In it God burns the sins of the faithful and forgives them for them."

Anas Mālik said that he heard God's Messenger say, "Ramadan has come. In it the gates of the Garden are opened, the gates of the Fire are shut, and the satans are fettered. If someone reaches Ramadan and is not forgiven, then when?"

He also said, "Were God to give the heavens and earth permission to speak, they would give those who fast during Ramadan the good news of the Garden."

Poor man, you do not know the worth of this blessing. You are caressed everywhere in the world, and eminence has been put down next to you, but you are unaware. The submission, which is higher and better than all the creeds, is your religion. The Qur'an, which is more exalted than all the books, is your book. Muṣṭafā, who is the master of Adam's children, the eyes and lamp of the empire, the leader of the world's folk at the resurrection, is your messenger. The Kaabah, which is the most eminent of spots, is your kiblah. The month of Ramadan, which is more excellent and eminent than all other months, is your month and the season of your practice. It is a month in which all acts of disobedience are forgiven, the satans subjugated, paradise embellished and its doors open, and the doors of hell shut. In it the bazaar of the workers of corruption is broken, the deeds of the obedient are joined with self-purification, and past sins and recorded defilements are burned.

The Commander of the Faithful °Alī said, "Had God wanted to chastise Muḥammad's community, He would not have given them the month of Ramadan, nor the surah, 'Say: He is God, One' [112]."

Here the lords of recognition see another intimation. They say that it is called "Ramadan" because in this month the Exalted Lord washes other than Himself from the hearts of the recognizers, then He burns them in His love. Sometimes He keeps them in fire, sometimes in water, sometimes thirsty, sometimes drowning. The drowning are not quenched, the thirsty have no sleep. The tongue of their state is saying,

"If He burns you, say 'Burn!', if He caresses, say 'Caress!'"

The man of passion had best be in the midst of water and fire,  
first to be burned by the one, then to be drowned by the other.

Once selfless of self, his Beloved will be in his arms."

This is why the Pir of the Tariqah, having been asked about togetherness, said, "It is that someone falls into the grasp of the Real. When someone falls into the grasp of the Real, he is incinerated there, but the Real is behind him."

In passion for You I'm headless and perplexed,  
the thread has slipped from the hand of my hope,  
Like a candle in the early morning—  
melted, burned, and killed.

**2:186** *And when My servants ask thee about Me, surely I am near. I respond to the supplication of the supplicator when he supplicates Me. So let them respond to Me and have faith in Me. Perhaps they will be led aright.*

He is saying, "When My servants ask you about Me, those are the servants who hang on to the ring of veneration for Me. They have fled to My street, put aside everything less than Me, undertaken to serve Me, believed in Me, and cut themselves off from secondary causes. They have wrapped the turban of trial around their heads and bought Our love with spirit and heart. They came into

existence with passion, and they are leaving with passion.”

With passion my steed set out from nonexistence,  
 my night always bright with union’s wine.  
 Of that wine not forbidden by my religion  
 my lips will not stay dry till I’m back in nonexistence.

“When servants like this and friends like this ask you about Me and seek My mark from you, know that I am near to them. Uncalled and unsought, I am near. Unhoped for and unperceived, I am near. With My firstness, with My attributes, I am self-standing and near. Not by the worthiness of the servant—I am near by My own description.”

This is the same that He said to His speaking companion Moses, on that pitch black night on the edge of the Mount when *he was called from the right bank of the watercourse* [28:30]. Moses was called from the right bank of the blessed watercourse: “O great Moses!,” for after Adam, no one heard the speech of the Real with the ears of his head except Moses. He was called, “O Moses!” Moses became unsettled, he could not bear it, and his patience fled. How can patience overcome love? Love will always snatch away the hand of patience. In his burning, distraction, and inability to bear, he said to the caller, “You have made me hear You. Where should I seek You?” The call came, “O Moses, seek as you like, for I am with you. I am nearer to you than the spirit is to your body, your life-vein is to you, your speaking is to your mouth. The speech is My speech, the light is My light, and I am the Lord of the Worlds.”

In terms of allusion, it is as if the Exalted Lord said, “O Moses, I am near to you through knowledge, but far from your imagination. O Moses, I am the share of My lovers, and I bestow the shares of the wage-earners. Remembering Me is delight, loving Me celebration, recognizing Me the kingdom, finding Me joy, companionship with Me the spirit’s repose, and nearness to Me light. I take the place of the spirit for the friends, I am the resurrection without Trumpet for the recognizers.”

I said, “Lovely idol! Are You then my beloved?  
 Now that I look closely, You are my spirit.  
 I will have no spirit if You turn away from me.  
 O Spirit of the world, You are my unbelief and faith.”

*Surely I am near—I respond to the supplication of the supplicator.* He is saying, “I am near to My servants, and I love the near ones. I answer those who call Me, I give access to those who seek Me, I am pleased with those who reach proximity to Me. My servant! Come near to Me so that I may come near to you. ‘When someone comes near to Me by a span, I come near to him by a cubit.’ My servant, if you call Me, I will respond to you. I also call you—to the assistance given by My religion and to the acceptance of the message of My messenger. So respond to Me! My servant, open a door so that I may open a door. Open the door of supplication, so that I may open the door of response: *Supplicate Me; I will respond to you* [40:60]. Open the door of turning back so that I may open the door of good news: *They turned back to God, and for them is good news* [39:17]. Open the door of expending so that I may open the door of replacement: *Whatever you expend, He will replace it* [34:39]. Open the door of struggle so that I may open the door of guidance: *Those who struggle in Us, We will guide them on Our paths* [29:69]. Open the door of trust so that I may open the door of sufficiency: *Whosoever trusts in God, He will be enough for him* [65:3]. Open the door of asking forgiveness so that I may open the door of forgiveness: *And then asks forgiveness of God, he will find God forgiving, ever-merciful* [4:110].”

Then He said, “*Perhaps they will be led aright:* I have placed this burden of the decree upon you for your own best interest and to take care of your work—so that you may stay on the straight road and reach everlasting bliss. Take profit from Me, for I did not create the creatures to take profit from them, rather so that they would take profit from Me. ‘I did not create the creatures to profit from them. I created them only so that they would profit from Me.’”

**2:189** *They ask thee about the new moons.*

The waxing and waning of the moon and its increase and decrease are allusions to the contraction and expansion of the recognizers and the awe and intimacy of the lovers. The contraction and expansion of the elect are like the fear and hope of the common people. Contraction and expansion are higher than fear and hope, and so also awe and intimacy are higher than contraction and expansion. Fear and hope belong to the common people, contraction and expansion to the elect, and awe and intimacy to the elect of the elect.

First is the station of the wrongdoers, next the station of the moderate, and third the station of the preceders.<sup>14</sup> The furthest limit of all is the intimacy of the lovers. In the state of intimacy, a man reaches a point where, if he enters fire, he is unaware of it and its heat leaves no trace in the repose of his intimacy. Thus Abū Ḥafṣ Ḥaddād was a blacksmith. He had lit up an exceedingly hot fire and placed iron within it, as is the custom of blacksmiths. Someone was passing by and reciting a verse of the Qur'an. The shaykh became happy at that verse and the state of intimacy overcame him. He put his hand into the furnace and pulled out the hot iron. He held it until his apprentice looked at him and said, "O Shaykh! How is that you are holding the hot iron in your hand?!" The shaykh put it aside, and then he left his profession. He said, "I have left this profession many times and then come back to it. This time, the profession left me."

**2:190** *And fight in the path of God those who fight against you, but do not transgress. God loves not the transgressors.*

In the language of the recognizers and the path of the chevaliers, this killing and fighting is another way station of the travelers and another state of the lovers. However, as long as you have not been killed by the sword of struggle in the path of the Shariah and you have not been burned by the fire of love, you will not be allowed to enter by this gate.

Take care not to believe that fire is simply the lamp that you know and nothing more; or that killing is simply the state that you know. Those killed by the Real are one thing, those killed by the throat something else. Being burned by the fire of punishment is one thing, being burned by the fire of love something else.

Thus that great pir said, "How should I have known that this is the smoke of the burning brand's fire? I fancied that wherever there is fire there is a lamp. How should I have known that in friendship the sin belongs to the killed and the judge gives refuge to the adversary!? How should I have known that the bewilderment of union with You is the path, and he who is drowned in You seeks You all the more?"

One day Shiblī went into the desert. He saw forty men, distracted, impassioned, and overcome by this talk. Each of them had gone into the desert, a brick under his head, his life having reached the gullet. The tenderness of affinity appeared in Shiblī's breast and he said, "O God, what do You want from them? You have placed the burden of pain on their hearts, You have struck fire in their haystacks. Will You now kill them all with the sword of jealousy?"

His secret core was addressed with the words, "I will kill them. Once I kill them, I will pay them the wergild."

Shiblī said, "What is the wergild?"

The address came, "When someone is killed by the sword of My majesty, his wergild is the vision of My beauty."

I will fight against Your passion's army  
and be killed—someone killed has value.

The wergild of the one killed by hand is dinars,  
the wergild of the one killed by passion is seeing.

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14 On these three basic sorts of Muslims, to whom Maybudī often refers, see especially the commentaries on 9:100-6 and 35:32.

**2:195 Expend in the path of God.... And do what is beautiful. Surely God loves the beautiful-doers.**

The rich remove money from their wallets, the poor remove the rich from their hearts, and the *tawhīd*-voicers remove all creatures from their secret cores—to this He alludes with His words, “Say ‘God,’ then leave them” [6:91]. The rich let wealth go from their wallets for the sake of the reward of that world, the poor let the rich go from their hearts for the sake of the Lord’s religion, and the recognizers let the creatures go for the sake of seeing the Glorified. The rich spend their possessions in alms tax and charity in order to escape from hell, the worshipers spend their souls in the duties of worship to reach paradise, and the recognizers spend their spirits and hearts in the realities of witnessing to reach union with the Real.

*And do what is beautiful. Surely God loves the beautiful-doers.* Muṣṭafā said, “Beautiful doing is that you worship God as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, surely He sees you.” Doing the beautiful is that you worship God in wakefulness and awareness as if you are gazing upon Him, and you serve Him as if you are seeing Him.

This hadith alludes to the heart’s encounter with the Real, the secret core’s convergence with the Unseen, and the spirit’s contemplation of the Patron. It is an incitement to self-purification in deeds, curtailment of wishes, and loyalty to what was accepted on the First Day.

What was accepted on the First Day? Hearing *Am I not your Lord* and saying *Yes indeed* [7:172]. What is loyalty to what was accepted? Serving the Protector. How does one curtail wishes? In “As if you see Him.” Where is self-purification in deeds? In “He sees you.”

When an eye has seen Him, how can it busy itself with glancing at others? When a spirit has found companionship with Him, how will it make do with water and dust? The word “*Return!*” [89:28] is addressed to the pure spirit. How will it make its home in the frame of water and dust? When someone has become accustomed to that Presence, how long will he put up with the abasement of the veil? How will the ruler of his own city spend his life in exile?

The attribute of the spirit is subsistence. Water and dust undergo annihilation. He who lives in the Real is not like him who lives in this world. The realizer is aware of the secret of the Real: the Real is seeable. “As if you see Him” in the report bears witness to this.

**2:196 And complete the hajj and the umrah for God.**

It is narrated from Wahab ibn Munabbih that God sent a revelation to Adam: “O Adam, I am the Lord of the world and the world’s folk, the creator of all, the king doing what I desire. I am the Lord of Bakka, and those who dwell there are My neighbors. Those who visit are My delegates, My guests, and under My protection. I will populate this spot with the folk of heaven and earth. They will come in droves from every direction and every region, their hair disheveled and their faces covered with dust from the suffering of the road, saying ‘God is greater’ and reciting ‘Here I am,’ their faces turned toward the blessed desert, the earth colored with the blood of sacrifice.

“O Adam! When someone visits this house and is self-purifying in that, he is My guest and one of Mine, one of those near to Me. It is worthy of My majesty to honor him and to bring him to forgiveness through the gift of mercy and bestowal. O Adam! Among your children is a prophet by the name of Abraham, My bosom friend, chosen by Me. With his hand I will establish it, and I will command him to build it. I will make its eminence appear, bring to light its watering place, mark its sanctuary, and teach him how to worship Me there. After him I will have the world’s folk keep it inhabited and place respect and reverence for it in their hearts. Then will come the turn of Muḥammad the Arab, the Seal of the Prophets, the lamp of heaven and earth. I will make it his birth place and origin, the place where revelation falls upon him, and the domicile of his honor. I will put its watering place, deputyship, and rulership in his hand. Then I will put love for it in the hearts of the faithful from the corners of the earth. They will come, bareheaded and barefoot, their goods and means put aside, their lives placed in their hands, their hair disheveled, their faces covered with dust. They will all go and circumambulate that house, asking Me for forgiveness. O Adam! If someone asks you what I will do with them, say that I am with them in knowledge, I am found by their souls and present in their hearts, and I am the cure of their pain. I am concealed

from their eyes, but I am face-to-face with their spirits.”

So apparent are You to my heart,  
so hidden are You from my eyes!

*And complete the hajj and the umrah for God.* The hajj of the common people is one thing, the hajj of the elect something else. The hajj of the common people sets out for the street of the Friend, the hajj of the elect sets out for the face of the Friend. That is going to the Friend’s house, this is going to the Friend.

I was in pain—not for the Kaabah but for Your face.  
I was drunk—not from wine but from Your fragrance.

The common people went with their souls and saw doors and walls. The elect went with their spirits and found conversation and vision. The elect travel this path just as that chevalier said:

“The blood of the sincerely truthful was purified and made into a road—  
unless the spirit takes a step in this road, you will have no access.”<sup>15</sup>

He who goes with the soul finds suffering and carries burdens in order to circle the Kaabah. He who goes with the spirit finds rest and ease, and the Kaabah itself circles around his house. In this meaning there is the story of Ibrāhīm Khawāṣṣ. He said that once in his deprivation he found himself wandering in Byzantium, just as the Men fall anywhere, bewildered and perplexed, helpless and having lost the thread.

Perplexed in You the Men of the world  
have not been able to find the end of Your thread.

The news in Byzantium was that the king’s daughter had become mad, and her father had bound her with the bonds of madmen. The physicians were all helpless to cure her. From time to time she would breathe a cold breath and rain down hot tears, sometimes weeping, sometimes laughing. It occurred to him that something could be done. He went to the door of the king’s house and said, “I have come to cure the sick person.”

When the king’s eyes fell on him, he said, “It seems you have come to cure my daughter. I suppose you are a physician.”

He said, “Yes, I have a Lord who is a physician. I have come to cure your daughter.”

He said, “Look at the battlements of the castle. What do you see?”

Ibrāhīm looked and saw severed heads placed on those battlements.

The king said, “If someone does not cure her, what you see is his recompense.”

He said, “I have nothing to fear.”

They tell me, “You’ll destroy yourself.”

How can a lover fear his own destruction?

When the king saw that he had seen those heads on the battlement and thought nothing of it, he pointed him to the room of his daughter. He went forth and had not yet stepped foot into the room when he heard this call, “*Say to the faithful that they cast down their eyes*” [24:30]. He stayed right there, distracted by her situation and bewildered by her state. Again he heard a call: “O Son of Khawāṣṣ! A drink that increases nothing but thirst! A food that increases nothing but consternation!” From behind the curtain he said, “O servant girl of God! What is this state and what is this ecstasy?”

She said, “O shaykh! Once I was sitting amidst joy and blessings with my slave girls and special friends. Suddenly a pain fell into my heart and a sorrow reached my spirit. I was annihilated from myself and became enraptured. I had not yet come back to my room before that pain became consolidated and the work was completed.”

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<sup>15</sup> The style is pure Sanāʿī, but the line is not found in his printed Divan.

O You the guide on whose road is pain!  
 You are solitary and Your familiar solitary!  
 One grain from Your trap, and an epoch,  
 one drop from Your cup, and a Man!

She said, “When I gained some ease from that ecstasy and distraction, I found myself in bonds and chains. I approved of His judgment and was satisfied with His decree. I knew that He does not want bad for His friends, so let us see what this work reaches in the end.”

Ibrāhīm said, “What do you say that we contrive a stratagem in order to go to the Abode of Submission and cultivate the submission. It would be a shame if I were to leave a dear one like you in the Abode of Unbelief.”

She said, “O Son of Khawāṣṣ! What kind of manliness is it to nurture the submission in the Abode of Submission? The man is he who takes up Islam in the Abode of Unbelief and nurtures it in spirit and heart. What is there in the Abode of Submission that is not here?”

He said, “The eminent, magnificent, noble Kaabah, which is the goal of pilgrims and the witnessing place of the yearners!”

She said, “Have you visited the Kaabah?”

He said, “I have visited it 70 times.”

She said, “Look up!”

He looked up and saw the Kaabah standing on top of her house. Then she said, “O Son of Khawāṣṣ! Whoever goes by foot visits the Kaabah, but when someone goes by heart, the Kaabah visits him.”

He said, “By that God who has exalted you with the exaltedness of the submission! Tell me the secret of this. How did you reach this station?”

She said, “Nothing I did was worthy of that Presence, but I approved of His judgment and was satisfied with His decree.”

He said, “How will I now contrive to leave this place?”

She said, “Standing as you are now, just turn your face to the road and go until you reach your goal.”

With her charisma a road appeared that had no veil or hindrance, and no one was aware of him. He left her house and the Abode of Unbelief and returned to the Abode of Submission.

**2:201 Among them is he who says, “Our Lord, give us in this world something beautiful, and in the next world something beautiful.”**

It is said that the beautiful thing of this world wanted by the faithful is knowledge and worship, and the beautiful thing of that world is paradise and vision. That of this world is witnessing the mysteries, and that of that world is seeing with the eyes. This world’s is the success of service, and that world’s the realization of union. This world’s is self-purification through obedience, and that world’s deliverance from burning and separation. This world’s is the Sunnah and the community, and that world’s the encounter and vision. This world’s is the firm fixity of faith, and that world’s the *repose and ease* [56:89]. This world’s is the sweetness of obedience, and that world’s the pleasure of contemplation. For this world’s, there must be deeds with obedience, and for that world’s there must be pain with recognition. It is a long road from deeds to pain, and he who does not have this eyesight has an excuse. What is obtained from these deeds is houris and palaces, but the possessor of this pain is drowned in light in the ocean of face-to-face vision.

O You the guide on whose road is pain!  
 You are solitary and Your familiar solitary!

*Among them is he who says, “Our Lord...”*. There is a subtle point in this verse. When someone wants this world, inevitably he will be held back from the reward of the afterworld, for God says, “*He has no share in the next world*” [2:102]. Muṣṭafā said, “When someone loves this world of his, that will harm his next world; and when someone loves his next world, that will harm this world of his. So prefer that which subsists to that which undergoes annihilation!” When someone wants

both this world and the afterworld, the Exalted Lord does not hold them back from him. He gives him what he wants. The report has come, “God is ashamed when a servant lifts up his hands to Him and He disappoints him.” It is also narrated, “God is ashamed when a person with gray hair who observes propriety and clings to the Sunnah asks Him for something and He does not give it.”

There remains another group, who recognize the reality of approval and have surrendered to God’s decree and approved of His determination. They do not turn away from lauding Him in order to ask from Him. They do not seek access to this world nor do they ask for the afterworld. Concerning them the Lord of the Worlds says, “When remembering Me busies someone from asking from Me, I bestow upon him the most excellent of what I bestow on the askers.”

**2:203** *And remember God in certain numbered days, but if someone hastens on after two days, no sin shall be upon him.*

There are three sorts of remembrance: The remembrance of habit, the remembrance of calculation, and the remembrance of companionship. The remembrance of habit has no worth, for it is the secret core’s heedlessness. The remembrance of calculation has no adornment, for its goal is seeking the wage. The remembrance of companionship is a deposit, for the tongue of him who remembers is a loan in the midst.

The remembrance of the fearful is from dread of being cut off, the remembrance of the hopeful is from wishing to find what they seek, and the remembrance of the lovers is from the tenderness of burning. The fearful heard the call of the threat with the ear of fear and clung to supplication. The hopeful heard the call of the promise with the ear of hope and clung to laudation. The lovers heard the call beforehand with the ear of love and did not mix with pretexts. The remembrance of the Beginningless reached the recognizers and they fled from effort to their lot.

*And remember God in certain numbered days, but if someone hastens on after two days... .* This is the attribute of the end of the ritual and the final acts of the hajj. Now let us offer comprehensive words comprising all the waymarks and rituals along with allusions and subtle points.

Know that there are two sanctuaries: the outward sanctuary and the inward sanctuary. The outward sanctuary surrounds the Kaabah, and the inward sanctuary surrounds the heart of the faithful. In the midst of the outward sanctuary is the Kaabah, the kiblah of the faithful, and in the midst of the inner sanctuary is a Kaabah that is the target of the All-Merciful’s gaze. The former is the goal of the pilgrims, and the latter the locus of lights, *so he is upon a light from his Lord* [39:22]. The former is free from the hands of evil-doers and unbelievers, and the latter is free from seeing and thinking about others.

If some article is found in the outward sanctuary, it is left there so that its owner may appear and find it. If some article is found in the inward sanctuary, there is no way to go after it, for it is nothing but God’s secret. God has a secret in every heart, and no one has access to that secret. He says, “I have deposited it in the heart of My servants whom I love.” Do not search for My secret! Anyone who searches for My secret throws himself into the whirlpool of trial. What business does the servant have with the secret of Lordhood? How can what was not and then came to be have access to Him who always was and always will be?

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “This knowledge is the Real’s secret, and these men are the possessors of secrets. What business has the watchman with entering the king’s court? Before that outer Kaabah is a man-eating desert, and before this inner Kaabah is the desert of grief and sorrow.”

A world is wandering in the desert of passion for You—  
who will be given access to the Kaabah of Your acceptance? [DS 210]

The former Kaabah is the kiblah of practice, the latter Kaabah the kiblah of contemplation. The former yields unveiling, the latter demands face-to-face vision. The former is the threshold of exaltedness and tremendousness, the latter the gateway to gentleness and joyful expansiveness.

So what if I don’t have the world’s kiblah,  
my kiblah is the Beloved’s street, just that.

In visiting the former Kaabah one has the loin-cloth and mantle that are well-known. In visiting the latter Kaabah, one has the loin-cloth of solitariness and the mantle of disengagement. The ritual consecration of the former is “Here I am!” on the tongue. The ritual consecration of the latter is disowning the two worlds.

The “Here I am” of the passionate is better than the consecration of the hajjis—  
the one is for the Kaabah, the other for the Friend.

How will I go to the Kaabah by taking the desert road?

The Kaabah is the street of the Heart-stealer, the kiblah His face.

The recompense for that hajj is houris, palaces, and the bliss and ease of paradise, and the recompense for this hajj is being put under the dome of jealousy on the carpet of exaltedness, the throne of proximity, and the cushion of intimacy—His attributes unveiled and His Essence witnessed, sometimes in the majesty of unveiling and sometimes in the gentleness of contemplation, in *a seat of truthfulness, at an Omnipotent King* [54:55].

**2:213** *The people were one community. Then God sent the prophets as bringers of good news and warning.*

In terms of allusion and according to the tasting of the chevaliers of the Tariqah, this verse has another intimation and another meaning. The king of the universe, the keeper of the world, the knower of the hidden, is saying that when He first created creatures, He created them in the curtaining wrap of createdness. When He made them with such a makeup at the beginning, the darknesses of the attributes of createdness surrounded this created nature. They were all one group in the curtain of obscurity. All were gathered in the darkness of absence, all remained in the captivity of their own makeup. It was just like that chevalier said:

“The creatures are at ease in the ruins of their own makeup—  
wink just once to throw the creatures into turmoil!” [DS 696]

Then a courier came from the infinite world to their tininess. Muṣṭafā gave this report about that courier: “God created the creatures in darkness. Then He cast upon them something of His light. Whomsoever the light struck was guided, and whomsoever it missed went astray.”

When this messenger turned its face from that infinity to their tininess, they all became aware, captive to desire, subjugated by will, wounded by wisdom, their ears fixed on their own fortune and lot: “What is coming to us? What will be decreed for us?”

Then the hand of predetermination divided them into two groups: the lucky and the unlucky. He said about the lucky, “These belong to the Garden, and I do not care.” He said about the unlucky, “These belong to the Fire, and I do not care.” In other words, “I have no fear of being blamed. I will do whatever occurs to Me and have no regrets. Some are the folk of felicity without any conformity with Me, and some are the folk of wretchedness without any opposition to Me. ‘These belong to the Garden, and I do not care’ about their disloyalty, and ‘These belong to the Fire, and I do not care’ about their loyalty. I receive no profit from loyalty, nor do I lose anything from disloyalty. When someone gains faith, he is the one who profits; I stay exactly as I was, without equal or need. When someone becomes an unbeliever, he is the one who loses; I stay exactly as I was, without associate or partner.

“O My servants! If the first of you and the last of you, the men of you and jinn of you, the living of you and the dead of you, had the heart of the most godwary man among you, that would add nothing to My kingdom. O My servants! If the first of you and the last of you, the men of you and jinn of you, the living of you and the dead of you, had the heart of the most depraved man among you, that would diminish nothing from My kingdom.”

One of the subtle points attached to this verse is that the world’s creatures gathered within Adam’s makeup—the unbeliever and the faithful, the sincerely truthful and the heretic—have the likeness of a merchant carrying musk. Since he goes in dread of highwaymen, he places the musk in the midst of asafetida. The musk pulls the smell of asafetida to itself, and sharp-scented asa-

fetida pulls the musk to itself. When the merchant reaches his destination and he feels secure, he spreads a cloth, puts the musk and the asafetida there, lets the wind blow against them, and each returns to its original scent and lets go of the borrowed. So also, the fragrance of the faithful in Adam's makeup reached the unbelievers, and the fragrance of the unbelievers reached the faithful. The beautiful deeds that come into existence from the unbelievers in this world all come from the fragrance of the faithful that has reached them, and the ugly deeds and disobedient acts that come from the faithful in this world all come from the scent of the unbelievers' unbelief. Tomorrow at the resurrection the cloth of justice will be spread and the wind of solicitude will blow. The beautiful deeds of the unbelievers will go to the faithful and the ugly deeds of the faithful will go to the unbelievers. The first judgment and beginningless decree will arrive. It will take away the borrowed, and give the original back to the original. The pure will go with the pure, and the vile with the vile, *so that God may distinguish the vile from the goodly* [8:37].

**2:214 Or do you reckon that you will enter the Garden?**

This is as they say:

You can't speak the words of the good so easily—  
it is not so easy, easy, to speak their words.

"When someone is too timid to engage with fearful things, he will not reach his hopes." Are you not aware that joining is found in breaking off, life in death, and desires in not reaching your desires? The moth reaches union with the candle when it burns, and the candle finds life when it loses its head.

Religion's pain is indeed marvelous, for when you suffer it,  
you will be like a candle—better once your head's cut off. [DS 485]

The high Firdaws is a sweet garden and meadow, but the road there is difficult, a rosebed full of thorns. Muṣṭafā said, "The Garden is surrounded by disliked things," lest the nobodies and the unqualified claim familiarity. *Are they equal, those who know and those who know not?* [39:9].

A simile for this rule is the ocean: It was made the resting place for precious pearls and night-brightening gems, and then sharks and huge fish were made the veil of those pearls and gems. Two men set out, pulled into the field of seeking by love for gems. They go to the ocean's shore and see its difficulties, and dread appears in them because of the danger of those sharks. Of the two men who see the terrors and difficult states, one is afraid and he steps back from seeking and declares himself quit of his own words. He had a wish, but his attribute of manliness was not complete. He fancied that this work could be finished merely by wishing and that he could reach the treasure without suffering. The exalted Shari'ah gives the answer: "The religion is not reached with wishfulness and self-adornment."

With Me you must have a hidden mystery,  
with Me you must always have need.  
In truth, black crow, you're a fine bird!  
You want to mate with a white falcon.

The other man is the possessor of desire. Passion for the beauty of that night-brightening pearl cleanses his intellect of the ocean's terrors, so he does not give those meanings access to himself. Hour by hour and moment by moment that beauty discloses itself to him, so he becomes more entranced and more passionate. He goes head first into the ocean. If felicity assists him and success-giving becomes his friend, that night-brightening pearl will fall into the grasp of his seeking. If the opposite happens, the sharks will take his life as booty and his name will be written in the register of "I don't care." The tongue of his state will say,

"Each month two thousand of the passionate like me  
are killed, and not one lets out a sigh."

**2:215** *They ask thee what they should expend. Say: "Whatever good you expend should be for parents and kinsmen, orphans, the indigent, and the son of the road." And whatever good you do, God knows it.*

Throwing away money in the path of the Shariah is beautiful, but it is not like throwing away the spirit in the field of the Haqiqah and becoming separate from all others at the moment of contemplation.

Keeping to the stipulation of loyalty is beautiful, but not as much as becoming separate from self and stepping onto the carpet of limpidness.

Someone asks, "What should we do with our property? How should we spend it?"

The Shariah answers, "From 200 dirhams, 5 dirhams; from 20 dinars, one-half dinar."

Someone else asks and the Haqiqah answers, "You will not be with Him along with body and spirit."

Yes, the story of the wage-earners is one thing, the story of the recognizers something else. The wage-earner's recognition reaches recognizing the spirit, but the recognizer's recognition reaches throwing away the spirit.

Wealth, gold, things—gamble them away for nothing.

When the work reaches your spirit, gamble it away!

Those fortunate Companions did not ask how to spend because they had not found their way to poverty, but in hopes that this caress would reach them from the Exalted Presence: "*And whatever good you do, God knows it.* Whatever you have given and will give, I who am the Lord know it and am aware of it."

This is just like Moses, when he was called during that pitch black night in the desert of the Mount: "O Moses!" In the pleasure of this address Moses was burned by the call. In his burning and yearning he said, "Who is speaking to me?" Moses knew, but he was drowned in the ocean of yearning for the vision of the Real. He was seeking someone to take his hand: "I have burned in this one call. Perhaps He will call out again, and maybe I will light up."

The command came, "O Moses! Do you not know who is calling you?"

He said, "I know, but I am waiting for the caller to say, '*Surely I am God, Lord of the worlds*' [28:30]."

Here I am, My servant, and you're in My embrace,  
and whatever you have said I know.

Ask of Me without shame or dread,  
and fear not, for *surely I am God*.

Here there are two verses. The verse at the beginning of the section alludes to the worshipers' spending their wealth in order to reach recognition. The verse at the end of the section alludes to the recognizers' spending their own lives for the sake of struggle in order to reach the Recognized. It is His words,

**2:218** *Surely those who have faith, those who emigrate, and those who struggle in God's path—it is they who hope for God's mercy, and God is the Forgiving, the Ever-Merciful.*

After faith, He spoke of emigration. Emigration is of two sorts: one outward, the other inward.

Outward emigration has two sides: One side is to emigrate from one's home, homeland, and means and to go forth seeking knowledge. The other side is what comes to be known by seeking. Any traveling that is outside of these two has no weight or worth. The Prophet alluded to this with his words, "People are knowers or learners; the rest of the people are rabble."

You should not say that the seeker of knowledge and the seeker of the Known have one level. The seeker of knowledge is himself traveling, and the seeker of the Known is being pulled by the Real. He who is himself traveling dwells in suffering, distress, and hunger, like Moses in the journey in which he was seeking knowledge: "*Bring us our food. We have certainly met with weariness*

ness on this journey of ours” [18:62]. Another time, when he set off seeking the Known, he was confirmed to such a degree by the Real’s protection and pulling that he stayed thirty days waiting for the Real’s speech, and he was not aware of being tired or hungry.

The master Abū °Alī Daqqāq said, “The caressing of the seekers of knowledge reaches a place such that tomorrow, when they rise up from the dust, they will be mounted on the feathers of angels, according to the Prophets words, ‘Surely the angels will put down their wings for the seeker of knowledge, approving what he is doing.’” Then Abū °Alī said, “Since the seekers of knowledge will be mounted on the feathers of angels, how can anyone imagine what the seekers of the Known will be mounted on?”

Did we but know that the visit is true,  
we would make our face an earth so that You might approve.

\*

Beautiful idols walk on forbidden ground.  
I will make my eyes the ground—come stroll on my eyes!

This then was the explanation of outward emigration. Inward emigration is that one goes from the soul to the heart, from the heart to the secret core, from the secret core to the spirit, and from the spirit to the Real. The soul is the way station of submission, the heart the way station of faith, the secret core the way station of recognition, and the spirit the way station of *tawḥīd*.

In the traveling of the wayfarers one must emigrate from submission to faith, from faith to recognition, and from recognition to *tawḥīd*. This is not the *tawḥīd* of the common people. On the contrary, this *tawḥīd* is pure of water and dust, made limpid of Adam and Eve—attachments cut, causes dissolved, traces nullified, limits come to nothing, allusions ended, expressions negated, chronicles transformed.<sup>16</sup>

One day the master, Imām Abū °Alī Daqqāq, was drowned in the ocean of love and speaking of *tawḥīd*. He said, “If you see one of the honored pearls placing his foot in the street of making claims and talking about *tawḥīd*, be careful not to be deceived. Know that *tawḥīd*’s meaning is pure of water and dust, for it is the beauty of Unity that went into the field of the Beginningless to gaze on the majesty of the Sanctum. It spoke mysteries to Itself in the attribute of inaccessibility.” Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī alluded to this *tawḥīd* and said,

No one has voiced the unity of the One,  
for everyone who voices it denies it.  
The *tawḥīd* of those who talk of its description  
is a loan voided by the One.  
His *tawḥīd* is His voicing unity—  
its describer’s description deviates.<sup>17</sup>

**2:219 They ask thee about wine and gambling... And they ask thee what they should expend.**

God has servants on the earth who drink the wine of recognition and are drunk from the cup of love. There is no more than a whiff of this wine’s reality in this world, and nothing but a show of that drunkenness, for this world is a prison, and what can a prison put up with? Today there is no more than that. Nonetheless, wait until tomorrow, the assembly of *repose and ease* [56:89], the arena of union with the Beloved, when the servants will be gazing on the Real.

Hope for union with you has added to my life.  
What can union itself be, when hope does that!?

A man in turmoil entered the shop of a wine merchant with one dirham. He said, “Give me wine for this dirham.”

The merchant replied, “There’s no wine left.”

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16 The clause is from *Ṣad maydān*, no. 100.

17 Anṣārī, *Manāzil al-sā’irīn* 113.

The man said, "I'm already in turmoil. I can't tolerate wine's reality. Show me a drop so I may smell it—you'll see how drunk I become and what turmoil I'll stir up."

Glory be to God! What is this lightning that has shone from the Beginningless! It has burnt up the two worlds and nothing remains.

To someone He gave the wine of bewilderment from the cup of awe, and he became drunk with bewilderment. He said,

"I am bewildered in Thee, take my hand,  
O guide of those bewildered in Thee!"

\*

The work is difficult—how can I make it easy?  
The pain has no cure—how can I find a remedy?  
I've become secure from the headache of empty words—  
what can I do with the stories of the drunkards?

To someone else He gave the wine of recognition from the storeroom of hope. At the top of the street of yearning he kept on saying in hope of union,

"One day luck will enter the door of my house,  
one day the sun of elation will rise over me.  
One day You will glance in my direction,  
one day this grief of mine will come to an end!"

To someone else He gave the wine of union from the cup of love. He showed him the way to the carpet of bold expansiveness and gave him a spot on the leaning place of intimacy. With joyful disdain and coquetry he said,

"On the branch of revelry, we're Your nightingales.  
Our hearts are devoted to singing about You.  
Don't let us go, for we're Your helpers!  
Pass over our sins, for we're drunk with You."

Still another was so busy seeing the Cupbearer that he paid no attention to the wine!

You poured me a cup and made me drunk!  
So I'm drunk from You, not the cup.

The women of Egypt blamed Zulaykhā for her passion toward Joseph, but when they reached the contemplation of Joseph, they became so selfless that they cut their hands and tore their clothing. The drunkenness of contemplating Joseph so overcame them that they were not aware of cutting their hands or tearing their clothes. Jacob had the same state. The overpowering force of his yearning to see Joseph was such that wherever he looked, he saw Joseph, and whenever he talked, he spoke of Joseph.

With whomever I speak, whether I want it or not,  
your name comes to my mouth from the first.

One day Gabriel came and said, "No longer bring Joseph's name to your tongue, for that is the command." Then whenever Jacob met anyone, he would say, "What is your name?" Perhaps there would appear in the midst someone named Joseph, and he would find consolation in that.

I want a heart for choosing only You,  
a spirit for breathing the pain of Your passion,  
A body for desiring only Your love,  
an eye for seeing You and only You.

*And they ask thee what they should expend.* The lords of the meanings have said that there are three sorts of asking: One is the asking of assertion and making known. Thus the Exalted Lord says,

“So, by thy Lord, We shall surely ask all of them about what they were doing” [15:92-93]. The Prophet alluded to this when he said, “On the day of resurrection the servant will stay on his feet until he is asked about four things: about his youth and how he wasted it, about his lifespan and how he ruined it, about his wealth and whence he gathered it and where he spent it, and about how he put into practice what he knew.”

The second asking is that of harassment. Thus the estranged asked Muṣṭafā when the resurrection would be, but they themselves had no faith in the resurrection. They asked in order to harass him. Thus He says, “*They ask thee about the Hour, when it will come*” [7:187]. So also are His words, “*They ask thee about the mountains*” [20:105].

The third is seeking for understanding and searching for right guidance, as He says in this verse: “*They ask thee about wine and gambling, ... and they ask thee what they should expend.*” *They ask thee about the orphans* [2:220]. *They ask thee about menstruation* [2:222]. All of these are asking in order to seek right guidance, and in this sort of asking people are diverse. One asks about states, and he hears the answer from the tongue of an intermediary. But he who asks about Him who transforms the states hears the answer without intermediary from the Exalted Presence with the attribute of generosity, for *surely I am near* [2:186].

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “There are many at His door who want *from* Him, but those who want *Him* are few. There are many who talk of pain without His pain, but those who have the pain are few. In commentary it has come that the Lord of the Worlds said, ‘Some of you desire this world, and some of you desire the next world—where is someone who desires Me?’”

**2:223 *Your women are your tillage, so come to your tillage as you like.***

The servant has a soul and a heart. The soul is from the low world, and its root is water and dust. The heart is from the high world, that is, the lordly subtlety, and its foundation is pure light. The soul’s station is absence, and the heart’s station is witnessing. Muṣṭafā alluded to this with his words, “There is no heart that is not between two fingers of God.”

God gave the soul, which stays absent, the same living quarters as its similars, and He made this a favor. He said, “*Your women are your tillage, so come to your tillage as you like.*” In another place He said, “*Marry the women who seem goodly to you*” [4:3]. In another place He said, “*That you may rest in them, and He placed between you love and mercy*” [30:21].

Finding one’s own shares and inclining toward similars in this manner is the portion of the soul, which remains in the lowland of jealousy. As for the heart, it has the station of contemplation, so it is forbidden to incline toward any others or to come down to any creature. Until it cuts itself off from creation and makes its own secret core pure of other than the Real, it will not come under these words: “*He loves those who make themselves pure*” [2:222]. The Lord of the Worlds loves those who are pure in this manner. He calls them men when He says, “*In it are men who love to make themselves pure, and God loves those who make themselves pure*” [9:108].

Know also that in this house of the decree, vile things are of two sorts. One is vileness of entity, which can never become pure by washing. If you put a corpse into the ocean a thousand times, it will never become pure, for the impurity belongs to its own entity.

The other is vileness of attribute. At root something is pure, but an impurity has reached it. If you wash it, it becomes pure. This impurity, however, is of two sorts. One is flimsy, so it becomes pure with a single water. The other is heavy, so it must be washed with water and dust to become pure.

At root vile things in the religion have the same divisions. One is vileness of the entity, which will never disappear. This is the vileness of the associationism that He does not forgive: *Surely God does not forgive that anything be associated with Him* [4:48]. *The associaters are impure* [9:28]. These remain in hell everlastingly, for their impurity is the impurity of the entity and it cannot receive purity, and paradise is the place of the pure.

The other vileness in the religion is vileness of attribute, which is disobedience, and it can receive purity. This also is of two sorts: some sins are small and others are great. The small sins are flimsy and become pure with one pass through hell: *And none of you there is but will enter it* [19:71]. The great sins are thick and do not become pure with one pass. They remain longer, but

they do not remain everlastingly, for the entity is not impure, and the impurity can be made pure. If someone is washed in this abode with the water of repentance and remorse, he becomes pure. If he does not become pure in this abode, then in the house of retribution nothing but fire will make him pure. Unless the impurity is burnt away, he will not be pure, and unless he is pure, he will not reach the pure Lord. “Surely God is goodly and accepts only the goodly.”

Revelation came to David: “‘Make for Me a pure house in which I may reside!’ Make My house pure so that the Lord of the House may settle down in it.”

He said, “O Lord, how shall I make it pure?”

He said, “Strike it with the fire of passion so that everything that does not have My lineage will be burnt. Then sweep it with the broom of remorse so that if any caprice of the soul remains not burnt by the fire of passion, the broom of remorse will sweep it away, for the bride of union with Me does not get along with the soul’s caprice.”

The bride of religion will not show her face to you, brother,  
till your soul’s caprice has settled down in the religion’s road.

How long will you sit like women in hope of color and scent?

Fix your aspiration on the road and set out like a man! [DS 205]

**2:226** *For those who forswear their women, a wait of four months. But if they revert, God is forgiving, ever-merciful.*

In terms of allusion, these verses contain an eloquent admonition and complete advice concerning the observation of the rightful dues of the Real: God gives so much weight and gravity to the rightful due of the people that He sends a decisive command concerning it and instills dread into those who put it aside. Hence it is even more appropriate to preserve the rightful due of God and to dread putting it aside.

In one of the reports it is mentioned that tomorrow at the resurrection a youth will be brought who had neglected the rightful dues of God. In the attribute of awe and exaltedness the Exalted Lord will address him: “Had you no shame? Had you no fear of My anger and harshness such that you neglected My rightful due and you paid it no reverence and respect? Take him to hell, for he is worthy of fire, and fire is worthy of him.”

Ibn ‘Abbās narrated that the Prophet said, “God says, ‘I will not look after the rightful due of My servant until the servant looks after My rightful due.’”

In the scriptures has come, “I honor those who honor Me and I scorn those who scorn My command.”

Look at the vengeance He takes from the servant because of His rightful due, even though His rightful due is built on leniency, and He passes over most of it. As for the rightful dues of created things, in these no leniency is shown, so God’s vengeance in them is more. So much is this so that it is said that if someone has the reward of seventy prophets but has one plaintiff whom he has cheated of half a penny, he will not enter paradise until that plaintiff is satisfied with him. So, the rightful dues of the creatures must be preserved, and one must strive mightily to observe them, especially the rightful dues of women and spouses, on whose behalf the Lord of the Worlds acts as deputy in this verse, requesting their husbands to take care of them.

Muṣṭafā said, “The best of you is the best of you to his wife, and I am the best of you to my wife.” He also said, “I counsel you to be good to your wives, for they are your helpers living with you and they possess nothing of their own. You have taken them as a trust from God, and you have made their private parts lawful to you by His word.” He is saying that these women are your underlings and they are God’s trust with you. Act beautifully toward them and desire the best for them, especially when they are pious and worthy, for a pious and worthy woman is the cause of a man’s ease and his helper in the religion.

One day ‘Umar Khaṭṭāb said, “O Messenger of God! What should I receive and choose from this world?”

The Messenger answered, “Each of you should take a remembering tongue, a grateful heart,

and a wife with faith,” a pious and worthy woman. Look at what rank he gave to a worthy woman by placing her next to remembrance and gratitude! And we know that remembrance of the tongue and gratitude of the heart are not of this world. Rather, they are the reality of the religion. The pious wife whom he made their comrade is the same.

This is why Abū Sulaymān Dārānī said, “A worthy spouse is not of this world, but of the next.” In other words, she will keep you carefree so that you may busy yourself with the work of the next world. If weariness comes to you in assiduous worship, such that your heart is beaten down by it and you are held back from worship, then seeing and contemplating her brings intimacy and ease into the heart. Strength will return, and your eagerness for obedience will be renewed. This is why the Commander of the Faithful °Alī said, “Do not remove rest and ease completely from the heart, lest it becomes blind.”

It sometimes happened that such a tremendous work entered in upon the Prophet in his unveilings that his bodily frame was not able to bear it. He would say to °Ā°isha, “Talk with me, O °Ā°isha.” With these words he wanted to gain strength so that he would be able to bear the burden of revelation. Once he was given back to this world and he regained full strength, the thirst for that work would overpower him, and he would say, “Give us ease, Bilāl!”<sup>18</sup>

You become weary in this world of exile because  
you must say, “Give us ease, O Bilāl,” for the crowd. [DS 34]

Then he would turn to the ritual prayer and would find the delight of his eyes in the prayer, as has come in the report: “The delight of my eyes was placed in the prayer.”

°Ā°isha said, “After he turned to the prayer, it was as if he had never recognized me, nor did we recognize him.” Sometimes he was so drowned in the self-disclosure of majesty that he would say, “I have a moment with God embraced by no proximate angel, nor any sent prophet.”

In the world of realization, this change of state is called “curtaining and self-disclosure.” Were it not for the Real’s curtaining, when confronted with the majesty of self-disclosure the servant would burn away and not be able to stand before the assaults of the ruling power of the realities. To this he alluded with his words, “[God has seventy veils of light and darkness;] were they to be removed, the glories of His Face would burn away everything perceived by the eyes.” When that paragon of the world and master of the empire of Adam’s children sometimes asked forgiveness [*istighfār*], he was seeking to be curtained, for *ghafr* means curtaining, and *istighfār* means to ask to be curtained. His curtaining was to busy himself with °Ā°isha for a while and to be delighted with her. This is why it has been said in describing the friends, “When He discloses Himself to them, they lose their wits, and when He is curtained from them, they are given back to their share and they enjoy themselves.”

It was said to Abū °Abdallāh Khafīf, “Why does °Abd al-Raḥmān Istakhārī accompany the dog-keepers into the plain wearing a coat?” He said, “He wants to disburden himself because of the weight of what is upon him.” Near to this are the words of the poet,

I desire to forget her remembrance, for it is as if  
the image of Laylā appears to me everywhere.

He is saying: “I am looking for a pretext to forget You. I remember You, the pretext flees, and I become dazzled.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, when there is talk of finding You, I flee from my knowledge and lose my nerve. I cling to heedlessness, I keep on clinging to the curtain of the Unseen against the ruling power of face-to-face vision. Are You not my desire? But I throw myself into error to breathe for a moment.”

## **2:229 Divorce is twice, then retention with honor or setting free with beautiful doing.**

This is a recommendation to spread out the divorce so that they will not hurry to complete sepa-

18 These two paragraphs are derived from Ghazālī’s Persian work, *Kimiyā-yi sa’adat* 241-42.

ration.<sup>19</sup> Spreading out the divorce is recommended because the reality of separation is reprehensible. Although divorce is permitted in the Shariah, God hates it, for it is the cause of separating and of cutting the ties of familiarity and union. God's Messenger said, "The most hateful of permitted things to me is divorce." The exalted Qur'an praises people who do not cut bonds and do not seek for separation. It says, "*Those who join what God has commanded to be joined and fear their Lord*" [13:21].

In the Highest Dominion, He created angels who are half snow and half fire. Through His own power He brought these two opposites together and kept them that way. Their glorification is this: "Glory be to Him who makes fire familiar with snow! O Lord, make the hearts of your faithful servants familiar with each other!"

A pir of the Sufis said, "I was walking in the desert. I saw a person I did not recognize, water standing before him, and plants growing from the water. I asked him who he was and he said that he was Abū Murra [the Father of Bitterness].<sup>20</sup> I asked him what the water was. He said, 'It is my tears, and these green things and plants are growing up from my tears.' I asked him why he was weeping. He said, 'I weep in the days of separation for the days of union. In the days of separation the murmur of union is the ease of the hearts of the deprived. Leave me to weep for myself, for there is no one in the world more miserable than I.'"

I said, "My heart wants to be Your comrade,  
so I will be worthy of thanks and applause."  
By God, I did not think, O Spirit of the world,  
that all my hopes would come to this.

Hasan ibn ʿAlī had a wife whom he divorced. Her dower was 40,000 dirhams, so he sent it to her so that her heart would be happy. She put that wealth in front her and began to weep: "Paltry goods from a departed lover! What use to me are the goods of the world when my companion is not at my side and my friend is tired of me!"

When a viper strikes someone's liver  
they give him the antidote, not candy.

They say that when Hasan ibn ʿAlī heard about this, he was touched and asked her to return.

It has come in the traditions that the Commander of the Faithful ʿAlī went to visit Fāṭima's grave. He was weeping and saying,

"What is wrong with me? I stand among the graves greeting  
the grave of my beloved, but she does not respond."

Then an unseen voice said,

"The beloved says, 'And how should I respond to you  
when I am pawn to stones and dust?  
The dust has eaten my beauty and I have forgotten you.  
I am veiled from my family and companions.  
Greetings to you from me, but the union of loved ones  
has been cut off from me and you.'"

In other words, he said, "What has happened? What has happened to my loved one? I greet her and ask about her but she does not respond." An unseen voice called out, "Your loved one says: 'How can I answer when the seal of death has been placed in my mouth and I am alone in the midst of stones and dust and held back from relatives and near ones? Accept my greetings. Today that arrangement of friendship and joining between us has fallen apart, and its collar has been broken.' ʿAlī stood up in pain and recited these verses as he went away:

19 LI 1:193.

20 A title of Satan. For another version of the story, attributed to Ibrāhīm Khawāṣṣ, see under 64:2.

“Every coming together of friends has separation,  
and everything other than separation is small.  
My losses one after another  
are proof that no bosom friend ever remains.”

\*

Tell me what in this world is like the pain of separation?  
Tell me who has never been made helpless by separation?  
They say to me, “Weep not in separation from her.”  
Tell me who has never wept at separation?

Mālik Dīnār had a brother by the name of Malkān, who left this world. Mālik sat at his grave and was saying, “O Malkān, my eyes will not have delight until I know what has happened to you, and I will not know as long as I remain alive.” Then he wept a great deal.

They said to him, “O Mālik, why are you weeping so much at his death?”

He said, “I am not weeping because he left this world or because I am held back from him today. I am weeping because, if I am held back from him tomorrow at the resurrection and do not see him, that will be regret at not seeing a created thing. But who will have the regret of not seeing the Creator? And how will that be? It is said that the *greatest terror* [21:103] at the resurrection is the wound of separation’s remorse placed on the spirit of some at the crossroads, holding them back from their friends and brothers. But that will be easy and its pain little. What will be much more difficult is the wound of separation from God placed on our spirits, turning us away from the road of felicity.”

All that is easy and lowly—alas if He should say, “Go,  
for I disown you and your burden of disobedience.”

It is said that tomorrow at the gathering place of the resurrection a man will be brought who had been distracted in his days and disloyal to the covenant. The command will come, “Take him to hell, for he has the wound of deprivation.” When he reaches the edge of hell, he will lift up his hands and pull out his eyes and throw them away. They will say, “What have you done?” He will say,

“Eyes are useful to me for seeing the Friend —  
what will I do with eyes without seeing the Friend?”

\*

Once I became certain I would not be seeing you,  
I shut my eyes and gazed on no one.

\*

Night and day, early and late, that moon of heaven  
was not separate from my embrace for a moment.  
On purpose someone asked about me from her.  
She said, “Who’s he? What could he have to do with me?”

A great pir often used to say, “The heart went, the Friend went. I don’t know if I should go after the Friend or after the heart.”

The tatters of my soul were left behind on the day they left—  
I did not know to which of the departing I should bid farewell.

\*

Tomorrow these two dear ones will depart for sure—  
I don’t know to which I should bid farewell first.”

He said, “A call came to my secret core, ‘Go after the Friend! The lover wants a heart to find union with the Friend. Without the Friend, what good is a heart?’”

If there’s no union with the Friend, what use are heart and spirit?  
If king and queen are gone, what good is a bishop?

**2:233 Mothers shall suckle their children two whole years—for those who desire to complete the suckling.**

Great is that Lord who is unique in loving kindness and without peer in caressing servants. He bestows in testing, He is loyal to assurances. If we call Him, He hears, and if we do not, He knows. He is generous, loving, love-showing, and love-increasing; gentle, defect-hiding, excuse-hearing, a good God. His bounty is beyond all bounty, His generosity beyond all generosity, His mercy greater than all mercies, His love not like other loves.

The example given of utmost mercy is the mercy of mothers, but God's mercy toward His servants is more than that, and His love is not like their love. Do you not see that He commands mothers to give milk to their children for two complete years, He urges them to nurture them, and He counsels them to take care of them? He does not confine Himself to the love of mothers and leave it at that. This is so that you will know that God is more lovingly kind to the servant than a mother is to her child.

Once Muṣṭafā was passing by when a woman with a child in her arms was baking bread. They had told her that God's Messenger would be passing. She came forward and said, "O Messenger of God! We have heard you say that the God of the world's inhabitants is more lovingly kind to His servants than a mother to her child."

The Messenger said, "Yes, that is so."

That woman became happy and said, "O Messenger of God! A mother would never toss her child into this oven."

Muṣṭafā wept. Then he said, "God chastises in the Fire only those who refuse to say, 'There is no god but God.'"

Ka'b ʿUjra said that one day God's Messenger said to his companions, "What do you say about a man slain in God's path?"

They said, "God and His Messenger know best."

He said, "He is in the Garden." Then he said, "What do you say about a man concerning whom two just men have said that they knew nothing of him but good?"

They said, "God and His Messenger know best."

He said, "He is in the Garden." Then he said, "What do you say about a dead man concerning whom two just witnesses say that they never saw any good from him?"

The Companions said, "He is in the Fire."

The Messenger said, "How badly you have spoken—a sinful servant and a forgiving Lord! Say: 'Each acts according to his own manner' [17:84]."

Part of His complete mercy and generosity to His servants is that tomorrow at the resurrection, a group will be taken and made to pass easily by the Scales, the Narrow Path, and the bridge over hell. They will arrive at the door of paradise and be told to halt. Then a letter will arrive from the Exalted Presence, a letter whose title is "The Eternal Love." From beginning to end it will be rebuke and war with the friends. He will rebuke the servants as is appropriate to their state.

The letter will say, "My servants! Did I not create you gratis and sculpt you in a beautiful form? Did I not stretch out your stature? You were infants and did not know the road to your mother's breast. I showed you. I brought forth pure milk as your food from the midst of blood. I made your mother and father kind to you and had them nurture you. I preserved you from water, wind, and fire. I conveyed you from infancy to youth, and from youth to old age. I adorned you with understanding and excellence, I decorated you with knowledge and recognition. I sculpted you with hearing and eyesight. I had you obey and serve Me. At the door of death, I kept My name on your tongue and My recognition in your spirit. Then I put you on the pillow of safety. I who am Beginningless and Endless—I did all these beautiful things for you. What did you do for Me? Did you ever give a dirham to a beggar for My sake? Did you ever give water to a thirsty dog for Me? Did you ever move an ant from the path out of mercy?"

"My servant! You did what you did, but I am ashamed to chastise you as is worthy for you. Instead I will do what is worthy for Me. Go, for I have forgiven you, so that you will know that

I am I and you are you.”

Indeed, if a beggar goes before a king, they do not ask him what he has brought. They ask him what he wants.

O God, what could come from a beggar that would be worthy of You if it were not that You are worthy of what comes from a beggar?

One of the pirs of the Tariqah said, “How can He not caress, when He is the most generous of the generous? How can He not forgive, when He is the most merciful of the merciful? How can He not pardon, when several times in the Qur’an He commands people to pardon? *So pardon them* [3:159], *Let them pardon and forbear* [24:22], *Take to pardoning* [7:199].”

On the same topic is what He brings at the end:

**2:237** *And that you pardon is nearer to godwariness. And forget not bounty among yourselves. Surely God sees what you do.*

Godwariness lies in pardon, and paradise lies in godwariness, just as He says: “*The next world with thy Lord belongs to the godwary*” [43:35]. The folk of realization have said that godwariness has a beginning and an end. The beginning is what He says: “*And that you pardon is nearer to godwariness,*” and the end is what He says: “*And forget not bounty among yourselves.*” Its beginning is that you recognize what is rightfully due to you from your brother, but then you pardon it and let it go. This is the way station of submission and the conduct of the worshipers. Its end is that you recognize what is rightfully due to him from you and you prefer him over yourself. As much as you see disloyalty and offense from him, you offer him your apology. This is the station of *tawhīd* and the description of the state of the sincerely truthful. In its meaning they have sung,

“When we are ill, we come to you and tend to you.

When you sin, we come to you and apologize.”

To this the Prophet alluded when he said, “Shall I point you to the best character trait of the folk of this world and the next? You join with him who cuts you off, pardon him who does you wrong, and bestow on him who deprives you.”

**2:238** *Guard over the prayers, and the middle prayer, and stand before God devoutly.*

In the tongue of allusion to guard over the prayer is that, when the servant comes into the presence of the prayer, he comes with awe, and when he leaves, he leaves with reverence. As long as he is in the prayer, he is described by courtesy. He keeps his body in the outward service, his heart in the realities of union, and his secret core along with his spirit in the ease of whispered prayer. “The praying person is whispering with his Lord.”

Abū Bakr Shiblī said, “If I were given the choice to enter the prayer or to go into paradise, I would not chose that high paradise over the prayer. Even if paradise is joy and blessings, the prayer is secret whispering with the Patron of Blessings. That is the place of pleasure for water and clay, and this is the place of gazing for spirit and heart. That is roasted fowl in the garden of approval, and this is *repose and ease* [56:89] in the garden of the Beloved.”

For the sake of gazing stroll once into the Beloved’s garden,  
see the Beloved scattering spirit beneath your feet.

Muṣṭafā gave no station the mark he gave to the prayer when he said, “‘The delight of my eyes was placed in the prayer.’ Amongst the caresses and beauties, the brightness of my eyes lies in being occupied with Him and whispering secretly with Him.”

Here is my heart—look into it and see:  
is there any goal other than You?

There was a man called Abū °Alī Siyāh, who was unique in his era. Whenever anyone went to see him, he would say, “I’m a carefree man. I have no occupation. The brightness of my eyes lies in seeing a man of His road or talking about Him with someone.”

Every night I talk to my heart about You.  
I seek Your scent from the dawn breeze.

The knower of the Tariqah, ° Abdallāh Anṣārī, said, “O God, O lovingly kind, O helper! Exalted is he who has one breath with You! May I have a breath in which no one mixes, a breath that afterwards has no veil. For me that one breath is enough in the two worlds. O You who are before each day and separate from everyone! In this celebration a thousand minstrels are not enough for me.”

*Guard over the prayers.* Guarding is what keeps someone in the station of service and his heart in the station of veneration. Then the form of outwardness will be complete and the attribute of inwardness will be in place.

A man was the imam in the prayer. He wanted to straighten the rows and said, “Straighten!” He had not yet finished this word when he fell down unconscious. Afterwards they asked him what he had received in that state. He said, “A call came to Me in my secret core: ‘Have you ever once been straight for Me?’”

The first pillar of the prayer is intention, and the meaning of intention is the aim of the heart. When someone enters the prayer, there must be three things in three places in order for him to begin the prayer with a worthy attribute: allusion with the hands, expression with the tongue, and intention in the heart.

In the state of the intention it is as if the servant is saying, “I am aiming for the threshold of the Patron and I have put this world behind.” Then if he does not put aside thoughts of this world and he fails to occupy his heart with the prayer, he will have been a liar in the first pillar. When Ḥasan ibn °Alī reached the door of a mosque he would say, “O God, Your guest is at Your door, the asker from You is at Your door. O Beautiful-doer, the ugly-doer has come to You, and You have commanded the beautiful-doers among us to overlook the ugly-doer. So overlook my repulsiveness with Your beauty, O Generous One!”

Lifting up the hands in the prayer at the time of saying “God is greater” alludes to the servant’s constraint and poverty and his brokenness before the Presence of the Patron. It is as if he is saying, “I am drowning in the ocean of disobedient acts, so take my hand!” Lord God, I am a stranger in the land, I have fallen into the well of disobedience, I am drowning in the sea of tribulation. I have pain, but I do not know the remedy, or I know it, but I cannot drink it. There is no way to despair, but I do not have the gall to come forward.

I am bewildered in Thee, take my hand,  
O guide of those bewildered in Thee!

\*

If I’m an unbeliever, O Friend, make me a Muslim  
I’m deprived of You, call me and cure me!  
Although I’m not worthy to see Your face,  
at least sacrifice me at the top of Your street.

It has been said that the first person to make the dawn prayer was Adam. When that dust-dwelling chief, that unprecedented marvel of power, that artifact of creativity, that unique fabric of the desire, came down from heaven to earth, it was the end of the day. As long as he saw the brightness of the day, he had a bit of ease, but when the sun was hidden, Adam’s heart became a quarry of sorrows.

Night came like me, in mourning and grief,  
its clothing black, its face downcast.

Adam had never seen night and had not suffered darkness and sorrow. All of a sudden he saw the darkness that reaches the whole world, while he was a stranger, ill, and separate from his spouse. In that darkness sometimes he sighed, sometimes he looked at the moon, sometimes he whispered in prayer at the Threshold.

At night your remembrance is my intimate,  
my lips never resting from your remembrance.

The origin of all strangers was Adam, the forerunner of all the grieving was Adam, the first of all the weepers was Adam. It was Adam who laid the foundation of friendship in the world and Adam who set down the custom of night vigils. Moaning from the pain of separation and weeping in the middle of the night was a tradition set down by Adam. In that night when he moaned and wept, sometimes he complained of lowliness, sometimes he shouted out, sometimes he remembered the Friend while weeping.

Every night people sleep—how come I'm awake?

They're all asleep with companions—how come I'm alone? [DS 932]

At last when the breeze of dawn began to breathe like a lover and the army of morning burst from its ambush and shouted against the darkness of night, Gabriel came with the good news: "O Adam! Morning has come, peace has come! Light has come, joy has come! Brightness has come, familiarity has come! Arise, O Adam, and recite two cycles of prayer in this state—one in gratitude for the passing of the night of deprivation and separation, one in gratitude for the breaking of the dawn of good fortune and union." The tongue of the state was saying,

"Union has come—I've been released from the dread of separation.

I've sat down with my beloved, my heart's desire fulfilled!"

The first person to make the midday prayer was Abraham the Bosom Friend, at the time when he had been commanded to sacrifice his child. In the dream he had been shown that he had obeyed the command and thrown away the life of his dear child by its decree; in His bounty the King of the Throne had called him, and he had sacrificed Ishmael. At the hour when the sun begins to wane, the Bosom Friend's desire was realized and he confirmed the truth of the dream. He looked carefully and saw four states, in each of which he found elevation and a robe of honor. He bound his waist with gratitude and set out to serve the Presence. He performed four cycles of prayer in gratitude for the four robes of honor: one was gratitude for success-giving, the second gratitude for confirming the truth, the third gratitude for the call, and the fourth gratitude for the sacrifice.

The first person to perform the four-cycle afternoon prayer was Jonah. That well-pleasing servant was in the stomach of the fish, and that fish was in the stomach of another fish. From the bottom of the deep sea came the cry, "*There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee! Surely I am one of the wrongdoers*" [21:87].

Listen here to a subtle point: Jonah was imprisoned in the stomach of the whale, and the person of faith will be imprisoned in a tomb in the stomach of the earth. May the bed be blessed, may the couch be happy! Muṣṭafā said, "The grave is one of the plots of the Garden." Though it is a prison, for the person of faith it is like a scented garden with much *repose and ease* [56:89]. Jonah in the stomach of the fish, in that darkness and blackness, is the person of faith in the stomach of the earth, with intimacy and divine light. The fish's liver became Jonah's mirror. In its limpness he saw the animals of the sea and their wondrous forms. For the person of faith a door of the tomb is opened to paradise, so along with the divine light are houris, wide-eyed maidens, blessedness, and nearness. Relief came to Jonah, and assistance came to him from the divine bounty, so he came out from that prison to the desert of the world. That time was the moment for the afternoon prayer. Jonah saw that he had been released from four darknesses: the darkness of slipping, the darkness of night, the darkness of water, and the darkness of the fish's stomach. In gratitude for having put aside these four darknesses he made four cycles of prayer. This is an allusion to the faithful servant, before whom are four darknesses: the darkness of disobedience, the darkness of the tomb, the darkness of the resurrection, and the darkness of hell. When he performs these four cycles of prayer, he is released from one darkness with each cycle.

The first person to make the evening prayer was Jesus, the one made pure—a person of pure constitution, pure clay, and pure creation who came into the world without a father. In the stomach of his mother he had read the Torah and the Gospel, and in the cradle he spoke. A people from

among the folk of misguidance marveled at this. They said that a child without a father is inconceivable. The arrival of a child and the existence of a lineage is not permissible without two different waters. They said what they said, and they walked on the road of misguidance as they did.

Then they wrote out the inscription of *[God is] the third of three* [5:73]. Gabriel came: “O Jesus, your people said such a thing, and the earth quakes at their saying it. The Creator of earth and heaven is pure of their words.” That was the hour of the prayer of evening. Jesus stood up and hurried to service, asking God for pardon and mercy. He made three cycles of prayer. With one cycle, he repelled the claim of lordhood from himself: “You are the great Lord, I am the servant with many offenses.” With the next cycle, he negated divinity from his mother: “You are the all-compelling God, and my mother is Your maid.” The third cycle was attestation to the oneness of the Enactor, the renowned Uniquely One.

The first person to make the four-cycle prayer of sleep was Moses the Speaking Companion, the caressed of the faultless Creator, the one singled out for the gift of the Unseen, he who earned his wage from Shu<sup>‘</sup>ayb. When his term with Shu<sup>‘</sup>ayb came to an end and he left Midian, he set out for his domicile and thought of his homeland. After he had gone several way stations and the night arrived—a night that pulled the skirt of darkness over the horizons—a fierce wind arose, and rain, thunder, and lightning arrived. Wolves fell upon his flock, and the pain of childbirth came to his wife. The whole world came into tumult for his sake, and the ocean was boiling. On that night, all fire remained inside the stones and not one lamp was lit in the whole world. Moses was helpless in that state. Sometimes he stood, sometimes he sat, sometimes he rolled, sometimes he rested, sometimes he fled, sometimes contracted, sometimes expanded, sometimes his head on his knees, sometimes his face on the ground weeping. He kept on saying,

“How long will You drive me to every street?

How long will You make me taste every poison?”

Yes, they put the night-brightening pearl in front of the life-snatching shark, and they built a domicile for the Kaabah of union in the man-eating desert, so no one ever saw the treasure without suffering, and no one reached the day of good fortune without the grief of tribulation. At last he looked in the direction of the Mount and a ray of light appeared. He heard the call of the Forgiving God: “*Surely I am God*” [28:30].

Moses had four griefs: the grief of his wife, his child, his brother, and his enemies. The command came, “O Moses, do not grieve and do not sorrow, for I deliver from grief and I take away sorrows.” Moses rose up at that time and made four cycles of prayer in gratitude for those four blessings. This is an allusion that when the faithful servant performs these four cycles of prayer on condition of loyalty, truthfulness, and limpidness, He will suffice him for the business of his wife and child, He will give him victory over his enemies, and He will deliver him from grief and sorrow.

**2:245** *Who is it that will lend to God a beautiful loan, and He will multiply it for him many times? And God contracts and expands, and to Him you shall be returned.*

In this verse the generous Lord, He of tremendous and celebrated name, the lovingly kind, the caressing, the holder—majestic is His unity and holy His sanctum—caresses His servants, both the rich and the poor.

He caresses the rich by asking loans from them, for loans are asked of friends.

Yahyā Mu<sup>‘</sup>ādh said, “I wonder at anyone who still has wealth, when the Lord of the Throne wants to borrow it.”

A sound hadith says, “God descends and says, ‘Who will supplicate Me that I may respond to him?’ Then He spreads His two hands and says, ‘Who will lend to one who is neither lacking nor wrongdoing?’”

What do you know of the generosity and largesse found in this asking for a loan? This is a largesse that you might say is a painting on the spirit. From it the tree of joy is in fruit and in it the eyes of revelry are awake. He is saying, “Who is it that will give a loan to Him who is neither a

wrongdoer that he might take it away, nor a poor man not able to pay it back?” Anyone who recognizes the worth of this declaration will put forth the bounteous wealth of spirit and heart and say,

“I will exert my heart and spirit with none but You.  
My heart is Your property—I will not intervene!  
If with an allusion You ask for my spirit,  
I will send it at once without hesitation.”

One day °Alī Murtaḍā went home, and Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were weeping before Fāṭima Zahrā. °Alī said, “O Fāṭima, what happened to the brightness of my eyes, the fruit of my heart, and the joy of my spirit that they are weeping?”

Fāṭima said, “O °Alī, it seems that they are hungry, for a day has passed and they have eaten nothing.”

She had placed a pot on the fire, so °Alī said, “What do you have in the pot?”

She said, “There is nothing in the pot except plain water. I put it on the fire to keep the children happy, for they think I am cooking something.”

°Alī’s heart became constricted. He had a cloak that he had put aside. He took it to the bazaar and sold it for six dirhams and bought some food. He returned and told Fāṭima. She said, “You have succeeded O Abu’l-Ḥasan! May you remain in good.”

°Alī went to go back to the mosque of the Messenger and saw a nomad who was selling a camel. He said, “O Abu’l-Ḥasan! I am selling this camel. Buy it!”

°Alī said, “I can’t. I don’t have the price.”

The nomad said, “O Abu’l-Ḥasan! I will sell it to you until the time when spoils arrive or a gift comes to you from the House of Wealth.”

°Alī bought the camel for sixty dirhams and set off in front of it. Another nomad came to him and said, “O °Alī, sell this camel to me.”

He said, “I will sell it.”

He asked, “How much?”

He answered, “For as much as you want.”

He said, “I will buy it for 120 dirhams.”

°Alī said, “I have sold it to you,” and took 120 dirhams from him. He went back to his house and said to Fāṭima that he would give sixty dirhams to that nomad and they would use the other sixty. He went out looking for the nomad. He saw Muṣṭafā and he said, “O °Alī, where are you going?” °Alī told him his story. God’s Messenger became happy and congratulated him. He said, “O °Alī, that was not a nomad. That was Gabriel who sold it, and Michael who bought it. And the camel was one of the she-camels of paradise. This is that loan you gave to God when you were kind to a poor man after God had said, ‘*Who is it that will lend to God a beautiful loan?*’”

As for God’s caressing the poor in this verse, it is that, when God wants a loan, He wants it for them. Unless someone is dear to you, you do not want a loan for him. His caressing of the poor is more complete and of higher rank than His caressing of the rich. This is because when you ask for a loan, although most of the time you ask from friends, it does happen in the time of constraint that you ask from someone who is not a friend. The person for whom you ask the loan, however, is nothing but a friend and dear to you. Do you not see that Muṣṭafā, at the time of constraint, asked for a loan from a Jew, leaving his coat of mail with him in pawn? He did so in order to get a morsel of food for his wife. Look at the one from whom he wanted and the one for whom he wanted. This, however, rarely happens, and mostly people ask for loans from friends and turn to their familiars.

Several times in the Qur’an the Lord of the Worlds addresses the familiars and the faithful: “*Lend to God a beautiful loan.*” “*If you have lent to God a beautiful loan*” [5:12]. “*If you lend to God a beautiful loan*” [64:17]. In each case He said “beautiful” so that you would know that what is given to God must be pure, lawful, and beautiful. “Surely God is goodly and accepts only the goodly.” It has also been said that a *beautiful loan* is that you are not waiting for the reward or seeking compensation. You do it for the sake of what is due to God’s majesty, not to receive your wage.

It is said that tomorrow at the resurrection the Exalted Lord will rebuke a servant whose scroll is full of beautiful deeds. He will say, "You acted obediently because of your eagerness for the Garden and you abandoned disobedient acts because of your fear of the Fire. Which act of obedience did you do for Me?"

The vigil of the eyes for other than Your face is wasted,  
their weeping for other than not having You is void.  
Some there who work for the Gardens, but I  
have worked all my life out of love for union with You.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "How should I have known that reward is a freckle on the face of love? I fancied that the greatest robe of honor was the reward. How should I have known that the wage-earner is he whose share is everlasting paradise, and the recognizer is he who is wishing for one glance?"

*And God contracts and expands.* Contraction and expansion are in God's hand. He does the work, and His is the decree. He ties one heart back from recognizing Him, He opens another in intimacy with Him. One person is bewildered in the straits of fear, another is happy in the field of hope. One is trembling in the severity of His contraction, another is joyful in His expansion. One looks at his own activity and remains in the prison of contraction, another looks at the Real's bounty and relaxes on the carpet of revelry. This is the same as what the Pir of the Tariqah said: "O God, when I look at myself, I ask who is more miserable than I. When I look at You, I ask who is greater than I."

When my gaze falls on my own clay,  
I see nothing worse in the world.  
When I pass beyond my attributes,  
I look at myself from the Throne.

**2:248** *Their prophet said to them, "The sign of his kingship is that there will come to you the ark within which is tranquility from your Lord."*

Whenever someone finds a drink from the cup of recognition on the carpet of the religion's good fortune, the cupbearer of that drink is the sultan of tranquility. The exalted lodging place of the sultan of tranquility is the capital city of the heart: *He it is who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the faithful* [48:4]. The subtle reality of the heart is the dwelling place of the attribute of eternity: "Surely the hearts are between two fingers of the All-Merciful."

What a great difference there is between two groups of people! The tranquility of one group was in the ark, and the ark was under the determination of the Children of Israel, sometimes here and sometimes there, sometimes like this and sometimes like that. The tranquility of the other group is in their hearts, in the grasp of the Real's attributes. The Adamite has no hand in it, the angel no access to it. *He comes between a man and his heart* [8:24].

Shiblī said, "The curtains were taken down and the veils lifted in the realities of the secret core, and many unseen things were unveiled to my secret core. I saw hell like a roaring dragon and rapacious lion. It was playing with the people and pulling them to itself with its tail. It saw me and displayed its mightiness. It wanted its share from me. I gave it all of my outward organs and parts and had no fear of their burning. I had no concern for outward burning because of my inner burning."

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "All fires burn the body, but the fire of friendship burns the spirit. No one can be patient in face of that spirit-burning fire."

If He burns you, say "Burn!", if He caresses, say "Caress!"  
It's best for the passionate man to be put between water and fire.

Shiblī said, "When I gave my makeup and form to the fire, the turn of the heart arrived. The fire wanted my heart. I said, 'I will toss it away without fear.' A voice came to my secret core, 'O

Shiblī, leave the heart alone, for the heart is not yours, nor is it under your determination. The heart is in My grasp, for it is the quarry of seeing Me. The heart is in My hand, for it is the scented garden of My gaze. The heart is in my right hand, for it is the domicile of gazing on Me. O Shiblī, if you must spend your heart and it must burn, it would be a shame to burn it in the fire of form. At least let it burn in the fire of passion.”

Roast your heart in the fire of passion,  
then look from your heart to the spirit.  
If the Beloved comes to you in the road,  
sacrifice all at His feet.

**2:255** *God, there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Standing. Slumber takes Him not, nor sleep. To Him belong whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who will intercede with Him save by His leave? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they encompass nothing of His knowledge save as He wills. His Footstool embraces the heavens and the earth, and He is the High, the Tremendous.*

*God* is He who has divinity and lordhood, *God* is He who has unity and self-sufficiency. His fixity is unitary, His being self-sufficient, His subsistence beginningless, and His brilliance eternal.

*God* is the name of a lord whose essence is everlasting and whose attributes are eternal. His subsistence is beginningless and His splendor endless. His beauty is self-standing and His majesty constant. He is magnanimous and renowned, great in measure and deed, great in name and word, beyond intelligence and before when, and greater than any measure.

O majestic God who is the Enactor and the good sweetheart, the creator of the world and the guardian of the creatures, keeper of enemies and companion of friends, the hard cash of hopes and enough for assurances, the receiver of every plaintiff and the forgiver of every offense, the kiblah of the desirer and the remembrance of the recognizer’s heart!

In remembrance of You I pass my days without You,  
in my eyes a picture of Your form.

*God* is the remembrance of the hearts of the friends, *God* is the witness of the heart of the recognizers, *God* is the joy of the secret core of the distracted, *God* is the healing of the hearts of the ill, *God* is the lamp of the breast of the *tawhīd*-voicers, *God* is the light of the heart of the familiars and the balm of the pain of the burnt.

Passion for You in my heart is like the light of certainty,  
Your name upon my eyes like the seal on a ring.  
In my nature and aspiration until the day of resurrection  
love for You will be like the spirit and loyalty to You like religion.

The Pir of the Tariqah Junayd said, “If someone says *God* with his tongue when other than God is in his heart, God will be his adversary in the two abodes.” If someone remembers God with his tongue and delights in His name and then busies his heart with love for another, then—by the majesty and exaltedness of the Lord God—tomorrow the whip of rebuke will reach him in the station of harshness, and his adversary will be God.

On the night of the *miʿrāj* He said to the master, “O Muḥammad! I wonder how anyone with faith in Me can depend on other than Me. O Muḥammad! Were they to gaze on the subtleties of My kindness and the wonders of My artisanry, they would not worship other than Me’: What a wonder is someone who finds Me and then seeks for someone else! How can He who recognizes Me busy himself with other than Me?”

When an eye sees You, it is relieved of pain.  
When a spirit finds You, it is exempt from death.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, O worthy of generosity and caresser of the world! There is no

sorrow along with Your union and no grief along with Your remembrance. You are the plaintiff and the interceder, the witness and the judge. As long as I breathe along with Your love, I will be free of the bonds of existence and nonexistence, released from the bother of Tablet and Pen—cups of happiness placed in hand again and again in the session of intimacy!”

*There is no god but He*, a God other than whom there is no worthy object of worship. In the two worlds who else is worthy of Lordhood? There is none to take the hand of the wounded other than the signet of His beauty and gentleness. There is no caresser of the orphans other than the edict of His generosity. He is the Lord God to whose loyalty are bound the hearts of the friends, for whose encounter are wishing the spirits of the yearners, and from the cups of whose trial the spirits of the passionate are drunk in love. The ease of the wounded comes from His name and mark, the joy of the recognizers from His remembrance and message. How beautifully spoke that distracted one of the times:

“When will my luck smile at me from Your playing field?  
 When will separation from You strike its tent from my spirit’s desert?  
 My ease is Your message, my foot in Your snare,  
 Your prison my spirit’s garden because of Your name.”

*The Living, the Self-Standing*: a Lord who is alive, lasting, holding, caressing, bestowing, concealing. He knows all that is and all that will be. He reaches everything with His ability and grasp. He is the Lord of everyone and takes forward everything that comes to be. He links His familiars with love through the light of His name and the light of His message. He is the *repose and ease* [56:89] of hearts and the relaxation of the secret cores. Applause for those chevaliers who have caught a whiff of this talk and come to the table of gentleness! Just as others live through food and drink, they live through the name and mark of the Friend and are at ease in His remembrance.

They said to Shibli, “Where do food and drink come from?”

He said, “The remembrance of my Lord is the food of my soul, the laudation of my Lord is the clothing of my soul, and shame before my Lord is the drink of my soul. My soul has been sacrificed to my heart, my heart to my spirit, and my spirit to my Lord.”

May the light of my eyes be the dust beneath Your feet!  
 May my spirit be sacrificed to aching for You!

*Slumber takes Him not, nor sleep*. This is a declaration of the holiness and incomparability of the Essence, for He is free of defects and hallowed beyond blights. Sleep is a change of state, and God is pure of the changing and turning of states. He is far from decrease and increase. Sleep is a fault, and God is rid of faults. Sleep is heedlessness, and God transcends blights and heedless moments. Sleep is the changing of state, and God’s state does not change or accept alteration. Sleep is similar to death, and God is the living, the lasting, the subsistent.

Powerful, Knowing, Alive, Desiring,  
 Hearing, Seeing, clothed in majesty,  
 Hallowed beyond having an equal,  
 transcending opinion and talk.

He is a Lord who has no associate in Essence, no similar in attributes, and no equal in measure.

Thought is bewildered in Your subtle Essence,  
 all hidden things apparent to Your eternal knowledge.  
 In the ocean of Your perfection, the perfect are defective,  
 in the eye of Your acceptance, the defective become perfect.

*To Him belong whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth*. The engendered beings and newly arrived things in the earth and the heavens are all His artisanry and His kingdom. No one quarrels with Him, no other overpowers Him. What dominates over them is His command, what influences them is His knowledge. They have ability from His assistance, they are kept by His pres-

ervation. It is narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās that he said, “The earths are upon the Bull, the Bull is in a chain, the chain is in the ear of the Fish, and the Fish is in the hand of the All-Merciful.”

*Who will intercede with Him save by His leave?* Who fancies that he can take care of his own business without His wanting it or can take a breath without His knowledge or can reach Him without Him? His opinion is wrong and his effort misguided.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, when the approved sought You by You they reached You. When the unapproved sought You by themselves they broke off. Those who reached did not arrive because of gratitude, nor did those who broke off arrive with excuses. O You who Yourself made them arrive and who make them arrive at Yourself! Make me arrive, for none has arrived by himself.”

O You the guide on whose road is pain!

You are solitary and Your familiar solitary.

*He knows what is before them and what is behind them.* All that is someone or something in heaven and earth, the Creator knows its movement and rest, its thoughts and ideas. He sees its going and moving and He reaches its reality, for everything comes forth from His power and changes by His decree. He knows it, for He makes it happen. He sees it, for He does it. He binds it, for He loosens it. He is worthy of Godhood, for He is not held back, never at a loss, and does not fall short. He knows the hidden things, and the work does not distract Him. He attends to everything and takes care of all work. But when He throws something to the Adamites, they put their intelligence into His work, they bind their imaginations to Him, but their knowledge and intellect are lost in His measure. *They encompass nothing of His knowledge save as He wills.*

*His Footstool embraces the heavens and the earth.* This is the text of the Qur’an, alluding to direction and location. The Footstool is not “knowledge,” for that is the road of the roadless and the interpretation of the ignorant. We know the Footstool as the place of the feet, and this is the position of the Sunnis, who take it to heart and accept it without interpretation and self-determination.

Then He seals the verse by mentioning His majesty, greatness, tremendousness, and aboveness. He says, “*And He is the High, the Tremendous.*” Concerning the glorification of the angels, this is narrated from the Prophet: “The high heavens glorify Him who possesses awesomeness and highness: ‘Glory be to the High, the Highest! Glory be to Him, and high exalted is He!’”

God’s highness and aboveness are of two sorts: one is the highness and aboveness of attributes, the other the highness and aboveness of acts. That pertaining to attributes is beginningless: He has never ceased being naked and high and He has always been and always will be. He is beyond all things through His own magnificence, above all marks through His own measure, above all measures through His exaltedness.

That pertaining to acts is the aboveness of the Essence and the highness of location. He Himself acts and gives marks of Himself after the creation of heaven and earth and by His own desire and not out of need, for the work that God does is by want, not need, since He has no requirement or need for anyone or anything, and He has no associate or partner. O Lord, protect our hearts from innovation and misguidance and release them from confusion and bewilderment, by Thy favor and bounty!

## **2:257 God is the friend of those who have faith.**

Their *friend* [*wālī*], their patron [*mawlā*], their ruler [*wālī*], and their caretaker [*mutawallī*]*—*all are alike in meaning. He is saying, “God is the lord of the faithful, their caretaker and helper, their guide and open-hearted friend.”

In a report it has come that God’s Messenger said, “If someone were to destroy the eminent, great Kaabah, take apart its stones, and set it on fire, his disobedience would not be as much as if he were to denigrate one of God’s friends.”

A nomad was present. He said, “O Messenger of God! Who are these friends of God?”

He replied, “All of the faithful are God’s beloved friends. Have you not recited the verse, ‘*God is the friend of those who have faith?*’”

The equal of this verse is where He says, “*That is because God is the patron of those who have*

*faith, and the unbelievers have no patron*” [47:11]. He is the friend and caretaker of the faithful, not only in this world, but also in the next, as He says: “*We are your friends in this world’s life and in the next world*” [41:31].

In the story of Joseph, He quotes his words, “*Thou art my friend in this world and the next*” [12:101]. There is a great difference between these two verses—*We are your friends* and *Thou art my friend*—though anyone who does not have the eyes to see is excused. *We are your friends* comes from togetherness itself, but *Thou art my friend* alludes to dispersion. This is not because the friend is superior to the prophet, for the end of the friend’s work is but the beginning of the prophet’s work. However, the weak are shown greater benevolence, and the incapable are given more caresses, for they are not so bold as to claim familiarity. They see themselves as tainted, so they do not have the tongue to speak. Whoever is more helpless is closer to the Friend. Whoever is more broken is more worthy of love: “I am with those whose hearts are broken for Me.”

It has been reported that on the Day of Resurrection, one of the broken and burnt will be taken to the Presence. God will say, “My servant, what do you have?”

He will say, “Two empty hands, a heart full of pain, and a spirit troubled and bewildered in the waves of grief and sorrow.”

He will say, “Go straight ahead to the house of My friends, for I love the broken and grieving. ‘The sinner’s sobs are more beloved to Me than the glorifier’s murmur.’”

I said, “What can I offer Your tresses  
if You come close to Your servant?  
‘I’ll offer this miserable burnt liver—  
burnt liver has a use for musk.’”

David said, “O God, I take it that I must wash my limbs with water so that they may be pure of defilement. With what shall I wash my heart so that it may be pure of other than You?”

The command came, “O David! Wash the heart with the water of regret and grief so that you may reach the greatest purity.”

He said, “O God, where can I find this grief?”

He said, “We Ourselves will send the grief. The stipulation is that you bind yourself to the grieving and the broken.”

He said, “O God, what is their mark?”

He said, “They wait all day for the sun to go down, then they pull down the curtain of night and begin to knock at the door of the isolated cell of *We are nearer* [50:16]. Burning, weeping, and sighing all night long, needy and melting, their heads on the ground, they call on Us with longing voice: ‘O Lord, O Lord!’ With the tongue of their state they say,

“Let the night of separation pull the bow,  
let the day shoot its arrow like Ārash.  
On the night I’m happy with You, O idol,  
you’d say that night has put its foot in the fire.”

From the world’s Compeller comes the call, “O Gabriel and Michael! Leave aside the murmur of glorification, for here comes the sound of someone burning. Though he has the burden of disobedience, he has the tree of faith in his heart. He was kneaded with the water and clay of love for Me.

“The proximate angels, from the day they came into existence until the Day of Resurrection, have kept their hands on the belt of serving Me. They place My command on their eyes and burn in hope for one glance. Then they put the fingers of longing in the mouth of bewilderment—‘What is this? We do the service, but the love goes there. We run and rush, but arrival and seeing are theirs!’”

The Exalted Unity answers them in the attribute of predetermination: “The work is done by burning and grief. They are the source of burning and the quarry of grief.”

Without the perfection of burning pain, don’t mention religion’s name.

Without the beauty of yearning for union, don’t lean on faith.

To the Beloved's spirit-catching, curling tresses on the day of union  
sacrifice only your wretched, bleeding heart!

**2:260** *When Abraham said to his Lord, "Show me how Thou givest life to the dead." He said, "Dost thou not have faith?" He said, "Yes indeed, but that my heart may be serene."... And know that God is exalted, wise.*

In the language of unveiling and in keeping with the tasting of the lords of the realities, this verse has another intimation and explanation. They say that Abraham was yearning for the Real's speech and burning for His address. His burning had reached the limit, the army of his patience had been put to flight, and the fire of his love was shooting up flames. He said, "O Lord, show me how you bring the dead to life."

He said, "O Abraham, *dost thou not have faith?* Do you not have faith that I bring the dead to life?"

He said, "I do, but my heart has been thrown into turmoil by the wish to hear Your speech and by burning passion for Your address. I want You to talk."

*Dost thou not have faith?* "The goal was exactly that You would talk and ease would enter my heart."

My ease is Your message  
and my feet are in Your snare.

The story is told that a man had fallen for a young woman and wanted to speak with her, but she would not talk and was unwilling to do so. The afflicted man became helplessly captivated by her, hoping to speak with her. He knew that she had a liking for jewels. He went and gave everything he had for one precious gem. He went and placed a stone in front of her in order to break the gem. The object of his passion did not have the capacity to put up with breaking. She said, "Poor man, what are you doing?"

He said, "I am doing it so that you will say, 'What are you doing?'"

No rest or ease remains in my heart—  
call me names if you have no message.

It has been said that with these words Abraham was asking for the life of the heart and the serenity of the secret core. He knew that as long as a heart is not alive, serenity will not come down into it, and as long as serenity has not come down into it, he would not have reached the final goal of the recognizers. The final goal of the recognizers is the repose of intimacy, the witnessing of the heart, and the constancy of love; the tongue in remembering, the heart in secret whispering, the spirit in joy; the tongue in remembrance, the heart in reflection, the spirit with love; the tongue as spokesman, the heart with explication, and the spirit in face-to-face vision. It was said, "O Abraham, life is found in death and subsistence in annihilation, so go and kill four birds outwardly as We command in order to show reverence for Our command and to make manifest your servanthood."

Inwardly He is telling him to obey these commands: "Hang the peacock of finery on the gal-  
lows: Take no ease in the blessings of this world or the finery of this world.

"Don't be held back by nightingale and peacock—  
with this you have only calls, with that only color.

"Kill the crow of avarice: Be not avaricious for that which does not remain and quickly comes to an end.

"Why are you passionate for the companion who took Alexander's life?  
Why are you in love with the loveless by whom Darius lost his kingdom? [DS 53]

"Break the rooster of appetite: Let no appetite enter your heart lest you be held back from Me.

“If you come from the field of appetite to the portico of intellect,  
you’ll see yourself like Saturn in the seventh sphere. [DS 705]

“Kill the vulture of wishes: Do not stretch out wishes and do not fix your heart on this life of play and diversion. Then you may reach the *goodly life* [16:97]. O Abraham, the *goodly life* is what you want: the heart’s life and the secret core’s serenity!”

It has been said that by asking this question, Abraham was seeking vision, just as Moses did. Abraham asked for vision by intimation, not explicitly. Hence the answer was also by intimation, that is, His words, “*God is exalted*: O Abraham, I heard your asking and I know what you desire, but know that in reality *God is exalted*. Finding Him is exalted and seeing Him is exalted.” Moses asked explicitly, not through intimation, so he heard the answer explicitly: “*Thou shalt not see Me*” [7:143].

It has also been said that when Abraham said, “O Lord, show me how You bring the dead to life,” a call came to his secret core: “You also, show Me how you bring the living Ishmael to death. A demand for a demand. If you are loyal, I will be loyal.” So Abraham was loyal, and God praised him in that loyalty and said, “*And Abraham who was loyal*” [53:37]. God was also loyal and gave him his desire.

It has also been said that in his asking Abraham wanted the furthest limit of certainty. Certainty has three levels: First is the knowledge of certainty, then the eye of certainty, then the truth of certainty. The knowledge of certainty is what reaches God’s servants from the tongue of the prophets. The eye of certainty is what reaches them from the light of guidance. The truth of certainty is what comes through both the light of guidance and the traces of revelation and the Sunnah. Abraham wanted all three levels brought together for himself so that no ambiguity would ever again come to his mind.

Then He says, “*And know that God is exalted, wise.*” He is the Lord of exaltedness and the owner of exaltedness, the exalted in Himself through the exaltation of His brightness and the description of His majesty, the exalter of others through His generosity and bounteousness. Know that God has exaltedness, power, majesty, and strength. He is exalted such that no one reaches His exaltation, no understanding grasps His limit, no knower knows His measure. He Himself is exalted and exalts those who have been made lowly, shows forth those who have been little, and lifts up the thrown down. His exalting of the servants is both in this world and in that world—in this world through wealth and state, and in that world through vision and union, always and forever.

**2:264** *O You who have faith, do not void your charity by counting it a favor and causing discomfort.*

Ibn ʿAbbās said, “*Do not void your charity by counting it a favor toward God.*” God is saying, “O you have faith, who have placed your hands in the chains of Our servanthood and have clung to the rope of Our protection! The path of servanthood is not that of gazing on yourself and counting your obedience a favor to Us, for everything you do comes from Our success-giving and Our desire. When your heart was opened up, We opened it. When you found success, We gave it. When you gave comfort to the poor, We willed that. We made all of that happen, so all should be counted as Our favor. All acting is Ours, and all attending to things is Ours.”

Barrāʾ ibn ʿĀzib said, “On the Day of the Moat I saw God’s Messenger when he was saying these words of Ibn Rawāḥa:

“O God, if not for You, we would not have been guided,  
we would not have given charity, we would not have prayed.  
So send down tranquility upon us,  
and firm up our feet for the encounter.”

He is saying, “O God, were it not for Your solicitude, how could we have found the way to the street of *tawḥīd*? Were it not for Your success-giving, how could we have had the ability to do good works?” When a poor wretch counts obeying God a favor to Him, this is because he has lost the path of servanthood. He gives weight to his own obedience and sees it as large, so he does not turn the eyes of his heart and head away from it. In the path of chivalry, seeing one’s own obedi-

ence is idol-worship, and looking back at it is duality itself.

If you are martyred a hundred times a day in God's path  
you'll still be an idol-worshiper if you see yourself in the midst. [DS 708]

It has also been said that *do not void your charity by counting it a favor and causing discomfort* means to *void your charity* by laying favors on those who ask. He is saying, "Do not ruin your charity by counting it a favor to the poor. When a rich man counts it as a favor to the poor that he has given him something, it is because he does not recognize the eminence and level of the poor and does not know that today they are the kings of the world, as has come in the report, 'Kings in tatters.' And tomorrow, they will enter paradise five hundred years before the rich. Which eminence is greater than this? Which blessing is more complete?"

Abu'l-Dardā° said, "I love poverty in humility before my Lord, I love death in yearning for my Lord, I love illness as expiation for my missteps."

It has been narrated that the Prophet said to °Alī, "O °Alī, you are a poor man of God, so do not shun the poor. Rather seek proximity to them in order to find proximity to God."

Thus it is not appropriate for a rich man to place a favor on a poor man. Rather, he is receiving a favor from him. He should consider him God's gift to him, for the report has come, "God's gift to the faithful person is the asker at his gate." And why should he count it a favor toward the poor man, for he is not giving it to the poor man, nor is the poor man taking it from him. Rather, he is giving it to God, and God is entrusting it to the poor man. This is what the Prophet said: "Surely charity falls into the hand of God before it falls into the hand of the asker."

## **2:268 Satan promises you poverty and commands you to indecency, and God promises you forgiveness from Him, and bounty.**

*Satan promises you poverty* because of his poverty, and *God promises you forgiveness* because of His generosity.<sup>21</sup>

Satan himself is poor toward the Real, so he promises poverty, for that is what he has and that is what his hands reach. His harvest was burned, so he wants the harvest of others to burn as well. The Lord of the Worlds, who is forgiving and servant-caressing, promises forgiveness and generosity. Yes, everyone does what is worthy of him, and the pot pours what it has inside. *Each acts according to his own manner* [17:84]. The Lord's invitation is what He says: "*He invites you so that He may forgive you some of your sins*" [14:10]. Satan's call is what He says: "*He invites his party only so that they may be among the companions of the Blaze*" [35:6]. Satan invites to avarice and eagerness for this world, and that in reality is poverty. God invites to contentment and seeking the afterworld, and that is nothing but wealth.

The respect due to wealth in the religion is greater, for in this world, the person is content and has no need for the creatures, whispering secretly with the Real in his heart. In the next world he will dwell in the scented garden of bounty and generosity and the ocean of face-to-face vision, drowned in the Greatest Light.

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, "Wealth is three things: wealth of property, wealth of disposition, and wealth of heart.

"Wealth of property is three things: The lawful is a tribulation, the unlawful a curse, and the excessive punishment.

"Wealth of disposition is three things: contentment, satisfaction, and chivalry.

"Wealth of heart is three things: an aspiration greater than this world, an object of desire better than the next world, and a yearning for the vision of the Patron."<sup>22</sup>

## **2:269 He gives wisdom to whomsoever He wills.**

It has been said that wisdom has a reality and a fruit. The reality of wisdom is recognizing an affair

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<sup>21</sup> LI 1:219.

<sup>22</sup> From *Ṣad maydān*, no. 84 (322)

as suited for the affair, putting a thing in its own place, recognizing everyone in his own framework, seeing the end of every statement at its beginning, and recognizing the inwardness of any statement from its outwardness. The fruit of wisdom is balancing interaction with people between tenderness and cajolery, balancing interaction with oneself between fear and hope, and balancing interaction with the Real between awe and intimacy.

Wisdom is a light. When its ray shines upon you, it adorns the tongue with right remembrance, the heart with right thought, and the bodily members with right activity. Then when you speak, you speak with wisdom, snatching away hearts and making spirits your prey. When you reflect, you reflect with wisdom, flying like a falcon, roaming in the highest Dominion, and making a nest only in the Presence of At-ness.

May I be a ransom for the men dwelling in the Unseen,  
 their secret cores roaming in all that is there!

\*

Give the strong wings of wisdom to the peacock of the Throne  
 and here in this place of the snare you'll see its nest in joy.  
 If you stroll toward the Holy Presence with exaltedness,  
 you'll see steeds coming forth from the city of the Lord. [DS 706]

Yes indeed. And when someone like this acts, he acts with wisdom—coming together with the palisades of the Beloved's approval, sacrificing his desire to God's desire, seeing his intimacy in remembering Him, keeping his gaze in accordance with His gaze, resting in his remembrance no matter what arrives; sometimes burned by passion for Him in the playing field of majesty in the station of need, sometimes at ease with His gentleness in the garden of union on the throne of joy.

At times those black locks raise the swords of severity,  
 at times those sweet lips light the candles of gentleness.  
 O You whose perfection has paid purses to the losers at dice!  
 O You whose beauty has sewn the wallets of the destitute!

**2:273 [It is] for the poor, who are constrained in the path of God and are not able to travel in the earth. The ignorant man counts them as rich because of their self-restraint. Thou shalt recognize them by their mark—they do not ask of the people imploringly. And whatever good you expend, surely God knows it.**

This is a description of the state of the poor among the Companions and a clarification of their conduct. Until the day of resurrection, this is the balm of the hearts of the burnt and broken.

Their first attribute is that they are *constrained in the path of God*, that is, they have halted at God's decree. They have constrained their souls to obey Him, their hearts to recognize Him, their spirits to love Him, and their secret cores to see Him.<sup>23</sup> They have settled down in God's decree and approved of it, they have welcomed His command, they have kept their souls in obedience, they have occupied their hearts with recognition, their spirits have come to be at ease in love, and their secret cores have remained in anticipation of vision, for the Exalted Lord says about them, "*They are unable to travel in the earth.*" They are so busy with the Real that they attend neither to the creatures nor to themselves. They take no steps in seeking daily provision, nor do they put their hearts into acquisition and trade. This is exactly what He says: "*whom neither trade nor buying diverts from the remembrance of God*" [24:37]. They are chevaliers whose watchword is God's remembrance and whose blanket is God's love. They have repose and settledness at the threshold of serving Him and their aspiration is free of others. They are the beauty of paradise and the adornment of the *abode of settledness* [40:39]—a few of the Emigrants and a few of the Helpers.

*The ignorant man counts them as rich because of their self-restraint.* You would say that they are without need and you would number them as wealthy, for, despite the defectiveness of their state and the constraint of poverty, they never ask, whether from creatures or from the Real. Not

23 These two sentences are from LI 2:222.

asking from creatures is precisely trust, and trust is the level of their abode. Not asking from the Real is the reality of approval, and the field of approval is their way station. This was exactly the state of Abraham, to whom it was said that he should ask from the Real. He said, “His knowledge of my state is enough asking for me.”

°Abdallāh Mubārak was seen weeping. They asked, “What happened to this great man of the religion?”

He said, “Today I asked forgiveness from God. Then I thought, ‘What is this meddling of mine?!’ He is the Lord and I am the servant. He will do whatever He wants with the servant and will give him what he needs. He is not asleep that He should be awakened, nor is He heedless of the work that He should be alerted.”

Junayd said, “Once it passed my lips, ‘O God, give me drink!’ I heard a call, ‘Are you intruding between Me and yourself, O Junayd?’” This is the attribute of a group who have reached the world of realization, tasted a drink from the cup of union, and been delivered from occupation with creatures and self. As for him who does not have this state and has not reached this station, his road is to hold up his hands in supplication and ask the Real to deliver him. Asking is permitted for him, and in his case supplication is the same as worship.

*Thou shalt recognize them by their mark.* Not every eye will see them and not every head will recognize them. Only those will see and recognize them who have the eyesight of prophethood and the insight of the Haqiqah. The eyesight of prophethood is from the light of unity, and the insight of the Haqiqah is from the lightning of the beginningless. Murta°ish said, “Their mark is their jealousy for their poverty and their clinging to their distress and brokenness.” In reality it is they who have recognized the pearl of poverty, come to know its secret, and taken it up with spirit and heart. They would not sell one iota of it for this world and the afterworld.

The master Abū °Alī saw a poor man carrying a shirt on his shoulders made of bits and pieces of cloth stuck together. By way of a pleasantry he said, “O dervish, how much did you pay for that?”

The poor man said, “I bought it for the whole world. They’re asking for one of its threads in exchange for the bliss of the afterworld, but I won’t give it.”

Yes, the brightness of the pearl of poverty can only be seen with the light of prophethood and the brightness of friendship. Muṣṭafā saw the beauty of poverty with the light of prophethood and recognized its secret. He chose poverty over this world and the afterworld. He said about this world, “My Lord offered to fill the valley of Mecca with gold for me. I said, ‘No, Lord, rather let me be satiated one day and hungry the next.’” He detached his heart from the bliss of the afterworld and did not assign his eyes to that. Then the Exalted Lord praised him for that and said, “*The eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass*” [53:17].

If the only eminence of poverty were that Muṣṭafā was commanded to be the companion of the poor when it was said to him, “*And let not thine eyes turn away from them*” [18:28], that itself would be complete. Here something is prepared that is called “the secret of secrets,” and only the minds of the sincerely truthful have access to it. The reality of this secret becomes known from this report: “When someone has in his heart to sit with God, he should sit with the folk of Sufism.”

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, “In everyone something is apparent. In the knower, the religion is apparent. In the realizer, the Patron’s light is apparent. In the lover, the annihilation of the realm of being is apparent. In the Sufi what is apparent is apparent—its mark cannot be given with the tongue.”

We are the mansions of passion’s star,  
we are the center point shaping the world’s shapes.  
When they tell the tale of the passionate who’ve lost their hearts,  
we will be the secret of the tale of lost-hearted passion.

*And whatever good you expend, surely God knows it.* Here He speaks like this, and at the end of the previous verse He says, “*And whatever good you expend shall be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged*” [2:272]. The lords of the realities see a beautiful subtlety separating the

two verses. They say that when a servant spends in the road of God, there are two reasons for his expenditure. One is that he has in view his own goal and strives to gain reward for himself, fearing hell and hoping for paradise. His expenditure and his reward are what God says: “*And whatever good you expend shall be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged.*” The other reason for expenditure is that he has in view the poor person, seeking his ease and striving for his sake, so he does not see his own share in that. This is the state of the recognizer, who has removed the intrusion of his own reward from the expenditure. In the same way the Exalted Lord does not raise the issue of reward, but He honors him with this tremendous caress: “*And whatever good you expend, surely God knows it: I who am God know what must be given to this servant and what must be done for him.*” To this is the allusion in His words, “I have prepared for My wholesome servants what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what has never passed into the heart of any mortal.”

**2:274 *Those who expend their wealth night and day, secretly and openly, shall have their wage with their Lord, and no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they grieve.***

As long as they have any wealth, they do not slacken from expending it for an hour, night and day. When the wealth is exhausted, they do not slacken from witnessing Him for a moment, night and day.<sup>24</sup> This is as they say:

Wealth, gold, things—gamble them away for nothing.

When the work reaches your spirit, gamble it away!

Spending wealth in the road of the religion according to the Shariah is the work of the faithful, and throwing away the spirit in the contemplation of the majesty and beauty of the Patron in respect of the Haqiqah is the work of the chevaliers. This is the effort of servanthood by the servants. What then is worthy of God and the divine generosity toward the servants?!

**2:277 *Those who have faith and do wholesome deeds, who perform the prayer and give the alms tax, shall have their wage with their Lord, and no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they grieve.***

In other words, “Enough for those who come to be Ours will be what they find with Us, for *We leave not to waste the wage of those who do beautiful deeds* [18:30].”<sup>25</sup>

“When someone has recourse to the gate of Our generosity, We give him shelter in the shade of Our blessings. When the dust of Our path falls on someone, the darkness of separation from Us will not fall upon him. When someone takes one step toward Us, he will find a gift with Us.” In other words, “When someone joins with Us, he will escape from the night attack of severance.” Or: “When someone binds his heart to Our generosity, he will pack his bags from the room of sorrows.” Or: “When someone sees Us, his spirit will laugh. He who reaches himself will reach Us. Nothing can be said about what he who reaches himself will see and hear.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, all Your caresses are for our sake, for in each breath appears so much burning with the light of Your solicitude. Who has a patron like You? Where is a friend like You? With the attributes that You have, nothing else is fitting. All this is the mark, and the celebration is tomorrow. This indeed is the message, and the robe of honor is in place.”

The robe of honor is what He said: “*shall have their wage with their Lord, and no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they grieve.*” Wait until tomorrow, when He gives out the generous wage and tremendous caress that He has with Himself, the boundless blessings and everlasting triumph, in the assembly of *repose and ease* [56:89] and the appointed time of union with the Beloved.

When will my luck smile at me from Your playing field?

When will separation from You strike its tent from my spirit’s desert?

What wonderful work is the work of the poor! Gabriel, with six hundred peacock wings, could not

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<sup>24</sup> LI 2:222.

<sup>25</sup> LI 2:223.

take one step beyond the Lote Tree along with that paragon of the world. But this poor man with begging hands does not let go of the paragon's skirt until he places his foot along with his on the Majestic Throne. Know, however, that this boldness does not belong to today, for it is longtime. When the foundation of love was laid down in the beginningless covenant, the spirits of the poor drank one draft of the wine of *He loves them, and they love Him* [5:54] in the session of intimacy and on the carpet of expansiveness. This is why they became bold. The proximate angels of the Higher Plenum said, "Look at the high aspiration of this folk! After all, we never tasted a draft of that wine, nor even caught a whiff." The ruckus of these beggars' spirits fell to Capella:

First You began this talk of passion,  
so take care of our work as is worthy of You.  
How can we find room in the pavilion of mystery?  
We have nothing in hand but bragging and the edict of need.

**2:284** *To God belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Whether you show what is in your souls or you hide it, God will bring you to account for it.*

*To God belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth* as ownership, origination, creation, and devising. He gave them existence from nonexistence, so He owns them with the ownership of exaltedness and powerfulness, not the ownership of gaining and earning. He *does* in them *whatsoever He wills* [3:40] and He *decrees whatsoever He desires* [5:1].

He is saying that everything in the heavens and the earths is owned by God, an ownership of existence-giving and exaltedness, not an ownership of earning and inheritance. It is the ownership of the Adamites that is gained by the ruling property of commerce and gift, or acquisition and inheritance. Hence the ruling property that establishes ownership makes the rightful due of what is owned necessary for them. As for God's ownership, it comes by way of bringing nonbeing into being, by creation after nonbeing, and by making new from the outset. Thus His ownership is not like anyone else's ownership, nor does anyone have any ruling property over Him in that. What He does with what He Himself created He does by reason of His own lordhood. From Him it is justice, not injustice. Injustice is when someone does something that is not his to do. But it is God's to do whatever He does because He is creator, enactor, and king. Majestic is His ruling power, tremendous His rank, exalted His magnificence, realized His word, and high His reality beyond the perception of intellects!

*To God belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth.* He did not say this so that you would attach your heart to it and occupy yourself with it, but so that you would attach your heart to its creator and see its artisan. This is the same as He said: "*Do not prostrate yourselves to the sun and the moon, but prostrate yourselves to God, who created them*" [41:37]. When He created heaven and earth, He created them as the gazing place of the common people, so that they would look at the artisanship and from it reach the Artisan. Say: "*Gaze at that which is in the heavens and the earth*" [10:101].

He gave the elect a higher rank. He invited them away from the gaze of taking heed to the gaze of reflective thought. He turned them away from artisanship to reflective thought. He said, "*What, do they not ponder the Qur'an?*" [4:82].

Then He made Muṣṭafā pass through the degree of the elect, gave him access to the reality of solitariness, and set him down in the center point of togetherness, so that his gaze would go beyond the artisanship and the attributes. He said to him, "*Dost thou not see thy Lord?*" [25:45].

First is the way station of the aware, second the level of the familiar, and third the degree of the friends and the near ones. When at first lightning flashed from the heaven of exaltedness, the servant came to awareness. Then a breeze blew from the garden of gentleness, and the servant found familiarity. Then he found a drink from the cup of friendship and became selfless of selfhood—everything came to be his.

Awareness is the state of the wage-earner, familiarity the attribute of the guest, and friendship the mark of the near ones. The wage-earners have wages, the guests have feasts, and the near ones

have mysteries. The wage of the wage-earner befits the wage-earner, the feast of the guest befits the host, and the one who is near is drowned in face-to-face vision.

*Whether you show what is in your souls or you hide it, God will bring you to account for it.* Great is the work of someone who has business with Him! Majestic is the rebuke of him whose rebuker is He! One must buy reckoning with one's spirit when the reckoner is He! The measure of this declaration was known by that chevalier of the Tariqah, Shibli, who said, "O God, what would it matter if You placed all the sins of the world's folk on Shibli's neck? Then, tomorrow in that place of seclusion, You would count out each sin for me, and my talk with You would be drawn out."

I consider it unlawful to talk with others—  
whenever I talk with You, I draw out my words.

His words "place of seclusion" alludes to the hadith of Muṣṭafā in which he said, "There is none of you to whom your Lord will not speak, without any spokesman between Him and you, nor any veil veiling Him."

A nomad came and asked Muṣṭafā, "Who will take care of my account tomorrow?"

The Messenger said, "God will take care of the servants' accounts."

The nomad went back in happiness and joy and kept on saying, "So I am saved! When a generous man decides, he forgives."

*God will bring you to account for it.* It has been said that this sentence is a tremendous admonishment for him who has brightness in his heart and familiarity in his secret core. Since he knows that tomorrow he will be called to account and interrogated about the why and the wherefore of his words and deeds, today he undertakes his own accounting of himself. He watches over his own movements and rests, words and deeds. This is why Muṣṭafā said, "Take an accounting of yourselves before you are brought to account, and prepare for the Greatest Exposure."

**2:285-86** *The Messenger has faith in what was sent down to him from his Lord, and the faithful. Each one has faith in God, His angels, His books, and His messengers: "We make no distinction among any of His messengers." They say, "We hear and we obey! Thy forgiveness, our Lord! And to Thee is the homecoming." God takes no soul to task beyond its capacity. It shall have what it has earned, and against it shall be what it has acquired. "Our Lord, take us not to task if we forget or make mistakes. Our Lord, put not upon us a burden such as that Thou hast put on those before us. Our Lord, and do not burden us with what we do not have the strength to bear. And pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy upon us. Thou art our Patron, so help us against the people of the unbelievers."*

This is a declaration of the greatness and eminence of the Messenger at the moment of contemplation. He said, "*The Messenger has faith.*" He did not say, "Thou hast faith." This is how masters and kings are addressed in the manner of declaring their greatness. It is exactly like what He said about Himself at the beginning of the Surah of Opening: "*Praise belongs to God.*" He did not say, "Praise belongs to Me." This was to declare His own greatness and to make manifest His exaltedness and majesty.

*The Messenger has faith.* Now that He has mentioned faith, the Uprising, the Garden, the Fire, the prayer, the alms tax, retaliation, fasting, hajj, struggle, marriage, divorce, menstruation, the waiting period, expenditure, foster relationship, forswearing, divorce initiated by the wife, inheritance, charity, vows, buying, selling, usury, debts, and ransom; and He has mentioned the stories of the prophets and the signs of His power, God completes the surah by mentioning that His prophet and the faithful assent to the truthfulness of all of it. Hence He says, *The Messenger has faith in what was sent down to him from his Lord, and the faithful.* This is praise and laudation of the Prophet, who explained these rulings and delivered the message, and of the faithful, for we have recognized, accepted, and held firm to all the rulings, boundaries, stories of the prophets, and marks of God's power and tremendousness that were mentioned.

What is even greater and more majestic is that God Himself gives witness to Muṣṭafā and his faith, and He gives witness to the faithful and their faith. This is a witnessing by their God. It

is a witnessing that faith comes by bestowal. Where are water and dust? What are the universe and Adam? In beginningless solicitude the unitary majesty gave witness to the servant's faith and placed the crown of friendship on his head.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O Lord, it is You who made an oath of allegiance between Yourself and the servant without the servant. You gave witness to the servant's faith without the servant. You wrote mercy for the servant against Yourself without the servant. You made a pact of friendship between Yourself and the servant without the servant. It is fitting for the faithful servant to be delighted that You have made a pact of friendship with him, for the basis of friendship's treasure is all light, and the fruit of friendship's tree is all joy. The field of friendship is a vast heart, and the kingdom of paradise is one branch of friendship's tree."

*The Messenger has faith in what was sent down to him from his Lord, and the faithful.* Both the Messenger and the faithful have faith, but how far apart they are! The faith of the faithful is by way of inference, and the faith of the Messenger is by way of union. Their faith is by means of proofs, and the Messenger's faith is through contemplation and face-to-face vision. The following has been narrated from him:

"I saw my Lord with my eyes on the night of the *mi'rāj*. My Lord said to me, 'O Muḥammad! *The Messenger has faith in what was sent down to him from his Lord.*'

"I said, 'Yes.'

"He said, 'Who else?'

"I said, '*And the faithful. Each one has faith in God, His angels, His books, and His messengers; we make no distinction among any of His Messengers, unlike the Jews and the Christians.*'

"He said, 'And what do they say?'

"I said, 'They say "*We hear Your words and we obey Your command.*"'

"He said, 'You have spoken the truth. Ask, and it will be given to you.'

"I said, '*Thy forgiveness, our Lord! And to Thee is the homecoming.*'

"He said, 'I have forgiven you and your community. Ask, and it will be given to you.'

"I said, '*Our Lord, take us not to task if we forget or make mistakes.*'

"He said, 'I have removed mistakes and forgetfulness from you and your community. And what is it that you dislike?'

"I said, '*Our Lord, put not upon us a burden such as that Thou hast put on those before us.*'

"He said, 'That belongs to you and your community.'

"I said, '*Our Lord, and do not burden us with what we do not have the strength to bear.*'

"He said, 'I have done that for you and your community. Ask, and it will be given to you.'

"I said, '*Our Lord, and pardon us against engulfing, and forgive us against casting, and have mercy upon us against deforming.*<sup>26</sup> *Thou art our Patron, so help us against the people of the unbelievers.*'

"He said, 'I have done that for you and your community.'"

The Prophet was asked, "What was your recompense on the night that you were taken up?"

He said, "I was given the Opening of the Book and the concluding verses of the Surah of the Cow, and these are among the treasures of the All-Merciful's Throne that were given to no prophet before me."

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26 The references here are to the ill fates of evil-doers recounted in the Qur'an: being engulfed by the earth (28:81), having terror cast into their hearts (33:26), and being deformed (36:67).

## Surah 3: Āl °Imrān

### 3:6 *He it is who forms you in the wombs as He wills.*

Talk of this has two sides: the affirmation of the form of the Creator, and the explication of His power over creatures and favor toward them through predetermination and form-giving.

As for affirming the form of the Creator, in a sound report Muṣṭafā said, “God created Adam in His form, and his height was sixty cubits.” It has also been narrated as, “in the form of His face.”

The folk of interpretation—the foundation of whose religion is adulteration, interpretation, and negation—have turned the referent of the pronoun away from the Real and rejected the outwardness. The folk of the Sunnah—the foundation of whose religion is hearing, accepting, and surrendering—have left aside interpretation and gone by the outwardness. They say that in this report the pronoun refers to God, that investigation, reflection, and interpretation are not allowed, and that fancying similarity is an error, for the Real is without peer in all attributes.

Concerning vision there are many reports that the Real has a shining face and form. Ibn °Abbās narrates that Muṣṭafā said, “I saw my Lord in the most beautiful form.” In the narrative of Abū Umāma Bāhilī, Muṣṭafā said, “My Lord was shown to me in the most beautiful form. He said, ‘O Muḥammad!’ I said, ‘Here I am, obeying Thee.’ About what are the Higher Plenum disputing?” This report is a long one and will be discussed in its place, God willing.

The narrative of Jābir ibn Samura is this: “Surely God disclosed Himself to me in the most beautiful form.”

The narrative of Anas is this: “My Lord came to me in the most beautiful form.” Anas also said, “Among the favors God will bestow on Adam on the Day of Resurrection is that He will say, ‘Did I not bestow upon you My form?’”

Ibn °Abbās said, “Moses was angry with the Children of Israel, so when he came down with interdiction, he said to them, ‘Drink this, you donkeys!’ God said to him, ‘Do you liken creatures whom I created in My form to donkeys?’”

It is well known that in the reports of the resurrection Muṣṭafā said, “God will come to them in other than the form in which they recognize Him. He will say, ‘I am your Lord,’ and they will say, ‘Our Lord,’ and follow Him.”

°Ikrima narrated from Ibn °Abbās, “The form is the head, so when you cut it off, there is no form.”

For the lords of the heart these reports are a clear explication and truthful proof that the Creator has a form. Their circumspect and followed expression is to say, “He has a form,” or to say, “He is the possessor of a form.” We do not say that He is “formed,” for the imams of the past never said that, nor did they approve of it. Rather, they say that He has a form and a face, but that the exaltedness of His majesty keeps the knowledge of this to Him, so creatures are incapable of perceiving its “how” and its core. Just as He Himself does not resemble creatures, so also His form does not resemble the form and face of the creatures. The creatures’ form falls apart, comes to nothing, and is annihilated, but the Lord’s form has majesty and generous giving, the glories of light, and shining flashes of lightning. If the veil were to be lifted away from it, heaven and earth would burn and fall apart because of the glories, the brightness, and the shining. This is in the report: “Were [the veils] to be removed, the glories of His face would burn away everything perceived by eyesight.”

Were You to glance once as You are,  
no idol would remain, no idol-worshiper, no sprite.

As for talk in terms of form-giving, it is that the Lord of the Worlds laid a favor on the Adamites with the perfect form and beautiful face that He gave them. He says, “*And He formed you, so He made your forms beautiful*” [40:64]. In another place He says, “*We created man in the most beautiful stature*” [95:4]. This is a favor specific to the Adamites among all the animals. He did not give this rank to anyone else, nor did He convey any others to this situation, not even the proximate angels.

In the traditions it has come, “How wonderful! He created an angel by the name of Gabriel and gave him six hundred peacock wings studded with jewels and bells of gold stuffed with fragrant musk. When He flaps his wings, each bell gives forth a sweet sound, a tune that resembles no other. Every time another angel, Seraphiel—whose shoulders are the base for one pillar of the Throne—begins glorification, all the angels of heaven fall silent. Even beyond this is the Tremendous Throne, upon whom is sitting the God of the universe. It has battlements that do not enter into Adamic imagination, their measure known to one. Next to the light of the Throne the light of the sun disappears and is nothing. He created all these creature with these attributes, but He said nothing about giving them beautiful forms or creating them beautifully except in the case of the Adamites, whom He pulled up from dark dust and conveyed to such a rank that He sometimes praises Himself for their creation and sometimes them. Concerning Himself He says, ‘*So blessed is God, the most beautiful of creators!*’ [23:14]. Concerning them He says, ‘*Those—they are the rightly guided*’ [49:7]; ‘*Those are the best of the creatures*’ [98:7]. Glory be to Him! Glory be to Him! It is this that is *the great bounty* [35:32] and *the great triumph* [85:11]. God says, ‘*As a bounty from God and a blessing, and God is knowing, wise*’ [49:8].”

**3:7 *He it is who has sent down upon thee the Book, wherein are firm verses, which are the mother of the Book, and others ambiguous.***

*He* is neither a name nor an attribute. Rather, it is an allusion to being. It means that our Lord is, He is fitting to be, and He has been—beyond location and transcendent in attributes. Shurayh ʿĀbid said, “I saw a dervish in the mosque of the Sanctuary calling upon God by saying, ‘O He who is He! O He other than whom there is no he! Forgive me.’ A voice came from the Unseen: ‘O dervish, you received so much reward for saying that the first time that the angels will be writing it out until the resurrection.’”

*Huwa* is two letters, *h* and *w*. The place of articulation of *h* is the last part of the throat, and the place of articulation of the *w* is the first part of the throat. This alludes to the fact that the letters begin from Him at first and return to Him at last. From Him they begin and to Him they return. It has also been said it alludes to the created things and engendered beings: all things come in the beginning from His power and return in the end by His decree.

A dervish in the state of rapture was asked, “What is your name?” He answered, “He.” They said, “Where have you come from?” He said, “He.” They said, “What do you want?” He said, “He.” They said, “Perhaps you mean ‘God’.” When the dervish heard the name God, he gave his spirit to the name and left this world.

The painters depict Your name in a hundred meanings;  
remembering You and Your name they give up their spirits.  
They scatter their lives for the scent of union with You  
with nothing in hand of Your description but incapacity.

*Wherein are firm verses, which are the mother of the Book, and others ambiguous.* These are the two great divisions of the Qur’an, one apparent and clear, the other abstruse and difficult. The apparent belongs to the majesty of the Shariah, and the difficult belongs to the beauty of the Haqiqah. The apparent is so the common people may reach joy and blessings by perceiving it and putting it into practice. The difficult is so the elect may reach the mystery of the Beneficent by surrendering and attesting to it.

From the place of blessings and joy to the place of intimacy and mystery are numerous ups and downs. Given the exaltedness of this state and the eminence of this work, He did not lift up

the curtain of abstruseness and ambiguity, lest any of the non-privy walk into this street, for not everyone is worthy to know the secrets of kings.

Go, don't wander round the pavilion of secrets!  
 Why try? You're no man for this battle.  
 It needs a man cut off from both worlds  
 to drink down the dregs of the friends' draft.

**3:8** *Our Lord, let not our hearts stray after Thou hast guided us, and give us mercy from Thee.*

When they were truthful in the beauty of asking for help, He assisted them with the lights of sufficiency.<sup>1</sup>

When the heart is limpid, the present moment empty, and the tongue flowing with the Real's remembrance, the arrow of supplication inevitably reaches the target of response. But the work is in this: When will this limpidness, loyalty, and supplication come together and how will they join with each other?

The meaning of this supplication is this: "O God, keep our hearts far from confusion and straying and make us firm on the carpet of service with the stipulation of the Sunnah."

*And give us mercy from Thee:* And give what you give, O Lord, as Your bounty and mercy, not as the recompense for our works or the compensation for our acts of obedience! Our acts of obedience are not worthy for the Presence of Your Majesty, so the only thing to do is to efface them and ignore them.

One of the pirs of the Tariqah said, "The gall-bladders of the travelers and the obedient servants burst in fear at the verse: '*We shall advance upon what deeds they have done and make them scattered dust*' [25:23]. But, of all the Qur'an's verses, I find this the sweetest."

He was asked, "What does it mean?"

He said, "We will finally be released from these displeasing deeds and unworthy acts of obedience and attach our hearts totally to His bounty and mercy."

**3:10** *As for the unbelievers, their possessions will not take away their need for God, neither their children, and it is they who will be fuel for the Fire.*

What a majestic God, generous, lovingly kind, who promises the faithful in the midst of warning the unbelievers and who caresses these while blaming those! He is saying, "Tomorrow at the resurrection possessions and children will be useless to the unbelievers and will not profit them." In other words, they will be useful to the faithful whenever they have carried out what is rightfully due to them, making them the snare of their own religion and seeking through them their endless felicity.

Muṣṭafā said, "How excellent are wholesome possessions for the wholesome man! What excellent assistance are possessions for being wary of God!" This is just what the Lord of the Worlds says: "*And, with what God has given thee, follow after the Last Abode*" [28:77]. He is saying, "In that of this world which He has given you, bring the next world to hand! Seek the felicity of the next world!" The felicity of the next world lies in recognition of God. Recognition comes from the light of the heart. The light of the heart comes from the lamp of *tawhīd*, and the root of this lamp is the divine bestowal. As for its material, that comes from the deeds and obedient acts of the body. Obedient acts come from the strength of the soul, and the soul's strength comes from food, drink, and clothing. Food, drink, and clothing are nothing but possessions. Hence possessions, by this series of steps, are the cause of endless felicity. But, one must not pass beyond the measure of sufficiency, for then these will become the cause of rebellion, just as He says: "*No indeed; surely man is rebellious because he sees himself without needs*" [96:6-7]. This is why God's Messenger supplicated, "Lord God, make the food of Muhammad's family in the measure of sufficiency!" When the measure of sufficiency is for the leisure to worship, then it itself is nothing but worship, for it is the supplies for the road, and the road supplies are also part of the road.

1 LI 1:233.

Shaykh Abu'l-Qāsim Kurragānī had a lawful landed estate from which he received his sufficiency. One day they brought him the grain from the estate. He took a handful and said, "I would not exchange this for the trust of all those who trust in God." No one will know the secret of this except him who is occupied with watchfulness over the heart and knows to what extent the leisure of sufficiency helps in going forth on the road.

*As for the unbelievers, their possessions will not take away their need for God.* If the unbelievers had all the storehouses of the earth and all its buried wealth and if they sacrificed all of it for their own bodies to buy themselves back and be released from God's chastisement, that would not be accepted from them; their expenditure of possessions would have no profit for them and would be useless—whether it was for giving comfort to the poor or for the welfare of all the people. This is because worship by possessions stands in the third rank among the levels of obedience. First is limpid belief, then bodily worship, then worship by possessions. But the unbelievers have neither belief nor bodily worship, so worship by possessions will be useless and without profit for them.

Again, the faithful servant has a believing heart, a tongue voicing *tawhīd*, and worshipful limbs. So, if on top of belief in the heart, remembrance on the tongue, and worship of the limbs he should give charity, or he should do good deeds in some respect, then, even if there is some doubt in these, there is hope that, since the escort of belief is along with them, they will not be rejected.

What is more marvelous is that even if the limpidness of belief in the rulings of the roots of the Sunnah is not present in his deeds and nothing enters into his register, there is still hope of salvation, for Muṣṭafā reported that God says, "The prophets, the angels, and the faithful will have interceded [on the Day of Resurrection], and there will remain the Most Merciful of the Merciful." Then he said, "So He will take a handful or two from the Fire and bring out many people who never did any good."

**3:14** *Adorned for people is love of appetites, like women, children, heaped-up heaps of gold and silver, horses of mark, cattle, and tillage. That is the enjoyment of the life of this world.*

The paragon of the world and master of the children of Adam, Muṣṭafā, reported that when the Eternal Enactor created paradise, He said to Gabriel, "'O Gabriel! Go look at it.' Go gaze on this paradise and see once what I have made and created for My servants and friends." Gabriel went and saw those adorned paradises with their infinite joy and bliss, that place of revelry made and prepared in the neighborhood of God's Presence for the exalted ones of the road and God's friends.

When Gabriel came back he said, "Lord God, 'By Thy exaltedness, no one will hear of it and not enter into it!' By the exaltedness of Your Lordhood, no one will hear the attributes of this paradise without aiming for it and becoming obedient so that he may enter it."

Then the Lord of the Worlds surrounded paradise with all the hardship and suffering of unworthy things and unreachd desires, and He made its road a bridge of trial so that everyone who aims for the Patron must first pass over that bridge of trial.

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, "How should I have known that suffering is the mother of happiness and that beneath one disappointment lie a thousand treasures? How should I have known which gate this is or what is the answer to the story of friendship? How should I have known that companionship with You is the greatest Resurrection and that the exaltation of union with You lies in the abasement of bewilderment?"

O spirit of the world! The Kaabah is a sweet place, the nest of God's friends and the lodging place of the sincerely truthful, but there is a man-eating desert before it, mile after mile and way station after way station. Who in the end will have the seeking to pass over all those miles and way stations until he reaches the magnificent Kaabah?

A world is wandering in the desert of Your love—  
who will be given access to the Kaabah of Your acceptance? [DS 210]

After He made the road of paradise that of unreachd desires and disappointment, the command came, "O Gabriel: Look again. What do you see?" Gabriel saw that road full of danger, those mileposts of struggle, those way stations of discipline that He placed before the travelers to para-

dise. The Exalted Qur’an reports that if you do not pass by those mileposts of struggle, you will not gain access to His Presence: *“Those who struggle in Us, We will guide them on Our paths”* [29:69]. When Gabriel saw that, he said, “Lord God! I do not fancy that any one of them will enter paradise.”

Muṣṭafā said that the Lord of the Worlds then created hell with the fetters and chains, the tree of Zaqqūm, and the boiling water. He commanded Gabriel, “O Gabriel, go once into this prison to see the effect of My wrath and to know the attribute of My punishment.”

He said, “Lord God, ‘By Thy exaltedness, no one will hear of it and then enter into it!’ By Your exaltedness, O Lord, no one will hear the attributes of this hell and then do deeds through which he would enter hell.” Then the Lord of the Worlds surrounded hell with all the appetites of this world that are enumerated in this verse: *women, children, heaped-up heaps of gold and silver, horses of mark, cattle, and tillage*. He set up its road as the desires and caprice of the soul. Thus everyone who follows in the tracks of his own soul’s desire and caprice will in the end head for hell. When Gabriel saw that he said, “Lord God, I fear that none of them will remain without entering hell.”

Then Muṣṭafā reported about the road to both houses. He said, “The Garden is surrounded by disliked things and the Fire is surrounded by appetites.” Those who walk in the unwanted will step into paradise, and few they will be! Those who walk in appetite will step into hell, and how many they will be! The road of paradise has trials and ups and downs, and the road of hell is easy and does not weigh on souls. “Surely the deeds of the Garden are rough ground on a hill, and surely the deeds of the Fire are soft ground in a valley.”

**3:15** *Shall I tell you of something better than that? For those who are godwary there shall be with their Lord gardens beneath which rivers flow, therein dwelling forever, and spouses made pure, and approval from God.*

After talking about the enemies, describing their life, and explaining their furthest goal, God in this verse comes back to the story of the friends. Tomorrow, the final outcome of those whose watchword today is godwariness will be paradise and approval. He says, *“For those who are godwary there shall be with their Lord gardens.”*

Just as godwariness has levels, so also paradise has degrees. The first degree is the Garden of the Shelter, and the first level of godwariness is to avoid the forbidden and the soul’s caprice. The Splendorous Qur’an ties the two together in its words, *“As for him who fears the standing place before his Lord and prohibits the soul its caprice, surely the Garden shall be the shelter”* [79:40-41].

The highest degree is the Garden of Eden, and better than the Garden of Eden is the Greatest Approval. So, the furthest goal of the paradise-dwellers is the Greatest Approval, just as the Lord of the Worlds says: *“And goodly dwellings in the gardens of Eden; and approval from God is greatest”* [9:72]

The Greatest Approval belongs to those who reach the utmost godwariness. The utmost godwariness is that someone takes whatever has the scar of new arrival and the mark of creation as his own enemy, as Abraham said: *“Surely they are an enemy to me, save the Lord of the Worlds”* [26:77]. You must turn away from all things and, with detached heart, busy yourself with the suffering of passion for the Haqiqah. You must know for certain that the intrusion of others finds no room in passion’s suffering. You must cut off your heart and spirit from everything.

The heart is Your garden—take it all, for this heart  
has room either for my intrusion or Your image.  
In gratitude I will also send my spirit to You—  
a whiff of union with You does what a hundred spirits cannot.

Tomorrow, all will be taken to the furthest limit of their goals and aspirations. Here someone hopes for the Garden of the Refuge and is told, “Flee from the unlawful and be just, and that will not be held back from you.” Someone hopes for the Abode of Everlastingness and is told, “Avoid the doubtful and be a renunciant, and that will not be held back from you.” Someone else desires Firdaws and is

told, “Keep back from the lawful and be a recognizer, and that will not be held back from you.”

A group remain who have no hopes and no desires. They desire what the Beloved desires and choose what the Beloved chooses. The paradises are presented to them, and the maidens and serving boys are made to sit on the turrets scattering precious gifts for them, but they are detached from it all and turn their faces away. They say, “If we must give our heart to someone, well, let us give it to someone who will enslave it.”

Suddenly I gave my heart to the one with the tulip face.

She was worthy of my heart—that’s why I gave it.

Let me now speak of the Greatest Approval and finish with that. It is narrated from Anas ibn Mālik that he said one day God’s Messenger kept them waiting. When he came out, they asked him what had held him back. He said, “That was because Gabriel came to me holding in his hand something like a mirror with a black spot. He said, ‘This is Friday, within which there is an hour of good for you and your community. The Jews and the Christians desired it, but they missed its mark.’

“I said, ‘O Gabriel! What is this black spot?’

“He said, ‘It is an hour of Friday with which no Muslim will keep company asking for good from God without God’s giving it to him, or storing away the like of it for him for the Day of Resurrection, or averting from him its like in ugliness. It is the best of days with God, and the folk of the Garden call it “the Day of Increase.”’

“I said, ‘O Gabriel, and what is this Day of Increase?’

“He said, ‘Surely there is in the Garden a valley in which flows white musk. Every Friday God descends into it and sets up His Footstool. Then pulpits of light are brought and placed behind it and surrounded by the angels. Then footstools of gold are brought and put there. Then the prophets, the sincerely truthful, the witnesses, and the faithful, who are the folk of the chambers, are brought and they sit. Then God smiles and says, “O My servants, ask of Me!” They will say, “We ask You for Your approval. He will say, “I have approved of you.”’”

### **3:17 *The patient, the truthful, the devoted, the expenders, those who ask forgiveness at dawn.***

*The patient*, that is, with their hearts, *the truthful* with their spirits, *the devoted* with their souls, *the expenders* of what they are able, *those who ask forgiveness* with their tongues.<sup>2</sup> The chevaliers are those whose speaking is this and whose doing is this. In the heart they are patient with the Real’s command, in the spirit they walk straight in the Real’s covenant, in the body they observe the rightful due of the Real’s command, with wealth they spend in the Real’s road, with tongue they ask forgiveness and seek from the Real’s generosity.

*The patient*: That is, they are patient in trial and they reject complaint until they reach the Patron, nothing of this world or the afterworld holding them back. They are patient in every trial and put aside complaint. They turn their faces away from both this world and the afterworld until they reach the Patron.

*The truthful*: That is, they speak the truth in seeking, so they aim straight, then they speak the truth until they witness. They speak truthfully and begin traveling. They travel truthfully to reach the domicile. They think truthfully to reach the destination. Then they put aside the marks bearing witness to truthfulness and throw themselves into the ocean to reach the shore of security and the *seat of truthfulness, at an Omnipotent King* [54:55].

*The devoted*: That is, in clinging to the door, drinking down sorrow, leaving aside loved ones, and rejecting companions until they realize proximity. They put on the clothing of poverty and hold up the hands of need at the door of the house of generosity: “Until You open, we will not leave, and until You caress, we will not go away.” Sometimes they are in prostration, sometimes standing, sometimes in fear, sometimes in hope. From the Exalted Presence comes this caress: “The field of friendship’s road is solitariness, and the drinker of its wine is promised vision. Whoever is truthful will one day reach his desire.”

<sup>2</sup> This sentence is derived from LI 1:236-37, as is the first sentence explaining each attribute individually in what follows.

Some day good fortune will enter my door,  
 some day the sun of elation will rise,  
 Some day You will cast a glance at me,  
 some day this sorrow of mine will end.

*The exponders:* That is, they are munificent with their property to the extent they are able, then with their souls in respect of deeds, then with their hearts through truthfulness of states. Sometimes they expend possessions, sometimes states, sometimes the body, sometimes the spirit: possessions in the path of the Friend, states in the work of the Friend, the body in search of the Friend, the spirit in seeing the Friend.

Whatever we have, we spend it for You.  
 Our ears are for listening to Your words,  
 Our eyes for gazing on Your great beauty,  
 our spirit, heart, and religion for seeing You.

*Those who ask forgiveness at dawn.* That is, they ask forgiveness for all of that when they reach sobriety at the manifestation of the glow from the heart’s dawn, not from the dawn that appears in the regions. As long as they are traveling, this is their quality and attribute, their description and conduct. Then when attraction arrives and the morning of oneness dawns from the horizon of Self-disclosure, they ask forgiveness for the marks bearing witness to their fear and hope, their truthfulness and patience. This is why Muṣṭafā said, “My heart becomes clouded and I ask forgiveness from God seventy times a day.” He passes beyond recognition and reaches the Recognized, he goes beyond friendship and sees the Friend. The way station of the friends is friendship, and the Friend is their homeland. Take your ease in the Recognized, not in the recognition! This is why the Exalted Lord said, “*Surely the final end is unto thy Lord*” [53:42].

Alluding to all of these meanings Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, “Where do I find a sign of new arrival in Your beginningless eternity? When the flood reaches the ocean, what then is known of the flood? All beings are nonbeing in the Self-Standing First.

“O resurrection of the marks bearing witness and destruction of the traces! The recognizer is alive through his own nonbeing. O Splendorous and Self-Standing, the world is full of day, and the blind man is deprived. You became manifest, I became talk, and no talk remained. You appeared, I became eye, and no eye remained.”

I saw in secret the world and the root of the universe,  
 I passed beyond defect and repute with ease.  
 And that black light—know that it is beyond the non-pointed—  
 that too I passed; neither this nor that remained.

**3:18** *God bears witness that there is no god but He—and the angels, and the possessors of knowledge—upholding justice; there is no god but He, the Exalted, the Wise.*

The Real bears witness to the Real that He is the Real. He Himself praised Himself and He Himself gave witness to Himself concerning His attributes as is worthy of Himself. In His speech He reported of His existence, His self-sufficiency, His self-standingness, and His self-lastingness. He bore witness to the majesty of His measure and the perfection of His exaltedness while there was no refusal, no ignorance, no recognition by any created thing, no intellect, no conformity, no hypocrisy, no new arrival, no heaven, no space, no shadows, no brightness.<sup>3</sup>

There was no universe and no Adam, no air and no space, no land and no sea, no light and no darkness, no understanding and no virtue, no conformity and no hypocrisy when the Lord of the Worlds spoke in the majesty of His measure and the perfection of His exaltedness, giving witness to His oneness and peerlessness and reporting of His attributes and Essence. Today He is exactly what He was and will be forever. It has never been that He was not, and it will never be that He

3 This sentence and some of what came before are derived from LI 1:238.

will not be. He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward. He is the First who always is and who knows the beings and nonbeings. He is the Last who always will be, and He will know what He knew. He is the Outward through His enactorship, dominating over everyone through His all-compellingness and above everything through His greatness. He is too inward for the perception of how, outside the reasoning of imaginations, and pure of supposition, fancy, and being thus.

In Your subtle Essence thoughts are bewildered,  
in Your eternal knowledge hidden things appear.

*And the angels, and the possessors of knowledge.* Great is the eminence of the angels, the prophets, and the knowers, and magnificent the result of their work, that God should join their bearing witness to His bearing witness! This is not because His bearing witness to His unity needs to be joined with bearing witness by created things. No, no, for it is His exaltedness that recognizes Him and His exaltedness that knows His unity. There cannot be joining from something that was not, then came to be. There is no *tawhīd*-voicer that perceives His unity, nor any attester that perceives His being. Heaven and the heaven-dwellers, earth and the earth-dwellers, do not perceive the permanence of His kingdom. This world and the next, paradise and hell, do not perceive the perfection of His divinity. It is His exaltedness that perceives His magnificence and His exaltedness that knows His unity.

Her own face has itself as a moon,  
her own eye has itself as collyrium.

\*

Who knows You? It is You who know You, You.  
No one knows You—You alone know You.

Yes, it was He who wanted and brought about the felicity of the angels, the prophets, and the knowers, bestowing eminence and honor on them, and singling them out from the creatures, caressing them and giving them access to recognizing Him. *And God singles out for His mercy whomsoever He will* [2:105].

### **3:19 Surely the religion with God is the submission.**

The approved religion—by which people look up to God in servanthood, worship Him according to His decree, seek for His approval, and go back to Him—is the religion of the submission. The submission has three way stations.

The first way station is the acknowledgment that spares blood and wealth: the person's neck is safe from the sword and his wealth is left with him, whether he is a conformer or a hypocrite, a follower or an innovator.

The next way station is the acknowledgment that is right belief, following the Sunnah, and the loyalty of deeds.

The third way station of submission is surrender, which is the utmost end of the work. It is pleasing to God and is the refuge of recognition. It is to throw oneself on the Real's exalted threshold and follow Him, approving of His decree, not protesting against it or turning away from it, and having reverence and respect for it. What Abraham asked for himself and Ishmael in his supplication—that they be submitters—is the utmost end of this third way station: “*Our Lord, make us submitters to Thee!*” [2:128]. This is the same as when it was said to him, “*Submit!*,” he said, “*I submit to the Lord of the worlds*” [2:131]. It is also alluded to in His words telling about Joseph: “*Receive me as a submitter and join me with the wholesome*” [12:101].

### **3:28 Let not the faithful take the disbelievers as friends instead of the faithful.... And God warns you of Himself, and God is clement to the servants.**

The reality of the servant's faith and the final goal of his traveling on the path of *tawhīd* takes him back to God's friendship. The reality of friendship is conformity, that is, being a friend of His friend and an enemy of His enemy. The master of the Shariah alluded to this with his words, “The most reliable handhold of faith is love in God and hate in God.”

The traditions say that the Lord of the Worlds sent a revelation to one of the former prophets: “Say to the servants, ‘In this world you have taken up renunciation in order to hurry to your own comfort and be relieved of this world’s suffering. With your obedience and worship you have sought your own exaltation and your own good name. Now look: What have you done for Me? Have you ever loved My friends? Have you ever taken My enemies as your enemies?’”

This is exactly what He said to Jesus: “O Jesus, if the worship of all the inhabitants of heaven and earth accompanies you in the path of the religion, but you have no love for My friends and no enmity for My enemies, then your worship has been useless and without profit.”

It is reported that Abū Idrīs Khawlānī said to Mu‘ādh, “I love you in the path of God.”

Mu‘ādh said, “Let it be good news! I heard God’s Messenger say that on the Day of Resurrection, God will place seats around the Splendorous Throne for a group whose faces will be like the full moon. Everyone will be fearful because of the awe of the resurrection, but they will be secure. Everyone will be in dread, but they will be still. It was said, ‘O Messenger of God! Which group is this?’”

“He said, ‘Those who love each other in God.’”

It has also been related that God says, “I have obligated My love on those who love each other in Me, sit with each other in Me, visit each other in Me, and spend freely on each other in Me.”

Mujāhid said, “When God’s friends smile in each other’s faces, their sins fall away like leaves from a tree. They will reach God pure, and He will take them into His shelter and security at the resurrection.”

The great ones of the religion have said that if someone is not on guard today, tomorrow he will not reach this security. For, inevitably, security comes after being on guard. The servant’s being on guard is the fruit of the Real’s warning, of which He spoke in two places: “*God warns you of Himself*” [3:28, 3:30]. This is not addressed at the generality of the faithful, but rather at the elect among the folk of recognition. He makes them fear Him Himself, without bringing an intermediary into the midst. Elsewhere when He addresses the generality of the faithful He says, “*Be wary of the Fire*” [3:131] and “*Be wary of a day when you will be returned to God*” [2:281]. Anyone who possesses insight knows what a difference there is between these two modes of address.

**3:30** *On the day when every soul shall find the good it has done made present, and the ugly it has done. It will wish that there were a far interval between itself and that. God warns you of Himself, and God is clement to the servants.*

He said this here so that the servant would fall into changing states—sometimes fear, sometimes hope; sometimes contraction, sometimes expansion; sometimes harshness, sometimes generosity. The severity and harshness of *God warns you about Himself* throws the servant into confoundedness and bewilderment and he becomes selfless of self. Then He caresses: “*And God is clement to the servants.*” He sits him on the ship of gentleness and takes him from the whirlpool of confoundedness to the shore of intimacy. One of the pirs among the great ones of the religion said, “I wonder if I will ever escape the whirlpool of self in the ship of deliverance. Will the hand of compassion ever take my hand among the waves of wishes? Will the proof of unity ever lift the veil of dispersion from before my eyes? Will this heart ever come to rest in this body?”

In the road of avarice the purses of a hundred thousand merchants  
have been emptied of pure gold in search of this alchemy. [DS 210]

**3:31** *Say: If you love God, follow me; God will love you and forgive you your sins.*

In terms of the Haqiqah this verse has another intimation and another taste. He is saying: “Whoever has fervor in his breast because of these words, say to him: ‘Come out in my tracks, for all the work has been made ready in my footsteps. Do not bind your heart to intellect, for intellect is a watchman, not a leader to whom the reins should be given. It is not a road that you should set out in. Do not seek what you are seeking from intellect, seek it from prophethood. Intellect carries the saddle-cloth of the religion’s ruling. The exalted magnificence of the religion does not fit into the

scales of intellect, nor does it come under the confines of substance and accident.”

Our religion is the same as the religion of the 124,000 prophets and messengers. The testimony of the Qur’an contains these words, for He says, “*He has set down for you as the religion that with which He counseled Noah*” and so on [42:13].

That which holds up the level of our religion is two things: “God said” and “God’s Messenger said.” If everything that is the basis of the religion of the innovators—the substances, accidents, and specific differences of the Kalam experts and the determinations of their intellects—suddenly ceased to be in creation, came to nothing, and entered into the concealment of nonexistence, not an iota of deficiency would reach the threshold of the religion’s exaltedness or the gate of the Sunnah’s tremendousness. By the decree of good fortune this address has come from the Exalted Lord to the folk of the Sunnah: “*Today I have perfected your religion for you and I have completed My blessings upon you*” [5:3]. Here there is no room for the Kalam of the theologians and the meddling of the philosophizers, nor for their explanations of substance and accident.

The path of Kalam is the path of shadows,  
and the worst shadows are the shadows of Kalam.  
You should take the road of the folk of Hadith—  
it is enough to have Muṣṭafā as imam.  
Put away confusion, for this is “the religion of old women.”  
You should have that, and the religion of servants.

*Say: If you love God, follow me.* “Many thousands of years before the existence of the world and of Adam’s dust, We gathered together the spirits of the creatures and made a covenant with the spirits of the prophets and messengers: ‘*Say: If you love God, follow me.*’ Whoever wants to serve the threshold of that chieftain of the empire and that center point of good fortune, from now on let him tighten his belt in serving him and assent to be his helper. This is why the Lord of the worlds recounted from them, ‘*They said, “We assent.” He said, “So bear witness.”*’ [3:81]. Then We took them all at once to the concealment of nonexistence. We took a few breaths in the playing field of power and decree, and one by one We gave them entrance into this world. Adam came and went, Abraham came and went, Moses came and went, Jesus came and went. In the same way, many thousands of prophets entered the dust. Then We called out, ‘O Muḥammad! Now the playing field is empty, and the moment is yours.’”

That master took a step into the empire, and fourteen battlements fell from the castle of Caesar. In the Kaabah there were 360 idols and all of them fell on their faces. From the four corners of the world the call arose, “*The truth has come, and falsehood has vanished away*” [17:81]. The pearl of prophethood settled down on the carpet of exaltedness and the pavilion of messengerhood was pitched on the face of the earth, its ropes reaching from the east to the west of the world. The mask was lifted from the face of beauty, and because of the scattering of sweet words the world was filled with pearls and gems and adorned and trimmed with the noble character traits of the noble. Thus he said, “I was sent out with the all-comprehensive words to complete the noble character traits.”

As soon as he lifted the mask from the face of his sanctified spirit,  
every possessor of eyes detached spirit from heart.  
In the whole ocean of love he saw no one’s mark—  
he opened one shell, and the ocean was filled with pearls.

*Say: If you love God.* The beginning of this verse goes back to what the Folk of the Tariqah call togetherness and dispersion. *You love God* is dispersion, and *God will love you* is togetherness. *You love God* is to serve the Shariah, and *God will love you* is the generosity of the Haqiqah.

Service on the part of the servant rises up to God. To this alludes the verse, “*To Him ascend the goodly words*” [35:10]. Generosity on the part of God comes down to the servant. To this alludes the verse, “*We placed a tie on their hearts*” [18:14].

Whatever comes from the servant is dispersion—defective in motive and joined with scatteredness. Whatever comes from God is togetherness—pure of motive and free of every fault.

In the meaning of togetherness and dispersion, this verse is like the verse in which the Lord of the Worlds says, “*When Moses came to Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him*” [7:143]. *Moses came* is the same as dispersion, and *His Lord spoke to him* is the same as togetherness.

Dispersion is the attribute of the folk of variegation, and togetherness is the attribute of the folk of stability.

Moses was in the station of variegation. Do you not see that when God spoke to him, he went from state to state, changed, and was variegated? For no one could gaze on His face.

Muṣṭafā was one of the folk of stability and stood in togetherness itself. At the time of vision and conversation, he remained in the state of resoluteness and stability, not one hair of his body changing. The fruit of Moses’ path in dispersion was this: “*And We brought him near as a confident*” [19:52]. The fruit of Muṣṭafā’s attraction in togetherness itself was this: “*Then He drew close, so He came down*” [53:8]. In other words, “The Compeller, the Exalted Lord, drew close, so He came down.” In such a way did the Messenger interpret it.

His words, “*Follow me; God will love you*”: What a great difference between these words of the Beloved [Muḥammad], and those of the Bosom Friend [Abraham]: “*Whoso follows me belongs to me*” [14:36]. Love and bosom friendship are as far apart as these two sayings. The Bosom Friend said, “Whoever follows in my tracks belongs to me.” The Beloved said, “Whoever follows in my tracks is God’s beloved.” There is no state higher than friendship, there are no days sweeter than the days of friendship.

Friendship has three way stations: caprice is the attribute of the body, love the attribute of the heart, and passion the attribute of the spirit. Caprice abides through the soul, love abides through the heart, and passion abides through the spirit. The soul is not empty of caprice, the heart not empty of love, and the spirit not empty of passion.

Passion is the home of the passionate, and the passionate the home of trial. Passion is the chastisement of the passionate, and the passionate the chastisement of trial.

In passion for You I will be a pure fire-worshiper—  
I will be burnt in heart, roasted in spirit!  
I will dwell in hot fire and water,  
night and day I will be chastised!

The passion that is the spirit’s attribute has three sorts: First is truthfulness, second drunkenness, third nonbeing. Truthfulness belongs to the recognizers, drunkenness to the enraptured, nonbeing to the selfless.

Truthfulness is that you do what you say, you have what you show, and you are whence you call out.<sup>4</sup>

Drunkenness is unsettledness and rapture. When the gaze of the Protector becomes constant, the heart is enraptured. When the bestowal becomes great, it passes the capacity of finding.

Drunkenness belongs to the soul, the heart, and the spirit. When the wine forces itself on the intellect, the soul becomes drunk. When familiarity forces itself on awareness, the heart becomes drunk. When unveiling gains force over intimacy, the spirit becomes drunk. When the Cupbearer Himself is disclosed, being begins and drunkenness turns into sobriety.

O Sweetheart, I am not—make me be!  
Pour me a draft of union’s wine!  
Sit with me alone and make me drunk!  
When You’re tired of me, flatten me with a fine point.

Nonbeing is that you become lost in friendship—you appear neither in this world, nor in that world. The two worlds become lost in friendship, and friendship becomes lost in the Friend. Now I cannot say that I am, nor can I say that He is.

Separating the eye from the Friend is not good—

4 *Ṣad maydān*, no. 65 (305).

either He's in the place of the eye, or the eye itself is He.

The Pir of the Tariqah said: "O Lord! I seek the Found, I say to the Seen, 'What do I have, what should I seek, when will I see, what should I say?' I am entranced by this seeking, I am seized by this speaking.

"O Lord! I did it myself, I bought it myself—I lit myself on fire. I called out from friendship, I gave my heart and spirit to joy.

"O Kind One! Now that I'm in the whirlpool, take my hand, for I've fallen hard."

From now on, Sanā'i, don't speak of passion's pain—  
many like you are lost in passion's world.

Take some advice: Don't try so hard for passion,  
for passion's pain stirs up dust from running water. [DS 1150]

Indeed, the yearner is killed by friendship, even if his head is on a pillow. Even finer is that someone killed by friendship is better than someone killed by the sword: Blood does not come from the one killed by friendship, nor smoke from the one burnt by it. The killed is content with the killing, and the burnt happy with the burning!<sup>5</sup>

How You kill us and how we love You!  
O marvel! How we love the killer!

\*

Though Your ache has put me in the fire,  
how I will ache if Your ache ever leaves me!<sup>6</sup>

**3:41** *He said, "My Lord, appoint for me a sign." He said, "Your sign is that you shall not speak to the people for three days, except by intimation. And remember thy Lord often and glorify Him at evening and dawn."*

Zachariah asked for a mark of his child's existence. It was said to him, "The mark is that I will stop your tongue from talking to the people for three days so that all your secret whispering will be with Me, and all on your tongue will be talk of Me."

By way of allusion He is saying, "I will give you a child whom I will cut off from this world and the creatures and the face of whose heart I will turn toward Me. Then he will know that his kiblah is nothing but My Presence and he will be at ease only in talking with Me."

Only Your name, image, and passion, O Spirit of the world,  
appear to me in speech, heart, and eyes.

This is why He commanded Zachariah, "*And remember thy Lord often and glorify Him at evening and dawn.*" He commanded the faithful in general to the same thing: "*And remember your Lord often*" [8:45]. He is saying, "Remember God, and carry out your days in obedience and service to Him. Belong totally to Him, calling upon Him and knowing Him in every state and every work! If you are at ease, be at ease with His remembrance and message, and if you are joyful, be joyful in His name and mark.

Once in a while knock on the door of My house—  
it is not right to pass by like a stranger.  
And if you talk, talk only of Me,  
and if you drink, drink only in remembrance of Me.

*And remember thy Lord often.* It is said that remembrance of God has three degrees: The first is outward remembrance with the tongue of laudation and supplication. God says, "*And remember thy Lord often.*"

5 This paragraph is derived partly from Anṣārī, *Chihil u daw* 246.

6 Part of a quatrain quoted in full under 7:172.

Second is concealed remembrance in the heart. Thus God says, “*Or with more intense remembrance*” [2:200]. The Prophet said, “The best remembrance is the concealed and the best provision the sufficient.”

Third is true remembrance, which is witnessing God’s remembrance of you. That is His words, “*And remember thy Lord when thou forgettest*” [18:24]. In other words, you should forget your own soul in your remembrance, then forget your remembrance in your remembrance, and then forget every remembrance in the Real’s remembrance of you.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, why should I remember when all I am is remembrance? I have given the haystack of my marks to the wind. Remembering is acquiring, and not forgetting is life. Life is beyond the two worlds, but acquisition is as You know.

“O God, for a while I performed Your remembrance through acquisition, then for a while I delighted in my own remembrance of You. My eyes fell upon You and I became busy with gazing. Now that I have recognized remembrance, I choose silence, for who am I to be worthy of this rank? I seek refuge from measured remembrance, temporal vision, familiarity through marks, and friendship by mail!”

**3:45** *When the angels said, “O Mary, surely God gives thee the good news of a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, celebrated in this world and the next, and one of those given proximity.”*

In this verse the God of the universe, the enactor of the world’s folk, the assigner of daily provisions to the servants, the bestower of bounty and the lovingly kind, the caresser of the friends, caresses Mary and honors her. With this honoring He gives her excellence over the women of the world and separates her from all of them.

First, He calls her with the vocative of honor, saying “*O Mary.*” Exalted is this address! Exalted is this call! Thousands of thousands of prophets and friends went, either in the repose of having found it, or in remorse and hope for it. O spirit of the world! If a thousand times you call on Him saying, “My Lord, my Lord,” that is not like His calling on you once, “My servant, My servant.” Even if you accept Him in lordhood, that gains you nothing, for in any case His lordhood is inseparable from you. What does the work is that once He should accept you for servanthood.

Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī said, “God stood me before Him in a thousand standing places, presenting the empire to me, but I was saying, ‘I do not desire it.’ In the last standing place He said to me, ‘O Abū Yazīd, what do you desire?’ I said, ‘I desire not to desire,’” that is, I desire what You desire. “Then He said, ‘You are My servant in truth.’”

Even if you do not have the gall to speak with God like Abū Yazīd, you are not too small to present your need to Him, to show Him your burning and hope, and to say, “O Lord, a name and mark is enough for me! You have come from Your threshold to place a name on me. Whatever name You want, let it be.”

A man went to the bazaar to buy a slave. They presented the slaves to him and he chose one to buy. He said, “O slave, what’s your name?” He said, “First buy me so that I may belong to you. Then call me by whatever name you want.”

When you are His servant, He will call you by whatever name He wants and keep you in whatever attribute He wants.

Master Abū ‘Alī said, “I saw an old man who was rushing from this wall to that wall, having become helpless and distracted. Because of my youth I asked him, ‘O shaykh! What have you been drinking?’

“He said, ‘Is it not enough that the Lord God of the world has let me know that He created me and that He is my Lord. Is something else needed?’”

Of passion for You is it not enough to have  
a heart adorned by union with You?

Another caress of Mary was that the Lord of the Worlds wrote out the inscription of chosenness for her in two places, at the beginning and the end of a single verse. He said, “*He has chosen thee and made thee pure, and He has chosen thee above the women of the worlds*” [3:42]. Who among

the women of the world has the honor that she has? She was free of this world and the world's folk, as He says: “[I dedicate to Thee] what is in my belly as someone free” [3:35]. The one who accepted and approved of her in that freedom was God: “So her Lord accepted her with a beautiful acceptance” [3:37]. Her place and seat were the mosque and the prayer-niche, and in that place her daily provision was coming to her from God's threshold: “[Zachariah] found provision with her” [3:37]. Then also she was pious and obedient to God's command: “And she was one of the devout” [66:12]. In her greatness and truthfulness she had God as her witness: “And his mother was a sincerely truthful woman” [5:75]. Even more wonderful than this was her child, who came without father and was God's spirit. That is in His words, “The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was but God's messenger, and His word that He cast to Mary, and a spirit from Him” [4:171]. In this verse, the Lord of the Worlds gave Jesus four names: Messiah, Jesus, Word, and Spirit. In other words, Jesus was God's messenger brought into existence by His speech, which He threw to Mary, and a spirit given by His bestowal.

In this verse He says, “a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, celebrated in this world and the next.” His face is recognized and his name good in this world and the next, and he is honored by God. He has various charismatic gifts and miracles, one of which is that he came from his mother without a father. Another is that he is the result of the inblowing of Gabriel. Third is that he appeared from an uncreated word. Fourth is that He gave him wisdom and knowledge in infancy. That is in His words,

**3:48 And He will teach him the Book, the wisdom, the Torah, and the Gospel.**

Until the end of these verses are all his miracles. Because it was in God's knowledge that the Christians would exaggerate concerning him, the Lord of the Worlds gave him speech in the cradle in the state of infancy to reject those Christians, so he said, “Surely I am the servant of God” [19:30]. In other words, it is not as the Christians say. Rather, “I am the servant of God, created by Him, and He is my Lord.” It is also a rejection of those who criticized his mother: “O sister of Aaron! Your father was not a man of ugliness” [19:28]. The Lord of the Worlds declared her innocence and, to brighten her eyes, He made those words come to his tongue in the state of infancy.

Here there is an exalted point: Since it was in God's knowledge that Jesus would be the brightness of Mary's eyes and the joy of her heart in this world and the afterworld, the Lord of the Worlds placed the burden and pain of Jesus on her at the time of birth. That is in His words, “And the birth pangs took her to the trunk of a date palm” [19:23]. Thus what was rightfully due became incumbent for her. As the counterpart of that suffering and hardship, blessings and ease reached her. Muṣṭafā's state with his mother was the opposite of this. Since it was in God's knowledge that his mother would have no portion of him, whether in this world or in the next, He did not place the burden of Muṣṭafā upon her, and at the time of birth no suffering reached her, so that no rightful due would become incumbent for her.

Similar to this is the story of Noah and his community and that of Muṣṭafā and his community. It was said to Noah, “Do not let yourself suffer for the community and do not carry the load of their trial, for they will never give you brightness of the eyes and joy of the heart: None of your community will have faith except those who already have faith” [11:36]. It was in keeping with this address that he supplicated, “My Lord, leave no disbeliever dwelling on the earth” [71:26], and God did that. To Muṣṭafā it was said, “O Master! Carry the burden of suffering for your community and be patient with them: So be patient, as the messengers possessed of resoluteness were patient [46:35]. If you see ugliness from them, pass it by and pardon them: Take to pardoning and command the honorable [7:199], for you will have brightness of the eyes and joy of the heart from their faith.”

Here a subtle point has been made: It as if the Lord of the Worlds is saying, “My servant, I lifted up every trial, tribulation, and hardship—illness, hunger, and thirst, the grief of daily provision, the dread of outcome—from the angels. I placed on them the fact that for them I did not make subsistent bliss, everlasting paradise, the promise of vision, and the approval of the Possessor of Majesty, nor did I promise it to them. My servant, I gave you all this trial and I poured on you all

this tribulation and affliction because I made everlasting bliss and the subsistent paradise for you and I have given it to you. Such is My apportioning. Where there is a treasure, the road passes through suffering, and where there is trial, its fruit is healing and bestowal.”

**3:54** *And they deceived, and God deceived, and God is the best of deceivers.*

Ibn ‘Abbās said, “The deception of God is that when they increased in unbelief and sin, He increased their blessings until He pulled them into total recklessness. They brought immense unbelief and applied their heads to rebellion and misguidance. Then He took them little by little from whence they did not know.”

It has come in the traditions that someone tormented Abū Dardā. Abū Dardā said, “Lord God, bestow upon him a healthy body, long life, and great wealth!” An intelligent man who ponders these words will know that this is the worst of supplications. When anyone is given this, recklessness and heedlessness will make him heedless of the next world so that he will be destroyed.

**3:60** *The truth is from thy Lord, so be not among the doubters.*

“O Muḥammad, take care not to suppose that I have associates and partners in the power of existence-giving. I do not need or require anyone in that. No one besides Me has the power of existence-giving and devising.”

One of the pirs of the Tariqah said in his whispered prayer, “O Lord, the one who does the work is the one who can, and the one who bestows is the one who has. What do I have and what can I do? Who has ability like Your ability? In praising You who has a tongue? Without Your love, who has the joy of spirit?”

Without the breeze of the heart-taker’s love, the garden has no ease,  
without the radiance of that rose-colored face, there’s no light or fire.

**3:64** *Say: “O Folk of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we worship none but God, that we associate nothing with Him, and that some of us not take others of us as lords apart from God.”*

In terms of realization, this is addressed to the folk of *tawḥīd* and the desirers on the road of the Haqiqah. He is saying, “If you who are traveling on the path of truthfulness today want to be dwellers in the *seat of truthfulness* [54:55] tomorrow, be careful to protect your walkway from the debris of customs, to sweep away the opacities of mortal nature from the carpet of your present moment, and to make the drinking place of your aspiration pure of the dust of others. Be one in heart, one in desire, and one in aspiration. ‘When someone comes to have one concern, God will suffice him against the concerns of this world and the next.’” This is why He says, “*and that some of us do not take others of us as lords apart from God*”: Do not settle down in every street with each scatteredness of the heart. Do not obey the commanding soul, do not worship blameworthy caprice, and *take not two gods; surely He is but One God* [16:51].

As long as the talk of some defiled fellow grabs you,  
you’re the servant of your own fancy, not a servant of God.

**3:73** *Do not have faith in any but those who follow your religion. Say: “Surely the guidance is God’s guidance,” lest anyone should be given the like of what you have been given, or dispute with you before your Lord. Say: “Surely the bounty is in God’s hand. He gives it to whomsoever He wills.” And God is all-embracing, knowing.*

Some of the commentators have said that here God is addressing the Muslims and caressing the folk of recognition and faith. He is reminding them of His favor toward them with the religion of the submission. The address then has two paths. In one respect it is addressed to the common faithful of this community, and in the other respect it is addressed to the recognizers and the elect among the folk of the Tariqah.

The first respect is this: “O assembly of submitters! Do not suppose or hold firm that anyone has been given what has been given to you. There is no religion like the religion of the submission, and it was given to you. There is no book like the Qur’an, and it was given to you. There is no prophet like Muḥammad, and he was given to you. There is no month like Ramadan, and it belongs to you. There is no day like Friday, and it belongs to you. All the shariahs have been abrogated by your shariah, and all the compacts have been abrogated by your compact. The perfection of the religion and the Shariah and the beauty of the Tariqah and the Haqiqah are all in your covenant.” This is in His words, “*Today I have perfected your religion for you and I have completed My blessings upon you and I have approved the submission for you as a religion*” [5:3].

“Now give gratitude for this blessing, give thanks to your Object of worship, and obey the command. The command is this: ‘*Do not have faith in any but those who follow your religion.*’ Do not exercise friendship with any but those who share your religion, and do not show brotherhood to any but the faithful. Keep away from the irreligious and the estranged.” This is just what He says in this verse: “*Do not lean upon those who do wrong, lest the Fire touch you*” [11:113]. He also says, “*Thou wilt not find a people having faith in God and the Last Day loving those who oppose God and His Messenger*” [58:22].

“Then see all this blessing and generosity from the Object of your worship and remember His favor. Do not place any cause in the midst along with Him and do not associate any others, for guidance and going astray, higherness and lowerness, are all from His bounty and justice, all by His desire and decree. Say: “*Surely the guidance is God’s guidance.*” Say: “*Surely the bounty is in God’s hand.*”

The other respect is that this is addressed to the recognizers and it caresses the lovers. He is saying, “Do not divulge the Real’s secrets to other than its folk.” Do not tell the mystery of love to anyone and do not make manifest the secret of poverty to the unworthy. Conceal the face of the Haqiqah’s beauty with the mask of inaccessibility, so that the eyes of the non-privy may not gaze at it.

When you drink wine, drink it with a privy, pain-filled companion.

When you lose it all, lose with a clever, wise companion. [DS 972]

Shiblī had secret whispering with the Real. He said, “Lord God, why did You take Ḥusayn Manṣūr [Ḥallāj] away from us?”

He said, “I gave him a mystery and showed him a secret. He gave it out to the unworthy. I brought on him what you saw.”

The command came, “O Muḥammad, *thou seest them looking at thee, but they do not see* [7:198]. Do you fancy that °Ataba, Shayba, Walīd Muḡhayra, and Abū Jahl see you? No, of course not! They have the eyes of the non-privy. They are not worthy of witnessing your beauty. Let them go. Do not occupy a corner of your heart with them. For a while attend to Bilāl, Salmān, and Ṣuhayb, for they are accepted by the witnesses to the empire and lifted up by the Threshold of Unity. O Muḥammad, put aside self-determination, accept My decree, and be grateful for My blessings. Singling out for guidance and bestowing recognition is the work of My Divinity.” This is why the Lord of the Worlds says,

### **3:74 He singles out for His mercy whomsoever He will.**

That is, *He singles out* for His blessings *whomsoever He will*. He singles out a group for provisions, He singles out a group for the blessing of character traits, He singles out a group for the blessing of worship, others for the blessing of desire, others for the success of outwardness, others for the realization of the secret cores, others for the gift of outer skins, others for the encounter with the secrets. God says, and His words are truth: “*If you count God’s blessings, you will not enumerate them*” [14:34].<sup>7</sup>

*He singles out for His mercy whomsoever He will*. He brought them together obscurely and did not specify anyone so that the hopeful would increase in their hope and the fearful would not remain in their fear. In the station of worship and obedience the servants will not find any states

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<sup>7</sup> LI 1:175.

better than hope and fear, for the Lord of the Worlds praises the servants in these two states and says, “*They hope for His mercy and fear His chastisement*” [17:57].

He is also calling attention to the fact that even if the servants strive to the utmost in obedience and perform all the conditions of servanthood, in the end it is God’s mercy that will deliver them. Concerning this the following has been narrated from the Prophet: “No one will enter the Garden by his deeds.”

It was said to him, “Not even you, O Messenger of God!”

He said, “Not even I, unless God envelops me with His mercy.”

**3:79** *It belongs to no mortal man that God should give him the Book, the judgment, and prophethood, and then he should say to the people, “Be servants of me instead of God!” But, “Be you lordly ones from having taught the Book and from having studied!”*

Before giving existence to the universe and creating Adam, the majestic compeller, the great God, the renowned enactor, knew in His eternal knowledge who among the children of Adam would be worthy of prophethood and friendship and who would be qualified for love and suited for messengerhood. *God knows better where to place His message* [6:124]. How can he upon whom He has placed the brand of deprivation and the inscription of unawareness be sinless and truthful on the road today? And how can he to whom He has given good fortune gratis and whom He has placed on the road of truthfulness and sinlessness be roadless and bad in state today? So, what will take form and how can it enter into imagination? It could never happen that the chosen Muṣṭafā and the caressed Jesus, after the honor of prophethood, the confirmation of sinlessness, and the strength of messengerhood, take a step out of line and say to the people, “*Be servants of me instead of God!*”

By virtue of the beginningless choice and eternal solicitude, the Lord of the Worlds answered on their behalf as their deputy: “They do not say this. Rather they say, ‘*Be you lordly ones!*’” In other words: Be among those singled out for God, those who are described by His words, “When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears and his eyesight with which he sees.”

In keeping with the tasting of the folk of recognition, *the lordly ones* are those who become one for God with disengaged intention, sound trust, and intimacy’s breeze. They step beyond the two worlds and seize hold of the gentleness of the Patron’s love. They say the prayer of the dead for their own attributes.

When someone steps into the field of passion for the beautiful,  
night and day will recite for him the prayer of the dead. [DS 210]

They have souls undergoing annihilation and hearts full of thirst. They have burnt souls, secret cores lit by passion, and spirits hanging in hope.

I want a heart for choosing only You,  
a spirit for breathing the pain of Your passion,  
A body for desiring only Your love,  
an eye for seeing You and only You.

Their aspiration goes beyond this world, their desire beyond paradise, their repose beyond heaven and earth. They are waiting: When will the sun of love rise, when will the moon of good fortune come forth, when will the breeze of felicity blow, when will the beginningless remembrance bear fruit?

When will I throw off this cage  
and build a nest in the divine garden!?

It is also said that *the lordly ones* are those singled out for God. Through this they are ascribed to Him, described by His attributes, and come forth with His character traits as long as their servanthood lasts and their makeup stays in place. This view is taken from the saying of Muṣṭafā, “Become characterized by the character traits of God!” He also said, “God has a number of character traits. Whoever becomes characterized by one of them will enter the Garden.”

The folk of knowledge have said that the commentary on these character traits is the meaning

of the ninety-nine names of God. In his traveling, the servant must pass by way of these meanings to reach union with God.

The Pir of Khurasan, Abu'l-Qāsim Kurragānī, said, "As long as the servant is acquiring these meanings and bringing together these descriptions, he is still in the path and has not yet reached the goal. He is traveling on his own and has not yet received God's attraction. As long as he stays in recognition, he is held back from the Recognized. As long as he is seeking love, he is unaware of the Beloved."

Hurry to passion and don't sit in attachment,  
take a few steps beyond passion and being passionate!

A great man was asked, "When does the servant reach the Patron?"

He said, "When he reaches himself."

They asked, "How does he reach himself?"

He said, "Seeking becomes lost in the Sought and recognition in the Recognized."

They said, "Explain more."

He said, "Of the body the tongue remains, and that's it. Of the heart the mark remains, and that's it. Of the spirit face-to-face vision remains, and that's it. Hearing goes, the Heard remains, and that's it. The heart goes, the Shown remains, and that's it. The spirit goes, what was remains, and that's it."<sup>8</sup>

Tribulation lies only in the makeup of my water and clay.  
What was before water and clay? That is what I will be.

It has also been said that the meaning of "*Be you lordly ones!*" is that you be singled out for God without looking at the intermediaries, like Abū Bakr at the time of the Prophet's death when the secret cores of the common people were disturbed. He said, "If anyone was worshipping Muḥammad, surely Muḥammad is dead. If anyone was worshipping God, surely God is the Living who does not die."

**3:81** *And when God took the compact of the prophets, "I have given you of the Book and wisdom. Then a messenger will come to you confirming what is with you. You shall surely have faith in him and you shall surely help him."*

In the whole Qur'an, there is no verse more complete in explaining the excellence of Muṣṭafā, to whom this verse is devoted without the association of anyone else. The Lord of the Worlds made two covenants with His creatures and took two compacts from them. One was the compact He took from the creatures concerning His Godhood and Enactorship, as He said: "*When your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their offspring and made them bear witness concerning themselves. 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes indeed'*" [7:172]. The other is the compact He took with the angels and the prophets concerning Muḥammad's prophethood and helping him, as He says, "*And when God took the compact of the prophets.*" This is an utmost bestowal of eminence and a perfect acknowledgment of excellence, for He made his name great with His own name and lifted up his measure with His measure.

Several thousand years before the existence of Muḥammad, a command came, "O Gabriel! I will have a friend whose name is Muḥammad. He will be praised and caressed by Me, his name will be placed next to My name, his measure will be lifted up by My bounty, his being obeyed will be obedience to Me, his words will be My revelation, and following him will be friendship with Me. O Gabriel! You make a covenant with Me to have faith in him and help him." This was when He said, "*You shall surely have faith in him and you shall surely help him.*"

Gabriel said, "O Lord, I make a covenant that my hand will be one with his hand, I will help, and I will have faith in him."

God said, "O Gabriel! Keep to this covenant and do not oppose it."

He said, "O Lord, who would have the gall to oppose You?!"

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8 The "great man" is Anṣārī. See under 8:41.

Then He said, “O Michael! You be a witness to Gabriel’s covenant.” Then in the same way He made a covenant with Michael, and He told Gabriel to be witness to Michael’s covenant. He made the same covenant with Seraphiel and Azrael. After He created Adam, He made the same covenant with Adam, and Adam accepted it. After Adam, He spoke to Seth, and Seth accepted—and so on and so forth, generation after generation. Here you have nobility and excellence! Here you have level and rank! Who else has bounty so complete? Who else has his work so well arranged? This is heavenly exaltedness and divine lustrousness!

In both darkness and limpidness unbelief and faith have  
no capital city save the face and tresses of Muṣṭafā! [DS 34]

**3:85** *Whosoever wants a religion other than the submission, it will not be accepted from him.*

Any religion that is not the submission is false. Any deed that is not following the Sunnah is the seed of remorse. The submission is the tree, the Sunnah is its water source, faith its fruit, and the Real the one who planted and nurtured it. When the wellspring of the Sunnah takes replenishment, it takes it from divine solicitude. If—refuge in God!—He should take back the solicitude, the wellspring would go dry. The tree would become ineffectual and barren, it would not give the fruit of faith, and it would be on the verge of disappearance and destruction. This is like the group who became apostates and turned away from the submission.

Again, if the lordly solicitude should go forth and replenish the wellspring of the Sunnah, then the branches of the tree will be made from the *goodly word* [14:24] and its fruit from pure belief. The heaven of guidance will make the branch into a ladder, and in the state of life and death its fruit will become constant and never be cut off. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says by way of similitude, “*God has struck a similitude: A goodly word is like a goodly tree, its roots fixed, and its branches in heaven. It gives its fruit every season by the leave of its Lord*” [14:24-25].

It has also been said that if a similitude is struck for the submission, it is a lamp that has been lit by the Most Tremendous Light, its material and nurture made to appear from the light of the Sunnah. To this is the allusion in His words, “*Is he whose breast God has expanded for the submission, so he is upon a light from his Lord [...]?*” [39:22]. He is saying, “Whenever the Exalted Lord lights the lamp of the submission in a breast, assistance from the light of the Sunnah makes it appear so that the breast may always be adorned and lit. Hence, whenever someone does not have a whiff of the Sunnah, he will have no portion of the submission.

It is narrated from Shāfi‘ī that he said, “I saw God in a dream and He said to me, ‘Ask a wish from Me.’ I said, ‘Make me die in the submission.’ He said, ‘Say, “And in the Sunnah.”’” In other words, when you want the submission, you should want the Sunnah along with it. You should say, “Make me die in the submission and the Sunnah,” for there is no submission without the Sunnah. Any belief that is not with the Sunnah will not be accepted, and any religion whose level is not kept by the Sunnah is not the religion of the Real.

The folk of recognition see another intimation in *the submission*. They say that the submission is the rightfully due, and surrender [*istislām*] is the reality. “And everything rightfully due has a reality.” Submission is the Shariah and surrender is the Tariqah. The dwelling place of submission is the breast and the dwelling place of surrender is the heart. Submission is like the body and surrender is like the spirit. Without the spirit, the body is a corpse, and without the body, the spirit is useless. In the religion, the submission is the least degree. It is to escape from associationism and to join with faith. Surrender is the greatest degree. It is to escape from self and join with the Real. This is why God says, “*Except for those who repent after that and make wholesome*” [3:89]. Everyone who escapes from associationism and joins with the submission is one of the repenters. Everyone who escapes from himself and joins with the Real is one of the wholesome. It is these two toward whom God is lovingly kind and whom He forgives.

**3:102** *O you who have faith, be wary of God as is the rightful due of His wariness.*

When He says, “*O people,*” He says, “*Be wary of your Lord*” along with it. When He says, “*O you*

who have faith,” He says, “*Be wary of God*” along with it.

*Be wary of your Lord* is addressed to the common people. Their godwariness is based on seeing blessings, and their aspiration is nurturing the body to serve the Real. *Be wary of God* is addressed to the folk of caresses and generosity. Their godwariness is based on being watchful of the Beneficent and their aim is the repose of the spirit in witnessing the Real. What a difference between the two!

*Be wary of your Lord* is addressed to the wage-earners, and *Be wary of God* is addressed to the recognizers. The wage-earners are seeking joy and blessings, and the recognizers are seeking the mystery of the Beneficent. From God the wage-earners want other than Him, but the recognizers want God Himself.

Aḥmad ibn Khidrūya saw the Real in a dream. He said, “O Aḥmad! Everyone is seeking something from Me, except Abū Yazīd. He is seeking Me.”<sup>9</sup>

People are wishing for repose and comfort,  
but I, O Exalted One, wish to encounter You empty.

\*

On the day I reach union with You  
I will disdain the state of the paradise-dwellers.

It has been said that godwariness is of three sorts: One is wariness of God’s punishment by having patience against acts of disobedience, as He says: “*Be wary of the Fire that has been prepared for the unbelievers*” [3:131]. Second is the godwariness of gratitude for blessings, as He says: “*Be wary of your Lord*” [4:1]. Third is godwariness at the vision of Unity, without taking into account reward or punishment, as He says: “*Be wary of God as is the rightful due of His wariness.*” The first is the godwariness of the wrongdoers, the second the godwariness of the moderate, and the third the godwariness of the preceders.

### **3:104 *Let there be a community of you inviting to the good.***

This is an allusion to peoples who stand up for God in God. They are not taken aback by the blame of any blamer nor cut off from God by relying on any causes. They have seen the shortcomings of their own souls and immersed their lives in gaining God’s approval. They act for God, give counsel for God’s religion, and call God’s creatures to God. Their trade has profited them and they do not regret their handshake.<sup>10</sup>

This is the description of a people who stand through the Real’s making them stand and who have been freed from their own power and strength and disengaged from their own desires and aims. They are outside the circle of deeds and states, free of the captivity of choice and self-determination. They know God, they call upon God, and they strive in God’s religion. They do not think about people or their blame. In their hearts they have friendship for the Patron and in their eyes the collyrium of Self-disclosure. They see everything just as it is. Others look from the artisanry to the Artisan, but they look from the Artisan to the artisanry. They are the elect of the Presence, branded by the Empire.

Be the elect servant of the king—with his brand  
you’re safe from police by day and patrols by night.

They are the ones burnt by union and killed by love. Their blood has been spilled and their property destroyed, but their hearts are in His grasp, their spirits in His embrace. This is why they say,

You have a Heart-taker better than life.  
Don’t grieve—let go of life.

“When someone is destroyed in God, God takes his place.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Under 55:29 the saying is attributed wrongly to Aḥmad ibn Abi’l-Ḥawārī.

<sup>10</sup> LI 1:280.

<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere Maybudī ascribes this saying to Shiblī (KA 2:356).

**3:105** *And do not be like those who became dispersed and disagreed.*

Dispersion is one thing and disagreement something else. Dispersion is the opposite of togetherness and disagreement the opposite of agreement. Dispersion is the scatteredness of the folk of the Tariqah and disagreement the scatteredness of the folk of the Shariah.

Dispersion is that the servant desires one thing and the Real desires something else. Togetherness is that the servant’s desire and the Real’s desire are one. According to the report, “When someone makes his concerns one concern, God will spare him the concerns of this world and the next world.”

It has been said that dispersion is to gaze on the creatures and to see the secondary causes such that you are never relieved of suffering and creaturely antagonism. Togetherness is to gaze on the Real and to know that the Real is one, the work comes from one place, and the decree comes from this one door.

As for the disagreement of the lords of the Shariah, that is of two sorts: One is in the principles of the religion, the other in the branches. Disagreement in the principles is terrible and dangerous, since one must be right and the other wrong. When someone’s goal lies in the west and he takes the road east, how can he ever reach the goal? The more he goes, the more he moves away from the goal day by day, and he falls farther behind. This is alluded to in His words, “*Surely this path of Mine is straight, so follow it. And do not follow the paths, lest they disperse you from His path*” [6:153].

As for the disagreement of the community on the branches, it is like a group who set out for one goal by disagreeing roads, some going nearer and some farther. Although they disagree in the traveling, they arrive at one goal and come together. This disagreement is mercy itself. To it the Prophet alluded: “Disagreement in my community is a mercy.” In other words, this disagreement in branches is God’s mercy toward the creatures, so that the work of the religion would not become narrow for them and its road would not be difficult. This is in His words, “*He placed no hardship upon you in the religion*” [22:78]; and in God’s words, “*God desires for you ease and does not desire for you hardship*” [2:185].

**3:119** *Ha! There you are: You love them, but they do not love you.*

The faithful had limpid hearts and generous natures, and they did not keep tenderness and mercy back from the estranged. They wanted good for them and attached their hearts to their submission. They wanted their salvation and did not hold back God’s mercy from them—whether they were acquaintances or strangers. This kept on crossing their minds:

Bring the sweetmeat, for it is the heart’s beloved,  
suited for both the elect and the common.

This is the same tenderness that Muḥammad showed to the estranged. He said, “O God, guide my people, for they do not know.”

As for the unbelievers, those who had no limpidness in their hearts or loyalty in their natures, they never wanted good for the people of faith, nor did they love them. They grieved at the good that reached them and became happy at the bad. God says, “*If something beautiful touches you, it vexes them, and if something ugly strikes you, they rejoice at it*” [3:120].

Indeed, everyone does what is fitting for him, for “The pot pours what is inside it.” The person of faith is generous and lovingly kind, for what is fitting for faith is generosity and chivalry. The unbeliever is base and bad-wanting, for what is fitting for unbelief is baseness and unseemliness. The person of faith calls God’s creatures to salvation and deliverance. The unbeliever calls them to the Fire and captivity. To this He alludes with His words, “*O my people! What is it with me that I invite you to salvation and you invite me to the Fire?*” [40:41].

**3:123** *God surely helped you at Badr while you were abased.*

He wrote this inscription of abasement for them in respect of number and the view of the common

people. But, in respect of the view of the elect and the reality of the work, how can it be said that someone is lowly and abased when God is his helper?

The Pir of the Tariqah said in his whispered prayers, “O Lord, in recognizing You we are alive, with Your help we are happy, with Your generosity we are joyful, through Your exalting we are exalted. O Lord, in You we are alive, so how can we ever die? In You we are happy, so how can we ever be sorrowful? In You we are joyful, so how can we live without You? In You we are exalted, so how can we ever be abased?”

A man entered in on Hārūn al-Rashīd and commanded him to do the honorable. Hārūn became angry and put him inside a room with a lion, with the door firmly shut. The lion entered in upon the man with humility and did not harm him. After that, they saw him in the midst of the garden, happily gazing at it, and the door to the room was firmly locked as it had been. They reported his state to Hārūn, and he summoned him. He said, “Who let you out of the room?”

He answered, “The one who brought me into the garden.”

He said, “Who brought you into the garden?”

He said, “The one who brought me out of the room.”

Hārūn commanded that they should put him on a seat with exaltation and honor and carry him around the city, with a caller going before him saying, “Behold, Hārūn al-Rashīd wanted to abase a servant exalted by God, and he was unable to do so.”

### **3:134 *Those who spend in prosperity and adversity, those who curb rage, and those who pardon people—and God loves the beautiful-doers.***

*Those who spend in prosperity and adversity.* It has been said that in this station people are three groups: First are those who spend nothing, whether in prosperity or adversity, whether in the vastness of blessings or in the days of famine and hardship. They are called “base” in an unqualified sense. They have seized the branch of niggardliness, which is a tree whose roots are in hell and whose branches are in this world. This is according to what Anas ibn Mālik reported from God’s Messenger: “Openhandedness is a tree in the Garden whose branches are in this world; when someone latches on to one of its branches, it will lead him to the Garden. And niggardliness is a tree in the Fire whose branches are in this world; when someone latches on to one of its branches, it will lead him to the Fire.”

Second are those who spend in vastness of blessings but not in narrowness and hardship. Most of God’s creatures among the world’s folk and those who take care of this world are in this station. In the work of this world they do not have the confidence for open-handedness and they are always in fear of poverty. To them alludes His words, “*If He asks you for them, then presses you, you are niggardly, and He brings out your rancor*” [47:37].

Third are those who spend in both of these states, both in ease and difficulty. Such a person has one of two states: Either he is an impudent and impure man who does not know whence he takes and where he gives and does not think about the outcome. He is numbered among the brothers of Satan. That is in His words, “*Surely the squanderers are the brothers of Satan*” [17:27]. Or he is a man who is confident in the sufficiency of God and His assignment of daily provision. He has recognized the secret of this report from Muṣṭafā: “Surely the holy spirit breathed into my mind that no one will die until his provision is complete. So be wary of God, and go lightly in your seeking. Never let the tardiness of provision make you seek something of God’s bounty through disobedience, for what is with God will only be reached by obeying Him. Surely every man has a provision that will come to him inescapably. If someone approves of it, it will be made blessed for him and be expanded. And if someone does not approve of it, it will not be made blessed for him and it will not expand. Surely provision seeks out a man just as his moment of death seeks him out.” Such a person relies on God’s treasury and keeps his heart straight with God. He spends all that he has and holds nothing back. He brings it to hand from its place on condition of the Shariah, and he spends it in its place in conformity with the Shariah. This is why the Lord of the Worlds praises and lauds his spending and says, “*Those who spend in prosperity and adversity.*”

Then He says concerning their attribute, “*those who curb rage.*” They do not become angry

at anyone, for they place all sins on themselves and consider themselves subjected and dominated over by the people. They tolerate suffering, or rather, they welcome it with patience and forbearance, for they bear witness that God knows and sees.

*And those who pardon people.* “Pardon” has two meanings: One is to efface, as the Arabs say, “The winds pardoned the tracks.” The other is surplus, as God says, “*Take to pardoning*” [7:199], that is, take the surplus of their property. Here He alludes to the fact that *those who pardon people* are those who pass over and efface people’s sins, but they do not limit themselves to that. Rather, they caress them and bestow upon them from the surplus of what they own. This is the attribute of the beautiful-doers, and God is their Friend, for He says, “*And God loves the beautiful-doers.*”

Beautiful doing in interacting with the Real is “to worship God as if you see Him.” In interacting with people, it is that, when someone is bad toward you, you are good toward him; and when someone does not act worthily toward you, you act worthily toward him. This is why God commanded, “*Take to pardoning,*” that is, take the excellent and beautiful things from among the character traits, and pardon those who wrong you, join with those who cut off from you, and act with beauty toward those who act with ugliness toward you.

**3:144** *Muḥammad is only a messenger. Messengers have passed away before him. What, if he dies or is killed, will you turn back on your heels? If anyone turns back on his heels, he will not harm God in anything, and God will recompense the grateful.*

As much as Muḥammad is praised and chosen among all men and caressed by the God of the world’s folk, as much as he is the pole of the world and the lamp of heaven and earth, the chieftain and full moon of the universe, emulated by the creatures, the paragon of the engendered beings, and the Seal of the Prophets—despite all this, he is a mortal man. Death is fitting for him and annihilation applies to him. As many prophets as there have been in the world, all of them went. The Real did not disappear, nor was God harmed. The Real remained after all of them, and God is their keeper in the perfection of His exaltedness.

By way of allusion, the folk of realization are being addressed: “The perfection of Our exaltedness is free of need for that which was not, then came to be. There is no link between Our lordhood and that which was not, then came to be. Our unity does not call for an existence-giver, and Our Being does not need a strengthener. Our exaltedness recognizes Our magnificence, and Our Unity knows Our exaltedness.

Her own face had itself as a moon,  
her own eye had itself as collyrium.

A sound report has come that He says, “O My servants! If the first of you and the last of you, the men of you and jinn of you, the living of you and the dead of you, had the heart of the most godwary man among you, that would add nothing to My kingdom. O My servants! If the first of you and the last of you, the men of you and jinn of you, the living of you and the dead of you, had the heart of the most depraved man among you, that would take nothing away from My kingdom.”

*What, if he dies or is killed, will you turn back on your heels?* This verse provides evidence for the eminence of Abū Bakr, for when Muṣṭafā was taken away from this house of decrees and the steed of death was sent for his prophethood’s shining face, then in the attribute of exaltedness the Divine Presence snatched that shining face away from the steed of death and took him into the embrace of Unity. The folk of dispersion fell into agitation and their eyes were placed inside the veil, except for the insight of Abū Bakr, the truthfulness of whose center point of togetherness Muṣṭafā had put on record in this report: “I and my brother Abū Bakr were created from one clay, but I went before him to prophethood without harming him. Had he gone before me, that would not have harmed me.” Hence, when ‘Umar picked up a sword and said, “If anyone says that Muṣṭafā has died, I will take off his head,” Abū Bakr—the foot of whose truthfulness was firmly established in the circle of togetherness—went to the pulpit and shouted at ‘Umar and the others, “If anyone was worshiping Muḥammad, surely Muḥammad is dead. If anyone was worshiping God, surely God is the Living who does not die.”

What a tremendous God, what an all-compelling Enactor! For all is He, the existence of the

creatures is by His holding, their nonbeing by His decree, the subsistence of the world's folk by His desire, the annihilation of the Adamites by His will. He will always subsist and He will live forever. *Everything is perishing but His face* [28:88].

**3:148** *God gave them this world's reward and the beauty of the next world's reward, and God loves the beautiful-doers.*

Concerning the reward of the next world He said "beauty," which is to say that the reward is beautiful, but He did not say that about the reward of this world. This is because the reward of the afterworld is lasting, but the reward of this world is passing. The former comes into being constantly without blight and without trouble, but the latter is soon cut off and has blights and tribulations.

*God loves the beautiful-doers.* The beautiful-doers are the "grateful" who are mentioned in verse 3:144. The "recompense" to which He alludes there is the love that He explains here. Beautiful doing is what Muṣṭafā said in answering Gabriel: "It is that you worship God as if you see Him." Beautiful doing is the attribute of the self-watchful, the state of the finders, the station of the approving, and the mark of the friends. Love for God is their watchword and remembering God their blanket. God's love is pouring down on them, and this pouring is like a sweetheart inside their spirit. From it the tree of happiness gives fruit and the spirit has a happy springtime.

Hail, O sweet breeze of early spring!

You give off the scent of that idol's tresses.

**3:152** *Among you are those who desire this world, and among you are those who desire the next world.*

The worth of someone is his desire, and the want of someone is his leader. One person wants this world, another the afterworld, another the Patron. Wanting this world is all trickery and delusion, wanting the afterworld is all occupation with the work of wage-earners, and wanting the Patron is all celebration and joy. A seeker of this world is wounded by fantasy and delusion, a seeker of the afterworld is attached to palaces and houris, and a seeker of the Patron is in the ocean of Solitariness, inundated by light.

Dhu'l-Nūn the Egyptian said, "O God, if I have any share of this world, I have given it to strangers. If I have anything stored up for the afterworld, I give it to the faithful. In this world, remembering You is enough for me, and in the afterworld seeing You is enough for me."

This world and the afterworld are two precious commodities, and vision is the hard cash that is given. The broker of this world is Iblis. He offers his wares at auction in the bazaar of abandonment and adorns them for the people. God says, reporting from him, "*I shall surely adorn for them what is in the earth*" [15:39]. Iblis's buyer is the unbeliever. The price is abandoning the religion and sheer associationism. As for Muṣṭafā, he is the broker of paradise. He makes his offers at the auction of solicitude in the bazaar of the afterworld. The buyer is God and the sellers are the faithful. The price is the formula, "*There is no god but God.*" The Prophet said, "The price of the Garden is *There is no god but God.*"

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "I see a group distracted from Him by this world, a group distracted from Him by that world, and a group distracted from both worlds by Him. They are waiting to see when the breeze of felicity will blow from the side of proximity and the sun of union will shine from the mansion of solicitude. They weep with the tongue of selflessness and say in hope, 'O generous one! How can someone who yearns for You put up with life? He who hopes for you has a breast full of blood at the hands of Your friendship!'"

Without You, O ease of my spirit, how can I live?

If You are not by my side, how can I be happy?

**3:159** *It was by a mercy of God that thou wert soft with them. Hadst thou been harsh and hard of heart, they would have scattered from around thee. So pardon them, ask forgiveness for them, and consult with them in the affair. And when thou art resolved, trust in God. Surely*

**God loves those who trust.**

“O master of masters! O paragon of engendered beings! You are generous and lovingly kind, gentle and ever-merciful to everyone. You drive everyone by customs that hit the mark. You call everyone to the table of exaltedness and convey to everlasting felicity. You are like a father for the orphans, a husband for the widowed. You caress the familiar and you show the road to the estranged. You are mercy itself for the world’s folk, a cause of generous giving to all the servants. O master, there is all of this, but take care not to see yourself. Do not consider these as your own acquisitions, for all of them are I. It is I who was, I who caressed, I who made, and I put you to that. I gave you a sweet disposition. O paragon, keep on being this way to the faithful and the friends—with the same loving kindness and the same sweet disposition: *And lower thy wing to the faithful who follow thee* [26:215]. But, with the unbelievers and hypocrites, you should be a bit harder and struggle against them: *O Prophet! Struggle against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be hard with them* [9:73].”

There is a great difference between the Beloved [Muḥammad] and the Speaking Companion [Moses]. He commanded the Beloved to be harsh with the unbelievers and he called him back from cajolery, for in his disposition all was softness and benevolence. To the Speaking Companion He said the opposite: “*Speak to him with soft words*” [20:44]. He commanded him to softness and benevolence, and He called him back from the sharpness and hardness that was within him.

Then He says, “*Hadst thou been harsh and hard of heart, they would have scattered from around thee.* O master, if you were to give the unmixed wine of *tawḥīd* to your companions, without the admixture of their own shares, they would flee and no longer come around you. O master, they do not have the capacity to put up with what your capacity puts up with. When someone’s night and morning are in the Presence of Unity, how can others be equal to him or have any affinity with him?”

The master himself gave this report of himself: “I am not like any of you—I spend the night at my Lord; He gives me to eat and drink.” At another time he said, “I have a moment with God embraced by no proximate angel, nor any sent prophet.” Muṣṭafā taught this courtesy of the religion to the creatures. He said, “‘Speak to the people in the measure of their intellects.’ Speak to everyone in the measure of his intellect and do not lay upon him what he is unable to bear.”

Give everyone a cup in the size of his spirit—  
lay down sweets according to each one’s intellect.

*So pardon them.* “O master! Pardon their shortcomings toward your rightful due and your work, and pass over it. As for their shortcomings toward My rightful due, you be their intercessor and ask for forgiveness from Me.”

*So pardon them, and ask forgiveness for them.* *So pardon them* is an allusion to togetherness, for it is a decree. The one who decrees in reality is God, and the Messenger follows. *Ask forgiveness for them* is an allusion to dispersion, which is the station of abasement and servanthood. This is the custom of the Lord with the prophets and friends—sometimes He puts them in togetherness, sometimes in dispersion. Togetherness without dispersion is disbelief, and dispersion without togetherness is associationism. Togetherness is the Haqiqah itself, and dispersion is the path of servanthood. When these two traits come together in someone, he is on the road of the Sunnah and the congregation and walks straight on the Tariqah and the Shariah.

*And consult with them in the affair.* “O master! The states of the travelers in this road are diverse. One falls short, so ask pardon for him. One repents, so ask forgiveness for him. One is obedient, so consult with him.”

*And when thou art resolved, trust in God. Surely God loves those who trust.* Resoluteness has a reality, and the basis of that reality is the rightness of what is desired. The togetherness of the heart is the basis of solidity in the religion, jealousy in the affair, and straightness in the present moment.

Resoluteness is of three sorts. One sort is the resoluteness of repentance, the second the reso-

luteness of service, and the third the resoluteness of the Haqīqah. All three are built on trust, and trust has a root, a precondition, and a fruit. Its root is certainty. Its precondition is faith; this is alluded to in His words, “*And in God put your trust, if you have faith*” [5:23]. Its fruit is the Real’s love; this is in His words, “*Surely God loves those who trust.*”

Master Abū ʿAlī Daqqāq said, “Trust has three levels. First is trust, second is surrender, third is delegation. Trust is the beginning, surrender the middle, and delegation the end. Trust is the attribute of the common people, surrender the attribute of the elect, and delegation the attribute of the elect of the elect. Trust is the attribute of the prophets generally, surrender the attribute of Abraham specifically, and delegation the attribute of the Seal of the Prophets, Muṣṭafā, most specifically. The possessor of trust has his ear to the Real’s promise. The possessor of surrender is at ease in knowledge of the Real. The possessor of delegation approves of God’s decree. When someone has trust, he is seeking bestowal. When someone has surrender, he is waiting for encounter. When someone has delegation, he is at ease with approval in the gathering place of *repose and ease* [56:89]. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, ‘*And approval from God is greatest—that is the tremendous triumph*’” [9:72].

**3:169** *Count not those who were killed in God’s path as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, provided for.*

O life of the spirit, what is it with me that I know nothing of my state?  
The spirit from You fills me, but my heart’s blood is empty of You.

O God, our life lies in remembering You, our happiness in finding You, our spirit in recognizing You!

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The living are three: one lives through the spirit, one lives through knowledge, and one lives through the Real. He who lives through the spirit lives on food and wind. He who lives through knowledge lives on love and remembrance. He who lives through the Real is happy indeed with Him.

“O God, if the body’s spirit is deprived of You, it will be a captive corpse, but if someone is killed in Your path hoping for union with You, he will live forever.”

You said, “Don’t pass by my street drunk  
lest you be killed, for my suitor is jealous.”  
Let me say a word, my dear, perhaps I’ll be excused—  
“Killed in your street is better than far from your face.”

Indeed, when friends are wounded in the Friend’s street, that is a good omen, for gambling away the spirit in the gaming-house of passion is their habit and disposition.

Wealth, gold, things—gamble them away for nothing.  
When the work reaches your spirit, gamble it away!

Beware, beware! Take care not worry that your spirit will perish in the Friend’s path. When the spirit perishes in loyalty to the Friend, that is true eminence. The precondition for your spirit’s undertaking friendship’s rightful due is its destruction.

Love is intoxication, its craving destruction,  
its wilting and emaciation beautiful.  
He has clothed me with abasement in His love—  
abasement in love for the likes of Him is eminence.

That tumultuous one of the time, Shiblī, said, “When someone is destroyed in God, God takes his place.” When you are loyal in friendship and gamble away your spirit, you will receive good fortune for free, for you will have the Friend in place of the spirit. If you had a hundred thousand spirits, you should sacrifice them to this union, for in truth that would still be something for nothing.

Why should I not be happy? I paid one soul  
for a union worth a thousand sweet spirits!

In this road no one truly passionate rose up like Ḥusayn Maṣūir Ḥallāj. He saw union with the Friend flying like a falcon in the air of solitariness. He tried to hunt it, but his hand could not reach it. It was said in his secret core, “Ḥusayn! If you want your hand to reach it, put your head beneath your feet.” Ḥusayn put his head beneath his feet and rose up to the seventh heaven.

If you come from the field of appetite to the portico of intellect,  
you’ll see yourself like Saturn in the seventh sphere.  
If today in this domicile you have a state of loss—  
what fine capital and fervor you’ll see tomorrow! [DS 705-6]

Take care never to call the spirit-gambling chevaliers who emigrate from this house “dead,” for the quarry of life’s jewels is nothing but their heart. The water of life flows only from the spring of their spirit. The Lord of the Worlds says, “*Rather, they are alive with their Lord, provided for.*” Upon them is the cloak of awe in the shadows of intimacy; sometimes His beauty expands over them, sometimes His majesty inundates them.

At times tasting joy, at times hearing mysteries,  
at times gazing from Your majesty on Your beauty.

Ma°rūf Karkhī was washing someone’s corpse and the man laughed. Ma°rūf said, “Oh! Life after death?”

He replied, “His friends do not die, rather they are transferred from abode to abode. How could they die, when the exalted Qur’an says, ‘*rather, they are alive with their Lord, provided for.*’” They are happy and delighted, at ease from sorrow and suffering, present with bounty and blessings, in the garden of intimacy on the carpet of generosity, cups of happiness placed in hand again and again. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says,

**3:171-72 *They rejoice in blessings from God and bounty, and that God does not leave to waste the wage of the faithful, those who answered God and the Messenger after the wound had befallen them.***

Those who bow their heads before the command of God and the Messenger in passion for the religion made their own dear spirits the target of the enemy’s arrows. They made their spirits a gift, their bodies a path, and their hearts a sacrifice. They bought that suffering and wounding with spirit and heart.

Sarī Saqaṭī said, “God appeared to me in a dream saying, ‘O Sarī! We created the creatures. Some of them saw this world and clung to it. Some of them saw trial, and they fled to paradise and well-being. Some of them thought nothing of trial and took the tribulation into their spirits and hearts, asking for union with Us. Which one of these are you? What do you want?’”

Sarī said, “I answered, ‘You know what I desire.’”

How often will you ask, why do you make me suffer?  
In truth you know my state better than I.

“He said, ‘O Sarī! By the majesty of Our measure, We will strike your head with the whip of trial, and We will make the millstone of tribulation revolve on your head.’”

Sarī said, “I replied with the light of recognition by lordly inspiration, ‘Are You not the one who sends trials?’”

The lover’s soul is patient with illness—  
perhaps He who made him ill will one day make him well.

\*

Since the healing, O Heart-taker, is from Your wound and pain,  
make no balm for the wounded, don’t cure the pain!

**3:180** *Let not those who are niggardly with the bounty that God has given them reckon that it is better for them.*

In the language of knowledge and according to the Shariah, “niggardliness” is withholding the incumbent. The incumbent in wealth is a little bit of a lot, so a man gives the poor a little and keeps a lot for himself.

But in the language of the Tariqah and the folk of allusion, niggardliness is leaving a little for oneself, a tiny amount of property, or a moment of the state. “The ransomed slave stays a slave so long as a dirham is owed.” Wealth and states in the path of these chivalrous men have the form of a dog, and passion in its own world has the form of an angel. Muṣṭafā’s Shariah reports that the angel gets along badly with the dog and never descends into a house that has one. “No angel enters the house within which there is a dog or pictures.”

When will the angel come forth if you do not  
take the dog from the door and the painting from the wall?  
When will you arrive at Aḥmad and Abū Bakr,  
with a spider spinning its web at the door of the cave?  
Lift up the veil so that down may come  
a litter of magnificence to the bench of the threshold. [DS 200]

**3:191** *Who remember God, standing and sitting and on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth.*

Those who remember are three: One remembers God with the tongue and is heedless with the heart. This is the remembrance of the wrongdoer, who is aware neither of the remembrance nor of the Remembered.

Another remembers Him with the tongue and is present with the heart. This is the remembrance of the moderate and the state of the wage-earner. He is seeking reward and excused in his seeking.

The third remembers Him with the heart; the heart is filled with Him, and his tongue is silent in remembrance. “When someone recognizes God, his tongue is mute.” This is the remembrance of the preceptor. His tongue is lost in the remembrance, and the remembrance is lost in the Remembered. The heart is lost in love, and love in the Light. The spirit is lost in face-to-face vision, and face-to-face vision is far from explication.

Remembrance set a trap whose bait was jealousy. The wage-earner saw the trap and fled, the recognizer saw the bait and clung to the trap.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Remembrance is not simply what you have on the tongue. True remembrance is what you have in the midst of the spirit. *Tawḥīd* is not simply that you know that He is one. True *tawḥīd* is that you be one for Him and a stranger to other than Him.”

*And reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth.* Abū °Alī Daqqāq asked Abū °Abd al-Raḥmān Sulamī whether remembrance was more complete or reflection. Abū °Abd al-Raḥmān answered, “Remembrance is more complete than reflection because remembrance is an attribute of the Real and reflection an attribute of creation. That by which the Real is described is more complete than that which is specific to creation.”

Reflecting for the heart is like sniffing for the breath. Reflecting on one’s own deeds and words is mandatory, on the artifacts of the Artisan recommended, and on the Artisan’s Essence forbidden. In the report has come, “Do not reflect upon God, for surely you are not able to judge His measure.” He is saying: “Do not reflect on God’s Essence, for you will not reach His measure, nor will you recognize Him as is proper to Him, nor will you perceive the foundations of His majesty and tremendousness.” This is not because His majesty is hidden from the creatures. No, rather, it is extremely manifest and clear, but the insight of the Adamite is extremely weak and incapable, so he does not have the capacity to perceive it. On the contrary, he becomes confounded, bewildered, and perplexed. He is like a bat that does not come out in daytime because its eyes are weak, for it does not have the capacity for sunlight. But this indeed is the degree of the common people.

As for the great ones and the sincerely truthful, sometimes they have the strength for this gaze, but not continuously. They are like people who can take one look at the sun’s disk, but not more than one look, for if they continue to look, there is fear that they will go blind. So, if someone wants to reflect, he does so on the wonders of His artisanry, for everything in existence is one of the lights of the Real’s power and tremendousness. If someone does not have the capacity to look at the sun’s disk continuously, he does have the capacity to look at rays of light upon the earth, and from them nothing increases but brightness and knowledge.

**3:194** *Our Lord, and give us what Thou hast promised us through Thy messengers.*

O Lord, bring to pass the promise that You Yourself made, bring to fruit the tree that You Yourself planted, brighten the lamp that You Yourself lit, and keep the blight of us away from the love that You gave by Your own bounty. O Lord, we are happy that You were and we were not. Your work caught on and ours did not. You put forth Your own worth, You sent Your own Messenger. O Lord, You lifted us up and no one said, “Lift up!” Now that You have lifted up, don’t put down! Keep us in the shadow of gentleness and entrust us to none but Your bounty!

If You water, You Yourself planted.  
 If You flatten the foundation, You Yourself raised it.  
 I the servant am just what You fancied.  
 Don’t throw me down—You lifted me up.

**3:195** *And their Lord responded to them, “I will not waste the deed of any doer among you, male or female. The one of you is as the other. And those who emigrated, were expelled from their homes, were tormented in My path, who fought and were killed, I shall surely acquit them of their ugly deeds and enter them into Gardens under which rivers flow, a reward from God.”*

This is loyalty to the promise that He gave to the faithful: “*Supplicate Me; I will respond to you*” [40:60]. The verification of this loyalty is that He responded to the caller, He bestowed upon the asker, He assisted the striver, He gave increase to the grateful, He bestowed insight on the patient, He rewarded the obedient, He absolved the disobedient, He had mercy on the regretful, He honored the lover, He gave vision to the yearner.

The command came, “O Muḥammad! There is no reason for despair. In triumph the work of the servant is not outside of three traits: If he is obedient, then his reward is in place. If he is disobedient, then your intercession is in place. And no matter how much he is held back, My mercy toward him is in place.”

If I wipe clean all the sins of the creatures,  
 what will be lost from My kingdom? A handful of clay.

*And those who emigrated, were expelled from their homes, were tormented in My path, who fought and were killed.* This is the attribute of the friends, the custom of the yearners, the story of those who gamble away their spirits, and the final outcome of the work of the passionate: They have given away their hearts and gambled away their spirits. Wounded by the arrow of trial, their status and respect overturned by the sword of the decree, they have been exiled from their homes and families.

Totally effaced in the ocean of thought,  
 of themselves they recite for all, “No home, no possessions.”

Sometimes burning and melting, sometimes weeping and wailing, they see the burn but not the burner, they see the tumult but not the tumult-inciter, they see the pain but not the remedy. What is even more wondrous is that they are happy with their pain and lament at the lack of pain.

I won’t give up the Beloved as long as I’ve not given up the spirit.  
 I will give up the spirit, but I won’t give up the Beloved.  
 Now at least I have the hard cash of pain—  
 I won’t give up this pain for a hundred thousand remedies.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, whoever seeks for You needs a resurrection as hard cash, or he needs his blood to be shed with the sword of disappointment. Exalted of the two worlds! When someone aims for Your threshold, his days are like this—or is it that my portion is like this?”

*I will surely acquit them of their ugly deeds and enter them into Gardens under which rivers flow, a reward from God.* There must be a pain of that sort if a balm of this sort is to appear—blessedness, the most beautiful, and union with the Patron in the Gardens of the Refuge! One group has the sweet drink of blessedness and the bliss of paradise, another group holds to its breast the vision and approval of the Patron! The tongue of the servant’s state says in joy and coquetry, “O God, You were my tribulation, You became my good fortune! You were my sorrow, You became my ease! You were my burning brand, You became my lamp! You were my wound, You became my balm!”

**3:200** *O you who have faith! Be patient, vie in patience, be steadfast, and be wary of God. Perhaps you will prosper.*

This again is another balm, another caress, a call of bounteousness, an address of generosity, and it gives witness to the servant’s faith and obedience. *Be patient* is addressed to the soul, *vie in patience* to the heart, and *be steadfast* to the spirit. He says to the soul, “Be patient in obedience and service.” He says to the heart, “Be patient in trial and adversity. He says to the spirit, “Be patient with the burn of yearning and the pain of love.” And God it is who is patient.

If like Joseph you want to come out of this prison,  
be patient like Zulaykhā in the pain of distance from Joseph.

It has also been said, “*Be patient* in God, *vie in patience* through God, and *be steadfast* with God.” Patience in God is the patience of the worshipers in the station of service with the hope of reward. Patience through God is the patience of the recognizers in the station of honoring with the hope of union. Patience with God is the patience of the lovers in the state of contemplation at the moment of self-disclosure, when they are looking with gazing eyes, their hearts bewildered in what is seen, their spirits lamenting at the hand of love.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, everyone is burning in separation, but the lover in vision. Now that he has come to see the Friend, what does the lover have to do with patience and settledness?”

*And be wary of God.* Godwariness is a tree whose roots are in the earth of loyalty, its branches in the air of approval, its water from the wellspring of limpidness. It is not reached by the heat of regret, nor the cold of quenching, nor the wind of farness, nor the blight of scatteredness. The fruit it brings forth is the fruit of triumph, endless prosperity, everlasting worthiness, subsistent bliss, and the kingdom of forever. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, “*Perhaps you will prosper.*” The Prophet said, “You should be wary of God, for this brings together every good; you should have struggle, for it is the submitter’s monasticism; and you should have the remembrance of God, for it is your light.”

## Surah 4: al-Nisā<sup>o</sup>

**4:1** *O people, be wary of your Lord, who created you from one soul, created from it its mate, and scattered forth from the two many men and women. And be wary of God, whom you ask against one another, and of the wombs. Surely God is watcher over you.*

“O center point of human nature, O attribute of mortal nature, make godwariness your shelter and cling to it, for the life of the servants is through it and the deliverance of the travelers in it.”

Godwariness is for the servant to make the commands of the Shariah into his shield so that the arrows of prohibition may not reach him. It has three levels: First, he takes refuge in the sentence of *tawhīd* and avoids every associationism. Second he takes refuge in obedience and steps away from the path of disobedience. Third he takes refuge in caution and flees from ambiguity. Anyone who climbs these way stations of godwariness with truthfulness will inescapably reach deliverance, for the Qur’an gives this report: “*God will deliver those who were godwary in their place of security; ugliness will not touch them, neither shall they sorrow*” [39:61]. In another place He says, “*Whosoever is wary of God, He will appoint a way out for him and He will provide for him from whence he never reckoned* [65:2-3]. Whenever someone takes hold of godwariness, We will ease for him the road of deliverance from every suffering and We will send him provision from whence he has no hope.”

It has been said that the sister of Bishr Ḥāfi went to see Aḥmad Ḥanbal. She said, “O Imam of the Muslims! I work a spindle on the roof of my house. When the torch of the Tahirids passes by, it may happen that I join threads with the rays of that torch. Is this permissible or not?”

Aḥmad said, “First tell me who you are. Are you in a walkway of being able to tolerate such godwariness?”

She said, “I am the sister of Bishr Ḥāfi.”

Aḥmad wept and said, “Godwariness like this is permissible only in the household of Bishr Ḥāfi! It is not worthy of you, so be careful not to do it, and Bishr Ḥāfi will be happy with you. Emulate your brother so that perhaps you may be like him. Then, if you want to work your spindle in the glow of the Tahirids’ torch, your hand will not obey, for your brother had a degree such that whenever he reached for food that was in any way suspicious, his hand would not obey him.”

“When the servant desires to be negligent of Me, I come between him and his negligence of Me.” This is found in the report in which Muṣṭafā said, narrating from his Lord, “When I know that what dominates over My servant’s heart is being occupied with Me, I put my servant’s appetite into supplicating Me and conversing with Me. When My servant is like that, My servant has passion for Me, and I have passion for him. When My servant is like that and he desires to be negligent of Me, I come between him and his negligence of Me. Those are my friends in truth. Those are the champions. They are the ones for whose sake I remove from the earth those whom they desire to be punished.”

He is saying: “When My servant wants only Me, knows only Me, and belongs only to Me, I also turn the face of My heart toward him. For him I shut the door of all desires, all appetites, and all wants and I remove all others from his heart. I give passion for speaking to Me and listening to Me dominance over his spirit and heart and I give him ease on the carpet of passion. I hold the sword of beginningless jealousy over his head so that, should he want to look at another, or crave for another, or do business with another, I do not allow it.”

I will make night into day and day into night in your work.

I will ruin your business with the world's creatures.

“Yes, when I want him, I know how he must be plundered. Today I will entrust him to the policeman of godwariness so that I may keep him under the protection of My Shariah, and it will give his movements and stillnesses the condition of courtesy. Tomorrow I will settle him down in the *seat of truthfulness* [54:55] in the Presence of At-ness.” Have you not heard that tomorrow at the resurrection it will be said to godwariness, “Come, for today is the day of your bazaar! If anyone has a portion of you, settle him down in a domicile in the measure of his portion. Settle down those familiar with you in the Presence of At-ness, for in the beginningless We decreed, *Surely the godway will be in the midst of gardens and a river, in a seat of truthfulness, at an Omnipotent King* [54:54-55].”

*Who created you from one soul, created from it its mate.* The Lord who created everything that He created as a pair made a spouse appear for everyone. He joined each with a likeness and attached each to a similar, for unity and solitariness are an attribute specific to Him. It is His rightful due and worthy of Him. In has been narrated in one of the books, “I have given the things mates so that My unity will be inferred.”

*And scattered forth from the two many men and women.* He showed the perfect power and majesty of His lordhood to the creatures: “From the offspring of one upright individual I brought forth many thousands of creatures with diverse natures and colors, with different forms and conducts. Each has another color, another nature, another character, another state, another aspiration. You will never see two people alike in nature and visage, or in form and manner. So glory be to Him whose predetermined things have no end and whose objects of knowledge have no limit!”

Then, at the end of the verse, He says, “*Surely God is watcher over you.*” The watcher is He who gives ear to hearts without investigating, who is aware of deeds without asking, and who in striving has no need to rest. This is an admonishment of the servant and eloquent advice for the traveler. It means, “Since you know that I give ear to hearts and keep My eyes on deeds and words, put watchfulness to work and carry out My rightful due.” Watchfulness is that the servant constantly looks at the Real with the heart and keeps the gaze of the Real before his eyes. Since he knows that He is not heedless of him, He is always on guard. Hence Muṣṭafā said, “When you do not like people seeing something from you, do not do it while you are alone.” In this meaning they have sung,

When you are alone with yourself one day, do not say,  
“I’m alone.” Say, “Over me is a Watcher.”

\*

I’m not heedless of your state for one moment, O friend.  
I have possessors of awareness where you are.

Ibn ʿUmar passed by a slave-boy, a shepherd who had sheep in a pasture. He said, “Boy, sell me one of these sheep.”

The boy said, “These are not mine.”

Ibn ʿUmar said, “If they ask, say it was eaten by a wolf.”

The boy said, “So where is God?”

Ibn ʿUmar was happy with his words and bought the slave-boy and all the sheep. He freed the slave and gave him the sheep. For a long time Ibn ʿUmar would say, “That slave said, ‘So where is God?’”

**4:10** *Surely those who eat the property of orphans wrongly will be eating only fire in their bellies and will roast in a blaze.*

The majestic compeller, the great Lord, the renowned keeper of servants, the clement, the generous, the loyal, the tremendous, the lord of everyone, the carrier of everything, who takes the hand of the weak and joins with them in love, in this verse caresses the weak and shows love to the

orphans. As for those wrongdoers who skewer the livers of orphans and drink the blood of the indigent, He threatens them and warns them of a fearful punishment. He acts as the deputy of the helpless and disputes with the wrongdoers for their sake. For He is the companion of the weak, the helper of the despairing, the responder to the call of the distressed, and the listener to the voice of the grieved. He loves the servant who, when battered, incapable, and destitute, lets out a cold sigh, sheds warm tears, and lifts two empty hands toward Him, asking again to be excused.

It has come in the traditions that a man was saying, "O Lord, O Lord! You have written, You have measured out, and You have decreed!" O God, all that was, is, and shall be is what You want, what You bring about, and what You write for the creatures. O God, none of this is outside Your predestination, nor does it happen without Your decree.

A call came in his secret core, "That is *tawhīd*. Where is servanthood?" What you have said is nothing but *tawhīd* and is fit for My Godhood. What then is the mark of your servanthood?

The man said, "O Lord, O Lord! Surely I have disobeyed, I have sinned, and I ask." O God, what comes from me is fitting for me. O God, I have broken the covenant, I have no loyalty, I am disloyal and everything worse.

What can I do about this story—I'm all artifice and color.

I'm altogether too lame to walk on the straight road.

Greed has made me all grasping claws,

I'm all war with the Apportioner's apportioning.

*Surely those who eat the property of orphans wrongly.* It is harsh to eat the wealth of orphans and foolishly crave their possessions. They say that once the marvel of the empire, the pure Jesus, was passing by a graveyard. He said, "Lord God, bring one of these servants of Yours to life!" At once a section of dust caved in, and a tall man came out and stood. Jesus was frightened by him and said, "Young man, who are you?"

He said, "I am the son of Taghlab."

He said, "When did you die?"

He said, "2,700 years ago."

He said, "Tell me how you have found death."

He said, "From the moment I went into the dust until now, the bitterness of death has been with me."

He said, "What has God done with you?"

He said, "O spirit of God! After 2,700 years I am still being called to account for half a piece of silver that I owed to an orphan. Calling to account for that has still not come to an end." He said this and fell back into the dust.

**4:12 For you half of what your wives leave, if they have no children.**

Inheritance and worthiness to receive it are established either by means of a cause or by way of a lineage. The cause is marriage and the lineage is kinship. Marriage is the cause of love, as God says, "*He placed between you love and mercy*" [30:21]. Lineage is assistance and strength, as has come in the report: "A man is many through his brothers." When one of the relatives by lineage or one of the near ones by cause dies, that will be a wound on a person's heart and a pain in his spirit. The Lord of the Worlds places balm on the pain. After this suffering He commands consolation through the wealth of the person who passed away. Thus, just as pain came from his passing, so also balm comes from his wealth. This is the custom of the Lord with His friends: If He places suffering on them by prescribing the Law, after the suffering He makes a treasure appear with the attribute of alleviation.

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, "How should I have known that suffering is the mother of happiness and that beneath one disappointment lie a thousand treasures? How should I have known that hope is the courier of union and that beneath the cloud of munificence despair is impossible? How should I have known that the Lovingly Kind is so forbearing that His gentleness and loving kindness to the sinner are beyond reckoning? How should I have known how servant-caressing is the

Possessor of Majesty and how much joy His friends have in Him? How should I have known that what I seek is in the midst of the spirit, and that the exaltation of union with Him is my opening?"

In my whole life one night at the time of dawn,  
the image of that comfort of the spirit came to me  
And asked, "How are you, wounded one?"  
I said, "In my passion for You, that is the first opening."

**4:17** *It is for God to turn only toward those who do the ugly in ignorance and then soon turn. Those—God will turn toward them. And God is knowing, wise.*

Turning/repentance [*tawba*] is the mark of the road, the leader to the court, the key to the treasure, the intercessor of union, the head of every happiness, and the basis of freedom. First is regret in the heart, second apology with the tongue, and then cutting off from bad things and bad people.<sup>1</sup>

It has come in the report that when someone repents but does not put aside bad friends, he is not a repentor. When someone repents but does not put aside food and drink, he is not a repentor. When someone repents but does not put aside his bedclothes and empty his eyes of sleep, he is not a repentor. When someone repents but does not expend the wealth left over after food, he is not a repentor.

The precondition of repentance is that you detach your heart from all existent things and turn it toward the Real. You discipline all the blood and flesh in your seven bodily members. Repentance is the precursor of the fire that comes from the bottom of hell so that today you will do to yourself with the water of your eyes what will be done to you tomorrow by the fire. Repentance is a message sent to you from the Presence: "O chevalier! How long will you make war? How long will you break the covenant? Come back, make peace!

"O falcon taken to the sky, come back, don't go!  
My fingers hold the end of your thread!

"O free man! How long have you been asleep? Wake up, it's morning, and you are thirsty for the wine of yearning. Look, it's time for the morning draft! How long will your heart and covenant stay broken? It is time to accept advice and to repent sincerely."

**4:18** *This turning will not belong to those who keep on doing ugly deeds until death is present for one of them, and then he says: "Surely now I have turned."*

In the tongue of learning, one must repent before death, even if it be one moment. In the tongue of practice, one must repent before the soul has the habit of seeing itself and worshiping itself. When someone is pleased with himself and gazes upon himself habitually, the door to repentance has been shut to him and the water of deliverance taken away from him.

Quit being the companion of self-nurturing habit-worshippers!  
Kiss the dust beneath the feet of those who have disowned self! [DS 972]<sup>2</sup>

Not everyone who has repented in the road of the Shariah, thereby reaching pardon and forgiveness, has reached truthfulness in love in respect of the Haqiqah. For a long time David the prophet wept and pleaded. At last it was said to him, "O David! Why do you weep when I have forgiven you, made your adversaries content, and accepted your repentance?"

He said, "Lord God, I know, but give me back those sweet moments I had in Your companionship and those breaths I had with You in seclusion!"

He said, "David, take heed! That is a love that has passed."

From now on leave the way open for the eyes to weep  
for the days of limpidness have no way to return.

1 From *Ṣad maydān*, no. 1 (258).

2 The translation follows the text as Maybudī gives it under 6:2 rather than that in Sanā'ī's *Divan* (*khwud-parwar* rather than *khwud bar dar*).

\*

Oh pain, Oh regret—of that standing and sitting in prayer  
I have dust on the head and wind in the hand.

**4:19** *O you who have faith, it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will, neither debar them from marriage that you may go off with part of what you have given them, unless they commit a flagrant indecency. Consort with them honorably. For, if you are averse to them, it may be that you are averse to something within which God has placed much good.*

This is a call, an admonishment, an allusion, a bearing witness, and a ruling. *O* is the call, *you* is the admonishment, *who* is the allusion, *have faith* is the bearing witness. *It is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will* is the ruling.

The explanation of the ruling is that women are considered weak, and they are imprisoned beneath your severity. Beware of tormenting them, and do not rule over them by way of scheming and deceit. Do not be severe, and do not ask of them what the Shariah does not approve. On the contrary, live with them honorably.

*Consort with them honorably*, that is, with the teachings of the religion and by modeling one's courtesy on the character traits of the submitted.<sup>3</sup> Show them the road of the religion and religiosity and teach them the courteous acts of being a Muslim and the Shariah. And protect them from the Fire, as He says in another place: “*Shield yourselves and your families from a fire*” [66:6]. Preserve the courteous acts of companionship when consorting with them and tolerate suffering from them, but do not place on them the burden of your service, making them suffer for you.

Although outwardly and specifically He is talking about women, by way of allusion He is talking generally about all Muslims. He is saying, “Watch out so that you never see yourself as having a mandatory rightful due from, or an excellence over, any other Muslim. Do not ask those above you to serve you, and do not push yourself on those beneath you. Do not use force against the folk of weakness, but rather strive to show consideration and give comfort to them and seek proximity to them.”

Revelation came to David: “O David, if you see someone broken in My road, or someone whose heart has been lost in My work, take care to serve him. With a bit of bread, or a drink of water, seek proximity to him and sit next to the sun of his heart's light. O David, the heart of that pain-stricken poor man is the rising place of My light's sun. The sun of My majesty's light is always shining in the chamber of his heart.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O miserable man! If you cannot seek proximity to Him, at least seek proximity to the hearts of His friends, for He gazes down on their hearts. Whomsoever He sees in their hearts, He takes as His friend.”

Do you not see how Muṣṭafā used to sit with the weak among the Emigrants, considering himself one of them? He used to say, “Praise belongs to God who placed in my community those with whom He commanded me to make myself patient.” That is in the hadith of Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudarī, who said, “I was with a group among whom were the weak among the Emigrants, and some were curtaining the nakedness of others. A reciter was reciting the Qur’an for us and we were listening to his recitation. The Prophet came and stood over us, and when the reciter saw him, he became silent. He greeted us and said, ‘What are you doing?’

“We said, ‘O Messenger of God, a reciter was reciting for us and we were listening to his recitation.’

“God's Messenger said, ‘Praise belongs to God who placed in my community those with whom He commanded me to make myself patient.’ Then he sat in our midst so as to be level with us. Then he indicated with his hand that we should form a circle, and their faces were illumined, but God's Messenger did not recognize any of them, for they were the weak among the Emigrants. Then he said, ‘To the destitute among the Emigrants give the good news of complete light on the Day of Resurrection. You will enter the Garden a half-day before the rich among the faithful, a

3 This sentence is from LI 2:17.

half-day whose measure is five hundred years.”

*If you are averse to them, it may be that you are averse to something within which God has placed much good.* Whatever is harder for your soul today will be sweeter for your heart tomorrow. Whatever has the form of suffering today in the house of the decree will be the basis of the treasure tomorrow in the house of union. Today, unreached desires and missed pleasures are mounted on the soul, but what desires and pleasures are contained in this work tomorrow!

And if today in this domicile you have a state of loss,  
what fine capital and fervor you'll see tomorrow! [DS 706]

**4:20** *If you desire to exchange a wife in place of another...*

This is the realization of generosity in the religion of friendship and the smoothing of the foundation of chivalry. He is saying, “Do not join the cruelty of separation with taking back livelihood, for this is not the work of the generous and it is unworthy of the chevaliers! You have put the scar of separation in the poor woman’s heart, so do not cut off the hand of her expenditures! If you take back what you gave, you will place a scar on her scar.”

Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī had a wife whom he divorced, and then he sent her plentiful wealth. He said about her, “The tribulation of our separation is enough. I must not put upon her the suffering of neediness as well.” They say the wealth was 40,000 dirhams. The woman dumped that wealth on the ground and said, “Paltry goods from a departed lover!”

**4:23** *Forbidden to you are your mothers and daughters, your sisters....*

The allusion in this verse is that the Shariah is built on making oneself a servant, not on self-exertion; the canon of the religion is transmitted, not rationally derived; and the basis of the Sunnah is surrender, not looking for reasons.

Surrender is an easy road, its domicile flourishing, its goal the approval of the All-Merciful. Self-exertion and self-determination are a difficult road, their domicile in ruins, their goal unwholesome. Watch out! Jump away from the road of self-exertion and cling to surrender. Avoid self-determination and looking for reasons. Whatever the Shariah has declared forbidden, consider it forbidden—a consignment by the Desire, built upon the Will. If it had been permitted in place of forbidden, the same would be the case, for it would have been current in the holy Shariah and would have no cause or ambiguity. For He is the Real—majestic is His majesty! *He does whatsoever He wills* [3:40] and *decrees whatsoever He desires* [5:1]. He forbids what He wills to those whom He wills and He allows what He wills to those whom He wills. His artisanry has no cause and His decree no protester.

**4:28** *And man was created weak.*

Wherever the name “man” comes in the Qur’an, a displeasing attribute is linked to it. Thus He said, “*Surely man is a great wrongdoer, ungrateful*” [14:34]. “*Surely man was created anxious*” [70:19]. “*Surely man is rebellious*” [96:6]. “*Surely man is ungrateful to his Lord*” [100:6]. “*Surely man is in loss*” [103:2]. This is because man comes from dust, and dust is the basis of density and the root of opacity. The servant’s hope is that on the day He created, He saw the faults, and then He bought along with the faults.

You bought me with my faults on the first day!

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O Lord, you called me ignorant. What comes from the ignorant other than disloyalty? You called me weak. What comes from the weak other than error? O Lord, take our inability to overcome ourselves as stemming from that weakness. Take our boldness and insolence as stemming from that ignorance. O Lord, You lifted us up and no one said, ‘Lift up!’ Now that You have lifted up, don’t put down! Keep us in the shadow of Your bounty!”

If You water, You Yourself planted.  
If you flatten the foundation, You Yourself raised it.

I the servant am just what You fancied.  
Don't throw me down—You lifted me up.

**4:31** *If you avoid the great sins prohibited to you, We will acquit you of your ugly deeds and admit you to a generous admitting place.*

The great sins of the folk of service in the path of the Shariah are what you have heard about. The great sins of the folk of companionship in the street of the Tariqah and in the tongue of allusion are another sort and have another tasting, for the folk of service are one thing, and the folk of companionship something else. Those who serve are the wage-earners, and the companions are the proximate. In the traditions has come the saying, "The beautiful deeds of the pious are the ugly deeds of the proximate." Of the same sort is the saying of the Pir of the Tariqah, "The hypocrisy of the recognizers is better than the self-purification of the desirers."

The basis of this rule is the subtle point Muṣṭafā reported about cloudiness and his asking forgiveness for it. He said, "My heart becomes clouded, so I ask forgiveness from God seventy times a day." Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq said, "Would that I could witness that for which God's Messenger asked forgiveness."

The mark of the recognizers' great sins is that lassitude sometimes comes over them in the world of their own traveling, and thereby their innate disposition is overpowered by human attributes. Their life becomes susceptible to customs and habits, and the realities of their faith come to be mixed with the contaminants of personal motives and marks giving witness to their own shares. In this state of theirs, if a messenger of sound discipline, truthful poverty, and the joy of ecstasy does not come out to welcome them and take their hands, they will not emerge from the pit of their own selfhood.

If you want to come out of the pit of status like a man,  
grab hold of the pearl-encrusted, musk-wafting chain. [DS 719]

The great ones of the religion have said that as long as a man does not reach this place of danger and leave behind the station of lassitude, he will not become a pir of the Tariqah and will not be suited to take disciples. A man must have lost the road a thousand times and then returned to it if he is to bring someone who has lost the road back to the road. What is needed first is the road to the road, then the road is needed. Someone who has always been on the road knows the road, but he does not know the road to the road. The secret of the slips of the prophets and their falling into lassitude is this. And God knows best. This is knocking at a magnificent gate. Happy is he for whom it is opened and who is guided to it!

**4:32** *Do not wish for that whereby God has preferred some of you over others. Men shall have a portion of what they have earned, and women shall have a portion of what they have earned. But ask God of His bounty.*

Abū Bakr Kattānī said, "When someone has the opinion that he will arrive without expending effort, he is a wisher, and when someone has the opinion that he will arrive by expending effort, he is a drudge."

Whoever fancies that he will reach the goal without toiling is a wisher, and "The incapable are those who follow their own caprice and wish for God." Whoever fancies that he will reach the Sought by toil and by seeking the Sought is a drudge.

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, "He is not found by seeking, but the seeker finds. Until he finds Him, he will not seek. Whatever can be found by seeking is of little worth. The servant finds the Real before the seeking, but for him seeking is the earliest step. The recognizer finds seeking from finding, not finding from seeking. In the same way, the obedient person finds obedience from self-purification, not self-purification from obedience; he finds the cause from the meaning, not the meaning from the cause. O God, since finding You is before the seeking and the seeker, I am seeking because unsettledness has overpowered me. The seeker is seeking and the Sought is obtained before the seeking. This is a most marvelous business! What is even more marvelous is

that finding has become hard cash when seeking has not yet arisen. The Real is seen but the curtain of exaltedness is in place.”

You are a sea of loveliness, a wave of beauty,  
the law of generous acts, the essence of life.  
The lovers seeking You are full of longing  
like Alexander seeking the water of life.

It has also been said that the meaning of the verse is this: “You wish for the station of the masters without traveling in their path, clinging to their conduct, and practicing their practices.”<sup>4</sup> You want the state of the great ones, but you have not gone on the great ones’ road. You search for the Kaabah of union with eyes that have not undertaken struggle. You see the great good fortune of the friends, but you have not seen their tribulation. “Your trouble is wishing that you could be like those who have taken trouble.” You fancy that the pen of the covenant was written easily for the passionate, that it wrote the inscription of friendship on their hearts gratis. But they have been wounded in spirit and heart at every moment, and they have tasted a draft laced with poison.

How many nights for the sake of seeing You  
have I been slapped in the head by the dogs of Your street!

But not just anyone is suited for His wounds, and not just anyone is worthy of suffering His pain. May God’s mercy be upon those chevaliers who have made their spirits the target of His trial’s arrow and recognized their hearts as the litter for His pain’s burden! Then, in that trial and sorrow, they hum this tune:

If my spirit is worthy of suffering your pain,  
this share of passion’s good fortune is enough for me.

Yes, everyone’s wound is in the measure of his faith, and everyone’s burden is in the measure of his strength. Whenever someone’s strength is greater, his burden is heavier. This is the secret of the verse in which He says,

**4:34 *The men stand over the women through that with which God has preferred some of them over others and that which they expend of their wealth.***

He gave the men more than the women because the burden is all on them, for theirs is the perfection of strength and the eminence of aspiration. They carry burdens in the measure of strength or in the measure of aspiration. “Resolutions are made in the measure of the folk of resoluteness.”

**4:36 *Worship God, and associate nothing with Him, and act beautifully toward parents, and toward kinsfolk, orphans, the indigent, and the neighbor who is of kin, and the neighbor who is a stranger, and the companion at your side, and the son of the road, and what your right hands own.***

This verse begins by mentioning *tawhīd*, which is the root of the sciences, the secret of the recognitions, the basis of the religion, the foundation of being a Muslim, and the partition between enemy and friend. Any act of obedience without *tawhīd* has no value or weight, and its outcome will be nothing but darkness and captivity. Any act of disobedience along with *tawhīd* will yield nothing other than familiarity and brightness.

*Tawhīd* is that you say that God is one and that you be one for Him. Saying one is the submitter’s *tawhīd*, and being one is the basis of the recognizer’s *tawhīd*. The submitter’s *tawhīd* drives away the devil, washes away sin, and opens up the heart. The recognizer’s *tawhīd* cuts away attachments, washes away the creatures, and brings forth the realities.

The submitter’s *tawhīd* takes advice, opens the door, and gives fruit. The recognizer’s *tawhīd* effaces the customs of human nature and burns away the veil of mortal nature so that the breeze

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4 LI 2:23.

of familiarity may blow, the beginningless reminder may arrive, and the friend may gaze upon the Friend.

The submitter's *tawhīd* is that you bear witness to God's one Essence, pure attributes, and beginningless names and marks. He is the God other than whom there is no god, the Creator of heaven and earth other than whom there is no enactor. No one has loyalty like Him in the whole cosmos. He is a Lord who is above all in measure, beyond all in Essence and attributes. From the Beginningless to the Endless He is the greatest Lord. When intellect holds that something is impossible, God has perfect power over it. His power makes no use of contrivance, and His self-standing has no change of state. In the kingdom He is safe from disappearance, and in Essence and attributes He is transcendent.

You will never see any created thing without marks of deficiency and fault, but the Eternal Enactor is pure of deficiency, incomparable with fault, free of blights. He does not eat or sleep, nor is He the locus for newly arrived things or changing states. He is not new in attribute, nor does He accept alteration. He stands before "when," acts before activity, creates before creation, and is powerful before the artisanries.

In His Essence, attributes, and perfection  
He has always been just as He is now.

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, "The *tawhīd* of the Muslims amounts to three words: affirmation of attributes without excess, negation of similarity without declaring ineffectuality, and going forward according to the outwardness without mixing."

The reality of affirmation is that you acknowledge and surrender to whatever God said in explanation and whatever Muṣṭafā said plainly about Him. You stand firm in the outwardness, you offer no likenesses for it, you do not turn it away from its formulation, and you do not wander around it with imagination, for God comes into knowledge but not imagination. You avoid reflective thinking about how it can be so and you do not seek any self-exertion or interpretation. You do not turn away from saying it or listening to it. You know that in reality whatever creatures know about God's attributes is only the name. To perceive it is to accept it. The stipulation is surrender, and the commentary is to remember.

Know God's Essence in God's measure, not as rationally understood by creatures. Know His attributes as is worthy of Him, not as reflected upon by creatures. Know His ability in His measure, not with the artifice of creatures. He is a Being that is one, outside of imaginations and apart from qualification. Whatever He wants, He does, not because of need, for He needs nothing. Rather, He puts things straight by want, pure knowledge, precedent wisdom, and penetrating power. His speech is true, His promise correct, and His Messenger trustworthy. His speech exists in the earth in reality, always joined with Him. His argument stands through it, His decree is irrevocable, His commands and prohibitions firm. *Surely His are the creation and the command. Blessed is God, the Lord of the Worlds* [7:54].

This is *tawhīd* as transmitted and recognition as reported. Through this *tawhīd* people reach paradise, escape from hell, and stay free from the Real's anger. The opposite of this *tawhīd* is the great associationism. Whoever is held back from this transmitted *tawhīd* remains in the great associationism, far from God's forgiveness.

The other *tawhīd* is the *tawhīd* of the recognizers and the adornment of the sincerely truthful. Speaking of this *tawhīd* is not the work of water and clay, nor is it the place of tongue and heart. What will the *tawhīd*-voicer say here with the tongue? His state is itself tongue. How can he express this *tawhīd*? Putting it into expression is calumny itself. This *tawhīd* is not from creation, for it is a mark from the Real. It is the resurrection of the heart and the plundering of the spirit.

No one has voiced the unity of the One,  
for everyone who voices it denies it.  
The *tawhīd* of those who talk of its description  
is a loan voided by the One.

His *tawhīd* is His voicing unity—  
its describer's description deviates.<sup>5</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, the recognizer knows You through Your light and cannot express the radiance of finding. The *tawhīd*-voicer recognizes You through the light of proximity and burns in the fire of love without turning away from joy. O Lord, in his finding he seeks to find You because he is drowned in bewilderment. He does not know seeking from finding.”

The poor wretch who recognizes Him through the artisanry! The poor man who seeks Him through the evidence! From the artisanry you must seek whatever finds room, and from the evidence you must ask for what is fitting.

How can the reality of *tawhīd* cling to the tongue of reports? This is not the *tawhīd* reached by inference and striving, nor that proven by evidence and artisanry, nor that realized by any means whatsoever. It is found in the midst of heedlessness, it comes without asking, and it busies the servant with itself. Lit up by the contemplation of the Near and the observation of togetherness, the servant reaps the benefit of beginningless love and loses the two worlds.

If seeing You brings loss to the spirit,  
then I'll buy the spirit's loss with the spirit.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, the mark of this work has taken the world away from me and concealed me even from the mark. Seeing You has left me without spirit. Love for You took away benefit, and I lost the two worlds.

“O God, do You know what has made me happy? I did not fall to You by myself. You wanted—it was not I who wanted. I saw the Friend at my pillow when I woke up from sleep.”

Her love came to me before I knew love—  
it came across a carefree heart and took possession.

Moses had gone in search of fire when he found *I chose thee for Myself* [20:41]. He was unaware when the sun of good fortune rose over him.

Muḥammad was asleep when the good news came: “Come and see Me, for I am buying you. How long will you sit without Me?”

Moses was not wanting conversation, nor was Muḥammad wanting vision. Finding comes in heedlessness. Do not fancy anything but this.

O God, the splendor of Your exaltedness left no room for allusions, the majesty of Your unity took away the road of ascription—I lost all that I had in hand, and all my fancies turned to nothing. O God, Yours kept on increasing and mine decreasing until at last there remained only what there was at first.<sup>6</sup>

Tribulation lies only in the makeup of my water and clay.  
What was before clay and heart? That is what I will be.

With the first *tawhīd* the servant escapes from hell and reaches paradise. With the second *tawhīd* he escapes from self and reaches the Friend.

*And associate nothing with Him.* In the tongue of the Shariah associationism is that you believe in another object of worship and not attest to God's unity. In the tongue of the Tariqah associationism is that you see among the engendered beings an existent thing other than God and you remain with the secondary causes.

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, “Not seeing the secondary cause is ignorance, but remaining with the secondary cause is associationism.”<sup>7</sup>

Then, in the course of the verse, He mentioned the neighbors and commanded taking what is rightfully due to them into consideration. He said, “*and the neighbor who is of kin, and the*

5 Anṣārī, *Manāzil al-sā'irīn* 113.

6 This paragraph is attributed to the Pir of the Tariqah under 7:143 and 13:39.

7 He says this in *Chihil u daw*, Chapter 23 (*Rasā'il* 138), and, judging from other passages in Maybudī, it was a favorite saying of his.

*neighbor who is a stranger, and the companion at your side.*” The neighbors are many, and what is rightfully due to them is in the measure of their proximity. There is the neighbor of the house, the neighbor of the soul, the neighbor of the heart, and the neighbor of the spirit. The neighbor of the house is the Adamite; the neighbor of the soul is the angel; the neighbor of the heart is the tranquility of recognition; and the neighbor of the spirit is the Real—majestic is His majesty!

He called the neighbor of the house “*the neighbor who is of kin.*” About the neighbor of the soul He said, “*Surely there are over you guardians*” [82:10]. Concerning the neighbor of the heart He said, “*He it is who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the faithful*” [48:4]. About the neighbor of the spirit He said, “*He is with you wherever you are*” [57:4].

The rightful due of the neighbors of the house is that you never leave aside taking them into consideration. By caring for them you should always keep them thankful to you and at ease with you.

The rightful due of the neighbors of the soul is that you keep them happy with your obedience and do not make them suffer by disobedient acts. Then, when they turn away from you, they will turn away satisfied and grateful.

The rightful due of the neighbor of the heart is that you keep your own recognition pure of the stains of innovation and the defilement of bewilderment and you adorn it with the garment of the Sunnah and the ornament of wisdom.

The rightful due of the neighbor of the spirit is that you rectify your character traits, you observe courtesy to all sides, you fill your mind with reverence, you step beyond the two worlds, you escape from yourself, and you become one for the Real.

It has been reported that God said, “O Muḥammad! Belong to Me as you always were, and I will belong to you as I have always been.”

If you are with yourself, how can you sit with Me?

How far it is from you to Me!

You will not reach Me until you become one:

either you’ll find room in passion’s road, or I.

**4:43** *O you who have faith! Do not approach the prayer when you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying, or defiled—except for travelers on the road—until you have made the full ablution.... Surely God is pardoning, forgiving.*

Intoxication is drunkenness. Drunkenness is disparate, and the drunkards diverse. One is drunk with the wine of the grape, another with the wine of heedlessness, another with love for this world, another with the frivolity of the soul and self-love. This last is the most difficult, for self-love is the basis of idol-worship, the seed of estrangement, the curtain of ill fortune, and the root of every darkness.

If you are martyred a hundred times a day in the path of God

you will still be an idol-worshiper if you see yourself in the midst.

When will you be the man to want the heart without caprice?

When you will have the pain to see the body with contempt? [DS 708]

When someone is drunk with wine and is fearful and shaking in dread of punishment, the end of his work will be burning in the fire of punishment—if He does not forgive him. But He may indeed forgive him, for He says, “*Surely God forgives the sins altogether*” [39:53].

When someone is drunk with the soul’s arrogance and with pride and self-worship, his work is in peril. His basis is loss, his deeds damage him, and he dwells in the peril of being led on and deceived and the danger of everlasting separation.

*Or defiled—except for travelers on the road—until you have made the full ablution.* If the religion were based on reasoning, then the greater ablution would be incumbent after urination, and the minor ablution after ejaculation. Urine is impure and semen is pure. With impure urine, the lesser purity is mandatory, but with pure semen the greater purity. This is so that you will know that the religion is founded on the transmitted, not on the rationally derived; on the Book, not on

reasoning; on making oneself a servant, not on self-exertion.

The origin of the major ablution is from the era of Adam. When Adam came from paradise to this world, he fell into companionship with Eve. Gabriel came and said, “O Adam, make a full ablution, for God commands you to do so.”

Adam obeyed the command and then said, “O Gabriel, what is the reward for this ablution?”

Gabriel said, “For every hair on your body, a one-year’s reward will be written for you in the ledger. For every drop of water that passes over your body, God will create an angel that will obey and worship until the Day of Resurrection, and He will give its reward to you.”

He said, “O Gabriel, is this for me specifically? Or is it for me and my children generally?”

Gabriel said, “It is for you, the faithful, and your children until the resurrection.”

Thus the ablution for defilement was made mandatory in all the shariahs of the prophets from the era of Adam until the time of the Master of the World—upon all of them be God’s blessings and peace! One of the imams even said, “The Trust that Adam lifted up, concerning which God said, ‘*And man carried it*’ [33:72], was the trust of the ablution for defilement.”

Then at the end of the verse He says, “*Surely God is pardoning, forgiving.*” God passes over sins, curtains the defects of those who apologize, and conceals the offenses of the sighers. The meaning of bringing these two names of pardon and forgiveness in this place is this: “Before I sent the commands and prohibitions I took away whatever you have done up until today, and I have passed over you. My servant, no one’s sin can overcome My solicitude. And who finds My bounty other than the one on whom the sun of solicitude shines? My servant, if you straighten your aim, I am there for you in the road. If you ask forgiveness from Me, I am aware of your heart’s thoughts. I am the forgiver of your offenses and I want good for you. Wherever there is someone with ruined life and destitute days, I buy him. Wherever there is a poor man, wounded by offenses, helpless in the hands of an adversary, I am his Patron! Wherever there is someone weeping in shame, his head bowed because of not having anyone, I am his proof. Wherever there is someone burnt because of having lost his heart, someone in pain from selflessness, I am the happiness of his spirit.”

Be wherever you will in the land  
and you will be near My remembrance.

**4:48 *Surely God does not forgive that anything be associated with Him, but less than that He forgives for whomsoever He wills.***

The associationism of the common people is one thing, and the associationism of the elect something else. The associationism of the common people is the greater associationism, and the associationism of the elect the lesser associationism.

The greater associationism is that they should say that the tremendous Enactor, the eternal Artisan, has an associate and partner, or they should consider Him to have an equal and peer, or they should make Him similar to something of creation. Whenever someone says this, he is not a worshiper of God, for he has called upon an idol. In reality, he has been held back from the religion of guidance. The right belief and pure religion is that you consider the God of the world’s folk and Creator of all to be pure of and incomparable with spouse, child, and partner. He did not give birth, nor did anyone give birth to Him. He is free of new arrival, change, and birth, hallowed beyond defect, incapacity, and need, pure in attribute, fitting in artisanry, sweet in speech, and complete in love. He is pure of fault in attributes, pure of blunder in deeds, pure of negligence in speech, and pure of doubt in love. He is a God who is outside of imaginations, and no one knows how He is. He is worthy of Godhood, knower of God-work, separate from faults, without peer in Essence and attributes. Whoever believes this has been released from the greater associationism and has joined with the root of faith.

As for the lesser associationism, it is of two sorts and belongs to two groups. For the faithful it is eye-service and letting go of self-purification in deeds. For the recognizers, it is paying regard to deeds and seeking deliverance thereby. Its trace in the faithful is to decrease their faith, to bring fissures into their certainty, and to close down the door of clarity. Muṣṭafā said, “I am very fright-

ened of the ancient associationism for my community.” He was asked what ancient associationism was, and he said, “That someone does good deeds along with eye-service in the deeds.”

Shaddād ibn Aws said, “I saw God’s Messenger weeping. I asked him why he was weeping and he said, ‘I fear that my community will bring forth associationism. Not that they will worship idols, or worship the sun and moon, but that they will worship with eye-service, thus making people God’s partner in their deeds.’”

Also, God says, “Of the associates, I am the least in need of associationism. If someone does a deed in which he associates another with Me, I am quit of it, and it belongs to the one who is associated.” He is saying: “Whenever someone does a deed and takes someone as My partner in that deed, I have less need than all the partners, so I will give the deed to the partner.”

The commander of the Faithful ʿAlī saw a man with his head turned down, meaning “I am pious.” He said, “O chevalier! Bring this crick in your neck into your heart, for God looks at the heart.”

He also said, “On the Day of Resurrection, it will be said to hypocritical Qur’an-reciters, ‘Are you not the ones to whom the goods of the world were sold more cheaply? Are you not the ones at the doors of whose houses people stood? Are you not the ones whom they greeted first? This belongs to the recompense of your deeds that We have conveyed to you. Today nothing rightfully due remains for you.’”

This is why some of the great ones of the religion did not accept the benevolence of friends during distress and poverty. Thus several days passed during which Sufyān Thawrī had no food in his house. On the last day a man brought him two money-bags and said, “You know that my father was your friend and was scrupulous in livelihood. This is the inheritance that he left, and I know that it is lawful and has no place for suspicion. Why do you not accept this and make me happy?”

Sufyān said, “May God reward you for your beautiful aspiration, but I will not accept it, for my friendship with your father was for the sake of God. I do not consider it permissible to receive compensation for it.”

This indeed is the degree of the scrupulous and the path of the pious. Higher than this is the degree of the recognizers. In their case the smaller associationism is that, after self-purification in obedience and truthfulness in deeds, if their eyes fall on their pure deeds, or if seeking a reward for them occurs to their minds, or if they see their own salvation in those deeds, they count this as associationism in the road of the religion and they repent of it.

**4:49 *Hast thou not seen those who deem themselves pure? No, God alone deems pure whomsoever He will.***

Do not praise yourselves, do not approve of others deeming you pure, do not look at your own good deeds, give no weight to your own traveling, and consider yourselves lower than everyone low.

A friend asked, “Which group is it  
 who have stolen reality’s ball from the world’s creatures?”  
 I said, “Why do you ask for the marks of that group, for they  
 have not shown themselves to themselves for the sake of showing.  
 They never walk on the edge of making claims,  
 nor do they ever sleep in the circle of meaning.  
 More wondrous is that their worthlessness and abasement  
 makes them like Christians and Jews in people’s eyes.”

Yes, at the threshold of a generous man, the more abased you make yourself, the more exalted you become. Your abasement is not despair of the Friend. Rather, it testifies to your truthfulness and straightness.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, I lament at my abasement, for I have seen no one with misery like mine. I lament at the burning because You are lost to my spirit. There is no one in the world to have pity on my days and time. O God, I wept so many tears in longing that I sowed the seeds of pain with my eyes’ water. If I find endless felicity, I will approve of all this pain. If my

eyes fall upon You once, I will not have seen myself with those eyes.”

*No, God alone deems pure whomsoever He will.* When God’s deeming pure reaches someone, its mark is that he is released from companionship with the scatter-hearted ones who have stooped to the path of *demons and idols* [4:51] and he does not again open himself up to them. But you should not fancy that the worshipers of *demons and idols* are simply those idol-worshipers. Anyone who is at ease with the caprice of his own soul and remains bound to what his soul desires is a man of idols and a servant of demons.

The creatures are at ease in the ruins of their own makeup—  
wink once and throw the creatures into turmoil! [DS 696]

In the tongue of the folk of allusion, placing your foot on your own soul and bringing your caprice under your own severity is the *tremendous kingdom* concerning which God says,

**4:54 *And We gave them a tremendous kingdom.***

It has been said, “The tremendous kingdom is having an overview of the secrets of the creatures,” or it is “gazing upon the secrets of the empire such that nothing is hidden.”<sup>8</sup>

This is why Abū °Uthmān Maghribī said, “When someone responds to the Real, the empire responds to him.” In other words, when something appears to him in the empire, he is given news of it. Ibn al-Barqī was one of the great shaykhs of Egypt and possessed perspicacity. Once he became ill and was given medicine. He said, “I will not drink it, for some disaster has happened in the empire. Until I find out what happened, I will not drink it.” Thirteen days passed before news arrived that the Qarmatians had fallen on the Sanctuary, killed many people, and worked great destruction.

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, “Servanthood cannot bear more than knowing some and not knowing some, for God says, ‘*He does not show His unseen to anyone except someone He approves as a messenger*’ [72:26-27]. ‘*And God will not inform you of the unseen*’ [3:179]. God knows all—no one else.”

It has also been said that the tremendous kingdom is recognition of the tremendous King. When someone recognizes Him, he has found the kingdom of both worlds.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, who is like me in becoming worthy for this work? Enough for me is that I have the worth of Your companionship.”

Tell them to call me nothing but lord—  
that’s a name suited for Your serving boy.

**4:58 *Surely God commands you to deliver trusts back to their owners.***

In this verse the lovingly kind Lord, the generous and right-knowing, the care-taker of the servants, commands His servants to give back trusts. He is saying, “Return the trusts at your own liability to their folk.” In other words, do not intervene in them, and avoid betrayal, for after the faith and recognition of the servant, there is no attribute greater than holding in trust; and after unbelief, there is no attribute uglier than betrayal. The servant’s obedience comes forth from holding in trust, and disobedience comes from betrayal. Betrayal is the basis of corruption, the beginning of every misfortune, and the foundation of disobedience. Holding in trust is the pillar of the religion, the perfection of *tawḥīd*, and the attribute of the prophets and the angels. In the firm text of the revealed book, the Lord of the Worlds describes Gabriel by saying, “*brought down by the trustworthy spirit*” [26:193]. In another place He says, “*obeyed, and also trustworthy*” [81:21]. He reported from the daughter of Shu°ayb that she said to her father about Moses, God’s speaking companion, “*O my father, hire him! Surely the best you can hire is the strong, the trustworthy*” [28:26]. And in describing Joseph the sincerely truthful He says, quoting the king of Egypt, “*Surely today with us thou art emplaced, trustworthy*” [12:54].

The trusts about which the Book and the Sunnah talk are three things: One is obedience and the religion, for the Lord of the Worlds calls them a trust. He says, “*Surely We offered the Trust*”

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8 LI 2:35.

[33:72]. Next are women, who are held as a trust by men. Muṣṭafā said, “You have taken them as a trust from God, and you have made their private parts lawful to you by God’s word.” Third is the property you leave with someone, or the secret you tell to him, for that is a trust. The Lord of the Worlds says, “*Let him who has been entrusted deliver back his trust*” [2:283]. Muṣṭafā said, “Deliver the trust back to the one who entrusted you.” He also said, “If a man relates some words, pay regard, for it is his trust.”

Mustāfā also said, “Sitting together is a trust.” In other words, when you sit with people, it must be on condition of holding in trust. Keep whatever you hear in your heart, and do not repeat what should not be said. The Lord of the Worlds created the Adamite’s ears open, without bonds. Whether he wants it or not, his ears hear and his heart knows. Hence he will not be called to account for hearing or knowing in the heart, for the servant has no choice in that. As for eyes and tongue, He created both with bonds. The Adamite is able not to look at what should not be looked at and not to say what should not be said. He can bring into place the condition of holding what is seen and said in trust, thereby taking care of God’s trust in these two. This is why Muṣṭafā said, “Sitting together is a trust.”

Moreover, at the end of the era of the submission, the first thing that will be decreased from the unswerving religion and turn its face back to the veil of unneediness will be trust. God’s Messenger said, “The first thing you will lose of your religion is trust, and the last thing you will lose is the ritual prayer.”

The explanation I just gave was in terms of the outward Shariah. In terms of allusion and according to the tasting of the chevaliers of the Tariqah, the trusts are first submission, placed in the servant’s breast; second faith, placed in the servant’s mindful heart; third recognition, put in the servant’s heart; and fourth love, concealed in the secret core. Each of these trusts has room for betrayal. Disquieting thoughts find room in the breast from the direction of the devil. Uncertainty finds room in the mindful heart from the direction of the soul. Swerving finds room in the heart from the direction of caprice. Angels go into the secret core, and seeing angels when making the secret core ready is a betrayal of the trust of love. This is why Junayd, when asked about making the secret core ready, said, “It is a secret between God and the servant, not known by the angel that he should write it down, nor by Satan that he should corrupt it, nor by caprice that it should make it deviate.”

Keep the hand of the devil away from the breast by remembering the Real, for He says, “[*Surely the godwary,*] *when a visitation from Satan touches them, remember, and then see clearly*” [7:201]. Keep the hand of the soul away from the mindful heart with the weapon of struggle, for He says, “*Those who struggle in Us, We will guide them on Our paths*” [29:69]. Keep the hand of caprice away from the heart by surrender, for He says, “*We have faith in it; all is from our Lord*” [3:7]. Keep the angel away from the secret core by jealousy, for jealousy is the precondition of friendship, just as love is the pillar of friendship. Sometimes loving kindness lifts the curtain so that the traveler comes to happiness and rest, and sometimes jealousy lets down the curtain so that the traveler comes to pleading. Sometimes love opens the door so as to caress the traveler with face-to-face vision, sometimes jealousy closes the door so the servant weeps in hope of face-to-face vision.

When someone must have face-to-face vision, reports are absurd for him.

When a heart is secluded with vision, how can it look at reports?

#### **4:64** *We sent not any messenger but that he should be obeyed by God’s leave.*

From the first to the last of this section is an allusion to the greatness of Muṣṭafā’s rank in God’s sight. It is one of the robes of honor given to him by God, for He has lifted up the intermediary and made his decree equal to His own decree. Just as approving of the Real’s decision brings about the certainty of the *tawhīd*-voicers, so also approving of the Messenger’s decree brings about the faith of the faithful. Thus the world’s folk will know that obeying the Messenger is to obey the Real, disobeying the Messenger is to disobey the Real, the words of the Messenger are the revelation

of the Real, the explanations of the Messenger are the road of the Real, the acts of the Messenger are the argument of the Real, the Shariah of the Messenger is the creed of the Real, the decree of the Messenger is the religion of the Real, and following the Messenger is friendship with the Real. Thus He says, *“Follow me; God will love you”* [3:31]. He is saying, “O master of masters! O paragon of engendered beings! O center point of the circle of newly arrived things! Say to My servants, ‘If you want God to give you access to His friendship and approve of your servanthood, travel in my tracks, for I am His Messenger. Bind the belt of following me, receive my decrees in spirit and heart without resistance. Put forth your body, put down your neck, throw yourself into the decree, and do not give narrowness and tightness any access to yourself.’” This is why He says,

**4:65** *Then they will not find in themselves any tightness from what thou decreest and will surrender with full submission.*

“Do you not know that all the work has been bound to my tracks, and both houses have been attached to my street?” What rank and good fortune! What nobility and excellence! From the era of Adam until today, who has had such complete bounty and such well-arranged work, such celestial exaltedness and such god-like luster?

After 500 and some years, the pillar of his Shariah’s good fortune is flourishing, his branches blooming, his wood yielding fruit, his eminence elevated, his decree predominant. His splendor is in this world, his fame in the next. Each heart has a lamp from him, each tongue a burning brand from him, each heart a splendor from him, each head a call from him, each spirit a place for him.

If you fancy that there is none of God’s gentleness—there is.

That above the world’s beauties there is no king—there is.

If you suppose that the spirits of good men in their passion

have no familiarity with the beauty of the dust of your feet—they do.

And if you think that when you lift up your tresses from your cheek

the lamp of the spheres has no brightness from you—it does. [DS 821-22]

**4:69** *Whosoever obeys God and the Messenger—they will be with those whom God has blessed: the prophets, the sincerely truthful, the witnesses, and the wholesome. What beautiful companions they!*

Ibn ʿAbbās says that this verse came down concerning Thawbān, who had become wasted and weak in love for God’s Messenger, his back bent and his face yellow. One day the Messenger said to him, “O Thawbān, what is it with you? Has your face turned yellow because you stay awake at night?”

He said, “O Messenger of God, this and that, as you know.”

He said, “O Thawbān, are you placing a great deal of suffering on yourself through various sorts of discipline? You have become so weak and your back is bent over!”

Thawbān said, “Yes, O Messenger of God, it has been something of all that.”

The Messenger said, “O Thawbān, is it that you are desiring?” Thawbān’s eyes filled with tears when he heard talk of desire.

How long will you ask me, “Why are you suffering?”

In truth, you know my state better than I.

“O Messenger of God, I do not know how the nights pass until day comes and I see you again.”

Wishing for you by day is the veil of my idleness,

aching for you by night is the chamber of my wakefulness.

Separation from you is the adornment of my sorrow,

fervor for you is the capital of my awareness.

“O Messenger of God! The hardest sorrow is that in the next world you will be in the highest of the High Chambers, and I will be held back from seeing you.”

While they were in the midst of this came Gabriel, the messenger of the Presence, the courier of mercy, bringing a verse: “*Whosoever obeys God and the Messenger—they will be with those whom God has blessed,*” and so on to the end. God’s Messenger recited it to him and made his heart happy, placing a balm on his woundedness. Yes, it wants a pain like this for there to appear a balm like that! Until you burn, you will not find a way out. Until you drown in *Remember Me!* in the ocean of remembrance, you will not reach the shore of security by the hand of *I will remember you* [2:152].

A man with nothing will never find an accomplished friend—  
pain for Ishmael calls for the burn of Abraham.

**4:86** *When you are greeted with a greeting, greet with one more beautiful than it, or return it.*

In this verse, the majestic compeller, the magnificent God, the lovingly kind beautiful-doer, teaches His servants the courteous acts of social intercourse and companionship, for anyone not adorned with courtesy is not worthy of companionship.

Companionship is of three sorts: the courtesy of conformity with the Real, the courtesy of sincerity with people, and the courtesy of opposition to the soul. Anyone not nurtured by these sorts of courtesy has nothing to do with the path of Muṣṭafā and has no worth in the world of *No god but God*. The exalted Lord first adorned Muṣṭafā with courtesy, as his come in the report: “My Lord taught me courtesy, so how beautifully I have been made courteous!” Thus on the night of the *miʿrāj* in that most tremendous station, he acted courteously toward the Presence, such that the exalted Lord says about him, “*The eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass*” [53:17]. He observed the courtesy of companionship with people, such that He says about him, “*Surely thou hast a tremendous character*” [68:4].

The principles of the courteous acts of companionship in interacting with the Real are that you put knowledge to work in every interaction, you revere the Shariah, you avoid putting into practice what your wishes command, you honor the Sunnah and its folk, you avoid innovation and its folk, you leave aside suspicion and supposition, you stay far from disquieting thoughts and the habits of eye-service, ignorance, and laziness in worshiping God, you avoid adorning yourself as a worshipful servant in other than the Sunnah, you keep supererogatory acts hidden, you not mention the name God in heedlessness, you not mix levity with seriousness, you not play with the Shariah and the religion, and you put scrupulosity to work in speaking, acting, seeing, eating, sleeping, moving, and resting. Even if you pass your days with truthfulness and limpidness, you never approve of yourself. Rather, you must always be displeased with yourself, and you must make it incumbent upon yourself to repent in every state. The Messenger said, “My heart becomes clouded, so I ask forgiveness from God one hundred times a day.”

Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī was so displeased with his own limpidness and self-purification that his glorification sometimes consisted of pointing at himself with his finger and saying, “You are the miserable man of the time.”

The Companions of Muṣṭafā were so displeased with themselves in the limpidness of their religion that it is narrated from Muʿādh that he used go to the doors of houses and say, “Come, let us have faith for an hour.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said something appropriate for this place: “O Lord, I have a heart full of pain and a spirit full of suffering. Exalted of the two worlds! What can this poor wretch do? O Lord, I am not helpless because of You, but helpless in You. Whenever I am absent, You say, ‘Where are you?’ When I come to the Threshold, You do not open the door!

“O Lord, since despair in the submission’s outwardness is deprivation, and in the Haqiqah itself hope is no doubt a deficiency, between this and that what is my remedy? Since in the Shariah patience is a mark of being pleased, but in the Haqiqah impatience is the very command, between this and that what proof can I offer You?

“O Lord, everyone has fire in the heart, and this poor wretch in the spirit, for everyone has rhyme and reason, but my poor self has nothing at all.”

As for the principles of the courteous acts of companionship in interacting with people, these are that you never hold back good advice and tenderness from any Muslim, you consider yourself less than everyone else, you place everyone's rightful due before yourself, and you are fair to everyone with respect to yourself by way of largesse, giving comfort, and having beauty of character. You avoid opposing and confronting the brothers and lying to them. You do not make requests from them by explicit command or explicit prohibition, you do not speak harsh words to them, and you do not reply to them unpleasantly.

Yūsuf Ḥusayn Rāzī said, "I asked Dhu'l-Nūn Miṣrī with whom I should be a companion. He said, 'He who does not own, does not censure any of your states, and does not change when you change, even if the change be great, for surely the more needy you are, the more severe will be your changing.'"

Dhu'l-Nūn said, "Be a companion of someone who has no property," that is, who does not consider what he has as his own and belonging to himself, for whenever there is antagonism, it occurs because "you and I" are in the midst. When you and I disappear from the midst, no antagonism remains.

He said, "He does not censure any of your states." He knows that you are not without sins such that defects would have no access to you. It is absurd in friendship to censure the state of your friend. Friendship is there when no censure is in the midst. It is recounted that a man had a wife and was far gone on her. One of the woman's eyes was white, but the man was unaware of that defect because of the excess of love. When the love decreased, he said to the woman, "When did this whiteness appear?" She said, "When love for me diminished in your heart."

He said, "Who does not change when you change, even if it is a great change." For the more you are changing, the more you need a friend. And it may be that the meaning of these words is that you should be a companion of the Real, not the creatures who change when you change. The one who does not change when the creatures change is the Real. Hence this is to show the road of cutting off from the creatures and joining with the Real.

**4:94** *O you who have faith! When you strike forth on the path of God, look clearly, and say not to him who offers you peace, "You are not of the faithful," seeking the chance goods of this world's life.*

By way of allusion, He is saying that when you go on a journey, go for the sake of reaching one of the friends of God so that he may be the intimate of your days and the witness of your heart and spirit. No matter how far you go, never be at ease from seeking and do not hold back the foot of effort. The friends are the favorites of the Exalted Threshold and accepted by the Presence of Divinity. Not everyone sees them, not every eyesight perceives them. When you find them, give ear, and when you see them, cling to them, for the brightness of the heart lies in witnessing them and endless felicity in being their companion.

The pir of the Tariqah Junayd was asked, "Which do you prefer? Two cycles of voluntary prayer or an hour of witnessing the poor."

He said, "An hour of witnessing the poor, for witnessing the poor is God's love, for He says, 'It is incumbent on Me to love those who love each other in Me and who visit each other in Me.' Bringing God's love to hand is an obligatory act for everyone. Leaving aside this obligatory act and choosing a supererogatory act is not the work of the clever and the conduct of the chevaliers."

**4:100** *Whosoever emigrates in the path of God will find in the earth many a road and expanse.*

In this verse the Lord of the Worlds, the God of the world's folk, the keeper of all, the knowing and lovingly kind, gives a mark of His mercy and shows His gentleness to the servants. He invites the faithful to emigrate and praises those who do.

The emigrants are of three sorts: One sort emigrates for the sake of this world. They undertake trade or the search for livelihood. Even though this is allowed in the Shariah, it is not clear where it will lay down its head at the end and what its outcome will be. Muṣṭafā said, "Love for this world is the beginning of every offense." He also said, "Do not take a landed estate, lest you

become eager for this world.”

This sort of emigrant is always in suffering and hardship, caught in the hands of thieves and on the verge of destruction. Hoping to gain something that is allowed, he leaves aside something obligatory. Then he burns, and he loses the basis for both. God says, “*You desire the chance goods of this life, and God desires the afterworld*” [8:67].

The second sort are the renunciants. Their emigration is for the sake of the afterworld and their traveling goes by way of meanings. They pass over the way stations of obedient acts and traverse the stages of worship on the feet of aspiration. Sometimes they make the hajj, go off to battle, struggle, make pilgrimages, perform the prayers, remember God’s name, and meditate on God’s blessings. Concerning them God’s Messenger said, “Travel! The solitary will be the preceders.”

They said, “O Messenger of God! Who are the solitary?”

He said, “The engrossed—those who are engrossed by the remembrance of God. Remembrance has lifted away their loads, and they come forth unburdened on the Day of Resurrection.”

The Exalted Lord says about them, “*Whosoever desires the afterworld and strives after it with proper striving while having faith—those, their striving shall be thanked*” [17:19].

The third sort are the recognizers, whose emigration is for the sake of the Patron. They emigrate within their own makeup. They emigrate inside the curtains of the soul until they reach the heart, they emigrate inside the curtains of the heart until they reach the spirit, and they emigrate inside the curtains of the spirit until they reach union with the Beloved.

I said, “Where should I seek You, O heart-stealing moon?”

He said, “My resting place is the spirit of the friends.”

A man came before Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī and said, “Why do you not emigrate and travel to benefit the people?”

He said, “My Friend has settled down and I am busy with Him.”

The man said, “When water stays in one place for a long time, it becomes stagnant.”

Abū Yazīd said, “You should be the ocean, and then you will never become stagnant.” Then he recited the verses,

“I see the hajjis urging on their steeds,  
but here I am, urging on the steed of yearning.  
Their goal in pilgrimage is the Kaabah—  
my kiblah is Your face, my pilgrimage to You.”

#### **4:103** *When you have completed the prayer, remember God, standing and sitting and on your sides.*

Know that the prayer is secret whispering between God and the servant. In this secret whispering, there is both need and joy. Today there is need, tomorrow joy; today suffering, tomorrow the treasure; today a heavy burden, tomorrow *repose and ease* [56:89]; today toil and work, tomorrow pleasure and the bazaar; today bowing and prostrating, tomorrow finding and witnessing.

Part of the eminence of the prayer is that the Exalted Lord has mentioned it 102 times in the Qur’an and given it thirteen names: prayer, devotion, Qur’an, glorification, book, remembrance, bowing, prostration, praise, asking forgiveness, declaring greatness, beautiful deeds, and subsistent things.

Muṣṭafā said, “The prayer is the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj* of the person of faith.”

He said, “The prayer is God’s banquet in the earth.”

The ulama of the past have said, “The prayer is the throne of the desirers, the pleasure of the recognizers, the means of approach of the sinners, and the scented garden of the renunciants.”

They have also said, “The person performing the prayer has received seven generous bestowals: guidance, sufficiency, expiation, mercy, proximity, degree, and forgiveness.”

The first step in associationism is not to say the prayers, for the Exalted Lord will say, “*What brought you into Saqar?*” They will say, “*We were not of those who said the prayers*” [74:42-43].

And He placed the name *faith* in the prayer, where He says, “*But God would never leave your faith,*” that is, your prayer, “*to waste*” [2:143]. He promises daily provision with prayer, where He says, “*And command thy folk to the prayer, and be thou patient therein. We ask thee for no provision. We shall provide for thee*” [20:132].

The number of obligatory prayers came as five in conformity with the roots of the Shari’ite rules. Concerning the roots of the Shari’ite rules Muṣṭafā said, “The submission is built on five.” The roots of the obligatory prayers are five prayers in one day and night. In other words, when the servant performs these five prayers with their stipulations and at their times, the Exalted Lord will give him the reward of all the roots of the Shari’ite rules.

The guises of the prayer are four: standing, bowing, prostrating, and sitting. The wisdom in this is that the existent things in their entirety have four shapes. Some are straight in the guise of standers, namely the trees. Some have the guise of bowers with their heads turned down, namely the beasts. Some have the guise of prostrators with their faces placed on the earth, namely the crawling things. Some sit on the earth like sitters, namely grass and plants. It is as if the Exalted Lord said, “O servant with faith! In serving Us, bring forth these four guises—standing, bowing, prostrating, and sitting—so that you may find the reward of all the creatures’ glorifications.”

Then He commanded some of these prayers to be two cycles, like the morning prayer, and some three cycles, like the evening prayer, and some four, like the noon, afternoon, and night prayers. This is because the servant is two sorts, spirit and body. Of the two-part prayer, one is the spirit’s gratitude, the other the body’s gratitude. Also, inside the Adamite are three exalted pearls: heart, intellect, and faith. The three-part prayer is gratitude for these three robes of honor. Again, the Adamite is compounded of the four natures;<sup>9</sup> the four-part prayer is gratitude for these four natures.

In terms of allusion He is saying: “My servant, show gratitude for body and spirit with the two-part prayer; show gratitude for faith, heart, and intellect with the three-part prayer; and show gratitude for the four elements with the four-part prayer, in the measure of capacity and possibility.” Then it will become apparent that the servant is more obedient than all, his work is more eminent, and his degree with the Real more elevated.

It has also been said that the prayer is a necklace made of pearls of many colors. Each color is the gift of someone exalted and the state of a messenger: Purity is the act of Job: *Stamp thy foot: here is a cool washing place and drink* [38:42]. Saying “God is greater” is the word of remembrance of Abraham: *And We ransomed him with a tremendous sacrifice* [37:107]. Standing is the service of Zachariah: *While he was standing, praying in the sanctuary* [3:39]. Bowing is the act of David: *He sank down, bowing, and was penitent* [38:24]. Prostration is the state of Ishmael: *He threw him down on his forehead* [37:103]. Bearing witness is the act of Jonah: *When he ran away to the laden ship* [37:140]. Glorification is the act of the angels: *Glorifying the praise of their Lord* [39:75]. When the faithful servant performs two cycles of prayer with humility and reverence, the Exalted Lord gives him the honor of these messengers and conveys him to their degrees.

Listen to something even more subtle: When you consider it, every act of worship done by the servants and every remembrance by the angels are all brought together in two cycles of the prayer: the struggle, the hajj, the alms tax, and the fasting. As for struggle: When warriors go to battle against the unbelievers, first they line up in rows, they prepare for the battle, and they set out to fight. A brave man puts on armor, goes to the front of the rows, calls the enemy to the field, and engages in combat with him. That heroic man is in front, and the others stand behind, shouting encouragement and saying “God is greater!” and entering into battle. In the prayer all these meanings are found: The man of faith first makes the full ablution, which is the chain mail that he puts on. When he makes the ablution, that is his armor that he puts on. Then he stands in the row of the worshipers and the reverent, and like a warrior the imam goes out in front. He battles against Satan and his own soul in the prayer niche, which is the field of battle against Satan. The others gaze upon him, their hearts attached to his victory. This struggle is more magnificent and

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9 The four natures (*tab<sup>c</sup>*) are typically understood to designate the qualities of the four elements and the four humors, that is, heat, cold, wetness, and dryness. Thus earth and black bile are cold and dry, water and phlegm are cold and wet, air and blood are hot and wet, and fire and yellow bile are hot and dry.

greater than that struggle, which is why Muṣṭafā said, “We have returned from the lesser struggle to the greater struggle.”

In the prayer there is also the meaning of the alms tax. The alms tax is the purity of possessions, and the prayer is the purity of the body: “*Take charity from their wealth, thereby to make them pure and to purify them*” [9:103]. “*Surely beautiful deeds take away ugly deeds*” [11:114]. The latter is the purity of the spirit, and the former is the purity of the body. The latter is more complete and more eminent than the former. In this meaning it has been narrated that God’s Messenger saw a man saying, “O God, forgive me! But I do not see You forgiving me.”

The Prophet said, “How ugly is your opinion of your Lord!”

He said, “O Messenger of God! I sinned when I was ignorant, and I sinned after submitting.”

He said, “As for what happened in the time of ignorance, that was effaced by your submission. And as for what was during the submission, that is effaced by the five prayers, for God sent down the verse, ‘*And perform the prayer at the two ends of the day and in the near part of the night*’ [11:114].”

In the prayer is also the meaning of the hajj, for the hajj is consecration and deconsecration, and the prayer is also consecrating and then bringing the consecration to an end. In the prayer the meaning of the hajj is more complete, more eminent, and more inclusive. And God knows better.

**4:114** *No good is there in much of their whispering, except for him who bids to charity, or the honorable, or making things wholesome among the people. Whosoever does this, seeking God’s approval, We shall give him a tremendous wage.*

The best deeds of the servants are the three things in this verse: charity, the honorable, and making things wholesome among the people. The good in this verse is not specified for one individual, but rather its profit reaches others. The wonder is not that you should open a door for yourself, the wonder and chivalry are that you should open a door to yourself for another.

Pir Bū ʿAlī Siyāh said, “So what if you make yourself happy? The work is done by making someone else happy.”

Muṣṭafā alluded to this: “The worst of men is he who eats alone.”

As for charity, it is of three sorts: with possessions, with the body, and with the heart. Charity with possessions is giving comfort to the poor by expending blessings. Charity with the body is undertaking for them the duty of service. Charity with the heart is being loyal to the beauty of intention and the consolidation of aspiration. This is charity toward the poor.

There is also charity toward the rich. It is that you act with munificence toward them and do not expose your need to them; you take back your hope from their charitable gifts and do not covet anything from them.

When charity, the honorable, and making things wholesome come together in someone, from head to foot he becomes veneration itself, the oyster shell for the mysteries of lordhood, and he is accepted by those who bear witness to the divinity. His name is given out as “sincerely truthful,” and tomorrow he will be gathered up along with the sincerely truthful. This is the great wage that the Exalted Lord has promised: “*We shall give him a tremendous wage.*”

**4:119** *Surely I will misguide them and fill them with wishes.*

When misguidance is consigned to Iblis, this is because of the secondary cause. Otherwise who is Iblis? Yes, he instills disquiet, for that is his job, and then, in the tracks of this disquieting, the Exalted Lord creates misguidance, for guidance and misguidance, felicity and wretchedness, come from God: *Whomsoever God guides, he is guided, and whomsoever He misguides, you will not find for him a guiding friend* [18:17]. Then He mentions the outcome, the end, the final issue, and the returning place of the two groups: About the misguided sort He says, “*Their refuge is Gehenna*” [4:121], and about the guided sort He says, “*We shall enter them into gardens underneath which rivers flow, therein dwelling forever and ever*” [4:122].

**4:125** *Who is more beautiful in religion than he who submits his face to God while he is a*

***beautiful-doer and follows the creed of Abraham, an unswerving man? And God took Abraham as a bosom friend.***

In this verse the Lord of the Worlds, the God of the world's folk, the Enactor who knows the hidden, praises the self-purifiers and shows that He is pleased with self-purification in deeds. The first person to dress the Kaabah of deeds in the cloak of self-purification was Muṣṭafā, who said, "Deeds are only through intentions." Self-purification in deeds does the work of color in jewels. Just as a jewel without the cape of color is a worthless stone, so also deeds without self-purification is to knock oneself out without hitting the mark.

Ma°rūf Karkhī used to beat himself with a whip and say, "O soul! Purify thyself and be delivered!"

It has been said that knowledge is the seed, deeds are planting, and self-purification is the water. The work is done by self-purification, salvation lies in self-purification, and endless felicity lies in self-purification, but self-purification itself is exalted and does not come down just anywhere, nor does it show its face to just anyone. The Exalted Lord said, "It is one of My secrets that I deposit in the hearts of those whom I love among My servants."

There was a worshiper among the Children of Israel. He was told that in such-and-such a place there is a tree that people worship. For the sake of God and the zeal of the religion he became angry, left his place with a mattock over his shoulder, and went to dig up the tree by its roots. Iblis went into the road with the attributes of an old man. He asked him where he was going and he replied, "To that place to dig up the tree."

Iblis said, "Go, busy yourself with your worship, for this will not done by your hand." Iblis struggled with him and fell, and the worshiper sat on his chest. Iblis said, "Let go of me and I will speak some beautiful words to you." He let go of him, and Iblis said, "O worshiper, God has prophets. If this tree needs to be dug up, He will command a prophet to dig it up. He has not commanded you to do so."

The worshiper said, "No, because the tree must be dug up, and I will not turn back from this work until I finish that."

Again they struggled together, and the worshiper was better, so Iblis fell down. Iblis said, "O chevalier, you are a poor man, and the people have to provide you with food. What would it matter if you stop this work, for it is not up to you and you have not been commanded to do it, and every day I will place two dinars under your pillow. That would be good for both you and the worshipers, for you can spend it on them."

At these words of his the worshiper paused. He said to himself, "Spending one dinar as alms and putting the other to use is better than pulling up this tree, for I have not been commanded to do so. I am no prophet that it should be mandatory for me." Hence with these words he went back. The next morning he saw two dinars under his pillow, and the same on the second day. But on the third day he saw nothing. He became angry, picked up his mattock, and went to dig up the tree. Iblis came into his road and said, "O man, give up this work, for it will never be done at your hand." They struggled together, the worshiper fell, and he was helpless at the hands of Iblis. Iblis aimed to kill him. The worshiper, "Let me go and I will go back. But first tell me why at first I came out better, and now you have come out better."

Iblis replied, "Because at first you rose up for the sake of God and were angry because of God's religion, so the Exalted Lord subjected me to you. When someone does something for God with self-purification, my hand will not reach him. This time you became angry for the sake of your own wanting and for the sake of this world. You became the follower of your caprice. Hence you could not defeat me and were subjugated by me."

When Muṣṭafā was asked what self-purification is, he said, "It is that you say, 'My Lord is God,' then you go straight as you have been commanded."

*Who is more beautiful in religion than he who submits his face to God while he is a beautiful-doer?* Wāsiṭī said, "The meaning of *while he is a beautiful-doer* is that he is doing the beautiful by submitting his face to God." He is saying, "The pure road and beautiful religion belongs to him

who turns his face toward the Real. He knows and recognizes as good this turning of the face to the Real and being a self-purifier, for not everyone reaches the threshold of the Sultan. It is he who recognizes the courtesy of the Presence.”

Then He says, “*and follows the creed of Abraham, an unswerving man.*” This alludes to the state of Abraham, who turned his face to the Real and observed the courtesy of the Presence, not leaving any portion for himself. He tossed it all away—his soul, his wealth, and his child. He tossed away his own soul for the sake of the Real’s approval, he tossed away his child for the sake of following His command, and he tossed away his wealth because of tenderness toward the people. Hence the Exalted Lord praised him and called him His bosom friend: “*And God took Abraham as a bosom friend.*”

It has been narrated that God revealed to him, “You are My bosom friend and I am your bosom friend, so be careful that I not become aware in your secret core that you have become attached to other than Me, lest you cut off your bosom friendship from Me.”

It has also been said that when the Exalted Lord wrote down bosom friendship for him, He gave out this call in the world: “*And God took Abraham as a bosom friend.*” The angels raised their voices and said, “O Lord, what did Abraham do that you have given him this honor and singled him out from all the world’s folk?”

The command came, “O Gabriel, open up your peacock-feathers and go from the top of the Lote Tree to the summit of that mountain, and convey My name to his hearing.” He stood behind the mountain. The Bosom Friend had three hundred herds of sheep, and each herd had a dog with a gold collar around its neck. Gabriel shouted out, “O Holy One!” The Bosom Friend fainted from the pleasure of hearing that. When he came to, he said, “O speaker! Say that once more, and this herd of sheep with its dog and gold collar belongs to you.” Gabriel once more raised up his voice, “O Holy One!” The Bosom Friend was rolling in the dust like a half-slaughtered chicken. He was saying, “Say it again, and another herd belongs to you!”

You spoke of Him to me, O Sa°d, and you increased  
my madness, so increase that speaking, O Sa°d!

He kept on asking him like this until he gave away the three hundred herds. Once he had given all, the knots became tighter, passion and destitution joined together. The Bosom Friend said, “O servant of God! Recite the name of the Friend one more time, and my spirit is yours!”

Wealth, gold, things—gamble them away for nothing.  
When the work reaches your spirit, gamble it away!

Gabriel became happy. He spread his peacock feathers and said, “If there is any shortcoming, it is in our eyes. You have passion to perfection. He was right to take you as a bosom friend.”

**4:126 *To God belongs everything in the heavens and everything in the earth, and God encompasses everything.***

In these verses, He says three times “*To God belongs everything in the heavens and everything in the earth.*” Each is an admonishment for a different group and specific to a designated meaning. The first is an admonishment for the common Muslims, the second an admonishment for the worshipful servants and godwary, and the third an admonishment for the sincerely truthful and elect.

First He says for the common Muslims, “Everything in heaven and earth is My possession and kingdom. All is My creation and artisanry. My knowledge reaches all and I am aware of all. I have made certain rightful dues incumbent among you and set apart obligatory acts for you. So comply with the rightful due of women, orphans, and the weak and put My commands into action. Strive to give comfort and achieve peace. Whether you do good or bad, whether you are at peace or war, know that in reality I know and I see, for all is My creation and My artisanry. How can My creation and artisanry be concealed from Me? *Does He who created not know, while He is the Gentle, the Aware?* [67:14].”

In the second verse He says,

**4:131** *To God belongs everything in the heavens and everything in the earth, and We have charged those who were given the Book before you, and you, to be wary of God.*

“You who are worshipers and abstainers, come totally into the street of godwariness and make godwariness your shelter. Leave aside the road of uncertainty and suspicion.” He says this and commands it. Then He gives success to one group, and He puts another group into the road of abandonment. To all of them He gives awareness: “I am without needs. I have no benefit from the obedience of the one given success, nor any loss from the disobedience of the one abandoned. Everything in the heavens and the earth is My possession and kingdom. All are My predetermined things and artifacts. Had I wanted, I would have created all successful, or all abandoned. No one can protest against Me, and there is no turning away from My decree.”

In the third verse, He says,

**4:132** *To God belongs everything in the heavens and everything in the earth, and God is sufficient as a trustee.*

This is an admonishment to the sincerely truthful and the lovers: “The seven heavens, the seven earths, and everything within them all belong to Me. I did not create them that you should turn your face toward them and attach your heart to them, remaining with them and being held back from Me. Rather, I created them to show them to you and to adorn them for your soul. Then, when you put aside everything and bring your face to Me, I will bring all of them into your service and put them all in your hands.” This meaning is in the report, “O this world! Serve those who serve Me, and trouble those who serve you!”

The story of Sahl Tustarī is well known. The caliph of the day offered great wealth to him, but he did not accept anything. Someone asked him why he had not accepted. Sahl called upon God to lift the veil from the eyes of the questioner, who then looked and saw a world full of gems and pearls. Sahl said, “O chevalier! I have no need for the wealth of the caliph. The whole world is at my command. The storehouses of the earth have been offered to me, but I do not want them.”

Why do you stay in this low place like crows looking for carrion?

Break the cage and fly at once like peacocks to the heights.

All on the face of gold and gems is unbelief and satanism—

if you have the religion’s fervor, step beyond the gold. [DS 52]

**4:136** *O you who have faith! Have faith in God and His Messenger.*

Faith is two sorts, one based on proof, the other on face-to-face vision. Faith by proof is the road of inference, and faith by face-to-face vision is finding the day of union. Faith by proof is to employ the evidence of intellects, and faith by vision is to reach the degrees of arrival. In terms of allusion He is saying: “O you have acquired faith by proof, strive to acquire faith by face-to-face vision!”

What is faith by face-to-face vision? Gazing with the eye of response on the Responder, gazing with the eye of solitariness on the Solitary, gazing with the eye of presence on the Present, being near to God’s nearness by being far from self, being present with His generosity by being absent from self. He—majestic is His majesty!—is not far from the strivers nor absent from the desirers. He says, “*We are nearer to him than the jugular vein*” [50:16].

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O Lord! You are found by the souls of the chevaliers, You are present to the hearts of the rememberers. They give marks of You up close, but You are far beyond that. They fancy You from afar, but You are closer than the spirit.”

Lovely idol! Are you then my beloved?

Now that I look close, You are my spirit.

It is also said that the meaning of the verse is this: *O you who have faith* by assenting, *have faith* by realizing! You have accepted the Shariah, now accept the Haqiqah.

What is the Shariah? What the Haqiqah? The Shariah is a lamp, the Haqiqah a burn. The Shariah is a bond, the Haqiqah advice. The Shariah is need, the Haqiqah joy. The Shariah is the

outer pillars, the Haqiqah the inner pillars. The Shariah is not having evil, the Haqiqah is not having self. The Shariah is service based on conditions, the Haqiqah exile based on witnessing. The Shariah is by intermediaries, the Haqiqah by unveiling.

The folk of the Shariah keep obedience and leave aside disobedience, the folk of the Haqiqah flee from themselves and take joy in oneness. The folk of the Shariah hope for everlastingness and subsistent bliss, the folk of the Haqiqah boldly busy themselves with the Cupbearer.

The Haqiqah begins when He appears. The longing that overcomes you makes the wide world too narrow for you and makes the inside of your shirt a prison. It strikes fire in your spirit and throws thirst into your heart. You see the burning, but not the Burner. You see the tumult, but not Him who stirs it up. There is no one to assist you, no one with whom to speak, no sympathizer with whom you can sit for a while.

Isolated from friends in every land—  
the greater the sought, the fewer the helpers.

In the end, the chevalier lets out a sigh in his longing and bewilderment: “O God, my tree has been burnt by thirst. How long will it take before You look after it? O Generous One! I am weeping over You! It is not beneath You to answer. Pour water once on my field!

“O God, if I am not worthy for what I desire, how can I love with a heart plucked of its feathers? If the hand of my need will not reach the branch of hope, how can I get on my feet? If You do not give me access to Yourself, how can I flee to You? O Generous One, give me access, so that I may weep at Your threshold and rejoice in hope mixed with fear. Receive me, O Gentle One, so that I may turn myself over to You. Gaze at me once so that I may throw the two worlds into the ocean.”

The Majestic Lord caresses the traveler with the attribute of generosity: “Fear not! Not every bite is poisoned. When a mother bites her child, she does so because of love.”

#### **4:160 *And for the wrongdoing of those who are Jews, We forbade them certain good things.***

Embarking on prohibited things necessitates the forbidding of licit things.<sup>10</sup>

If you see gentleness and generosity reaching a servant, it is because he has preserved the outward of the Shariah and has wanted to show reverence to it in spirit and heart. Inevitably, he has reached the repose of whispered prayers and the gentle favors of union’s gifts. In contrast, if you see harshness and severity, it is because he has looked with denial on the sanctuary of the Shariah and has put to work the religion’s prohibited things in following the commanding soul. Yes, that is the way it is: When someone holds back from the outward of the Shariah, the beauty of the Haqiqah veils its face from him. If someone disdains commands and prohibitions, what wonder if faith and recognition take their bags away from his heart?

If not for the Shariah, the turning wheel would stop;  
if not for the religion, the Twins would quit the sky. [DS 56]

#### **4:162 *But those who are firmly rooted in knowledge***

The firmly rooted in knowledge are those who have obtained the varieties of knowledge: knowledge of the Shariah, knowledge of the Tariqah, and knowledge of the Haqiqah.

Knowledge of the Shariah is to be learned, knowledge of the Tariqah is to be practiced, and knowledge of the Haqiqah is to be found. Concerning knowledge of the Shariah He says, “*Ask the folk of the remembrance*” [16:43]. Concerning knowledge of the Tariqah He says, “*Seek the means of approach to Him*” [5:35]. Concerning knowledge of the Haqiqah He says, “*We taught him knowledge from Us*” [18:65]. He turned knowledge of the Shariah over to a teacher, He turned knowledge of the Tariqah over to a pir, and He turned knowledge of the Haqiqah over to Himself.

Whoever fancies that he has no use for the intermediary of a teacher in knowledge of the Shariah is a heretic. Whoever claims that knowledge of the Tariqah is possible without a pir is a tempter.

<sup>10</sup> LI 2:84.

Whoever says that the teacher of knowledge of the Haqiqah is other than the Real is deluded.

It has been said that those firmly rooted in knowledge are those who learn the knowledge of the Shariah and then put it into practice with self-purification to the point that they perceive the knowledge of the Haqiqah in their secret core. Thus Muṣṭafā said, “When someone acts on what he knows, God will bequeath him knowledge of what he does not know.” When someone does not put the knowledge of the Shariah into practice, he has wasted his knowledge, and it becomes an argument against him. When someone puts it into practice, his outward knowledge becomes an argument to his benefit, and he receives the knowledge of the Haqiqah as a gift.

**4:163 *Surely We have revealed to thee as We revealed to Noah, and the prophets after him.***

The two worlds are built on the foundation of prophethood’s exaltedness, and prophethood’s fruit is the beauty of the Shariah. The Shariah is the right path, and the prophets are the marks of the path. Until the leader sees the road, he does not lead. *I invite to God upon insight, I and whosoever follows me* [12:108]. The Exalted Lord sent the prophets to the people so that they would make apparent the road of obedience, and the servants, on the basis of that obedience, might reach generous bestowal and reward; and, so that they would make apparent the road of disobedience and warn against it. Then the servants may avoid disobedience and not be deemed worthy for punishment. This then is infinite bounty and endless generosity.

If He had left the servants in place, not sent the Messenger, and not held the lamp of guidance with the hand of the Messenger in their road, the servants would have remained within the wrap of their createdness and the darkness of their own opinions. They would have eaten everything that is their poison and done everything within which is their destruction.

So, you should believe that the prophets are mercy and leaders for the world’s folk. They are the best of the creatures and the chosen among mortal men. They are the callers at the top of the street of friendship and the cupbearers at the lip of the water of life. They are the title-page of the Shariah and the proof of the Haqiqah. If there is a goal in creating the engendered beings, it is they. If the Haqiqah has a treasure, they are its keepers.

*Surely We have revealed to thee....* The command came, “O paragon of east and west, O emulated in the two realms of being! A shining light has reached you from the world of revelation called ‘messengerhood.’ Before you We gave to the messengers, each in his own measure. As for that which is beyond the world of messengerhood and accords with the drinking place of your good fortune, it was not fitting to reach any wrongdoer or be grasped by the good fortune of any traveler.” The allusion to this by the paragon of the world was this: “I was given the Qur’an and the like of it along with it.” In other words, “As much as I have spoken to you from the world of prophethood with the tongue of messengerhood, just as much has been spoken to me from the world of the Haqiqah with the tongue of revelation.” This is exactly what he said elsewhere: “I have a moment with God embraced by no proximate angel, nor any sent prophet.”

**4:170 *O people, the Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord, so have faith; that is better for you. But if you disbelieve, to God belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth.***

The allusion of the verse is that the threshold of Lordhood and the majesty of Unity has no need for the obedience of the obedient. He is pure of the worship of the creatures in heaven and earth. If all that is creation—the spheres and heavens, the existing things and the things coming to nothingness—went back to the concealment of nonexistence, that would not harm His purity and lordhood. There is no need for them to be joined with Him. The beauty of His Unity is His eternity, and the majesty of His eternity is His solitariness.

There is a sound hadith from Abū Dharr Ghifārī, from God’s Messenger, from God, that He said, “O My servants, I have forbidden Myself to do wrong, and all of it is forbidden to you. So My servants, do not wrong each other! Surely you are the ones who err by night and day, and I am the one who forgives sins and does not care. So ask forgiveness of Me, and I will forgive you.

“O My servants, if the first of you and the last of you and the men of you and the jinn of you had the heart of the most godwary man among you, that would add nothing to My kingdom. O

My servants, if the first of you and the last of you and the men of you and the jinn of you had the heart of the most depraved man among you, that would diminish nothing from My kingdom. O My servants, if the first of you and the last of you and the men of you and the jinn of you were to ask from Me and I were to give every man among them what he asked for, that would diminish nothing from Me, except as the ocean is diminished when a needle is dipped into it once.”

*But if you disbelieve, to God belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth.* He is saying, “If all creatures were to put aside the activity of servants and loosen the belt of obedience, they would not be able to go outside of servanthood, nor could they lift away from themselves the bonds of slavehood in respect of creation. Thus the exalted Qur’an gives this report: “*None is there in the heavens and the earth that comes not to the All-Merciful as a servant*” [19:93]. But there is a difference between a servant upon whom the name of servanthood has fallen in respect of creation and a servant upon whom it has fallen in respect of caressing and gentleness. *Who took His servant by night* [17:1]. *The servants of the All-Merciful* [25:63]. *Give good news to My servants* [39:17]. *Surely My servants, thou hast no ruling power over them* [15:42]: These are the ones accepted by the Presence, and those are the ones driven away by severance. Not everyone who is a servant is caressed by gentleness or in the bond of love. Do you know who the true servant is? The one adorned with beneficence and generous giving, who has a cup full of the wine of love in the presence of union and the session of intimacy.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, my beauty lies in servanthood. Otherwise, what is my tongue that it should remember You? My good fortune is that I am remembered by You. Otherwise, what value does my remembrance have for me?”

**4:174** *O people, a proof has come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light.*

The majestic Unity is placing a favor on the center point of mortal nature: “We have lit two lamps for you, one in the heart, the other in front of you. The one in front of you is the lamp of the Sunnah, which is the proof itself, and the one in the heart is the lamp of faith and the shining light. Happy is the servant who walks between these two lamps! Who is more exalted than he in whose heart the greatest light is shining and the eyes of whose heart sees the eyes and face of the Friend face-to-face! One breath with the Friend is worth the two worlds. One vision of the Friend for a hundred thousand spirits is gratis!”

In gratitude I will also send my spirit to You—  
a whiff of union with You does what a hundred spirits cannot.

**4:175** *As for those who have faith in God and hold fast to Him, He will make them enter into mercy from Him, and bounty, and He will guide them to Him on a straight path.*

From the servant come faith and holding fast by way of servanthood, and from the Exalted Lord bounty and mercy in the attribute of loving kindness. Then He says, “*He will guide them to Him on a straight path.*” He will give them the guidance and rectitude to know that the recompense they find and the generosity they see come from God’s bounty and mercy, not from their faith and holding fast. As the Prophet said, “There is none of you who will be saved by his deeds.”

They said, “Not even you, O Messenger of God?”

He said, “Not even I—unless God envelops me with His mercy.”

## Surah 5: al-Mā'ida

### **5:0 In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.**

This is the name of the majestic whose majesty is His magnificence, whose magnificence is His brilliance, whose splendor is His exaltedness, whose being is His Essence, whose beginninglessness is His endlessness, and whose eternity is His everlastingness. He is tremendous in His dominion, king in His all-compellingness, the supervisor who is self-sufficient in essence, the unique who is everlasting in attribute.

A king in heaven in whom is my pride,  
exalted in measure, hidden from Him nothing.

This is the name of a lord who is similar to nothing and no one and who is held back by no work at any time. He nurtures enemies and caresses friends, He conceals defects and takes care of things. Mentioning Him is the tongue's celebration, seeing Him is the spirit's life, finding Him is everlasting joy. He is a king without an army, standing firm without witness, aware of the hidden, shelter of the distressed. He is a Lord who is near to knowledge and far from imagination. The seeker of Him is slain though alive, and finding Him is the resurrection without the Trumpet. Thus the seeker is not cheated, and the wage-earner not excused. The seeker is in the whirlpool of longing, and the finder is bewildered in the waves of light. In bewilderment and confoundedness he keeps on saying,

I am bewildered in Thee, take my hand,  
O guide of those bewildered in Thee!

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, everyone laments at bewilderment, but I am joyful in bewilderment. With one 'here I am,' I have opened the door of all disappointment to myself. Alas those days when I did not know enough to reach for your gentleness! O God, like a moth to a lamp I cling to the fire of bewilderment, its spirit not feeling the suffering of its heat, nor my heart the pain of the burning brand. O God, I have water in my head and fire in my heart, joy on the inside and want on the outside. I am sitting in an ocean that has no shore, my spirit in a pain that has no cure, my eyes fallen on what the tongue cannot describe."

The antagonists say, "These words are not fitting."  
It's not the sun's sin if someone is blind.

### **5:1 O you who have faith!**

It is narrated that Ja'far ibn Muḥammad said that these words have four traits through which the Lord of the Worlds honored and caressed the community. One is that they are a call, second an intimation, third an allusion, and fourth a bearing witness. *O* is a call, *you* is an intimation, *who* is an allusion, and *have faith* is a bearing witness. The call is an honor, the intimation of mercy, the allusion to love, and the bearing witness to recognition.

"He called them before He made them appear, and He named them before He saw them." They were in the concealment of nonexistence when He called them to honor. They had not yet come into the circle of existence when He named them with a beautiful name: *He named you submitters from before* [22:78]. He saw the faults and He approved of the faults. He saw the offenses,

and He bought the offenses. He saw the pure ones of the high world, and He chose the tainted ones of the low world, for “The sinner’s sobs are more beloved to Me than the glorifier’s murmur.”

Given the beginningless solicitude of the Unneeded Threshold toward the Adamite, his situation is like that of a child whose mother sews him new clothes. She says, “Beware, beware, O child! Do not let this fancy garment get dirty!”

The child goes outside and busies himself playing with the other children and dirties the clothes. He comes back home with dirty clothes, so he hides in a corner, helpless and bewildered. He keeps on saying, “Mother, I’m sleepy.” The mother knows that the child is afraid of her rebuke. “Dearest,” she says, “come. I only sent you outside after I had soap and water in hand, for I knew what you would do.”

The Adamite’s state is like this. When that center point of good fortune and chosen one of the empire was sent out from the concealment of nonexistence to the confines of existence, the pure spirits and holy ones began to shout, and they aimed arrows of denial at the world that God was setting forth: “*Wilt Thou set therein one who will work corruption there?* [2:30]. You are creating a group who will blacken the garment of *Today I have perfected your religion for you* [5:3] with the smoke of disobedience and the dust of associationism. They will tear the veil of honor from the beautiful face of faith!”

He addressed them with the words, “Yes, I know what has been prepared in this oyster shell of mysteries. *We honored the children of Adam* [17:70]. The bounties of exaltation have made them exalted. I sent them out to the world of defilement wearing the garment of protection and the shawl of the Trust only after I had in hand the water of forgiveness and the soap of mercy.”

**5:3 *Forbidden to you are carrion and blood, the flesh of swine, that which has been offered up to other than God, the strangled, the beaten down, the fallen, the gored, what has been eaten by predators—except what you slaughter—what is sacrificed on stone alters, and that which you allot by divining arrows—that is ungodliness. Today those who disbelieve have despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. Today I have perfected for you your religion and I have completed My blessings upon you, and I have approved for you the submission as a religion.***

Although carrion is vile and forbidden, a measure of it is still allowed at the time of constraint. Among the sorts of carrion is the flesh of a brother Muslim that is eaten by backbiting. In this there is never a concession in any state, whether by constraint or free choice. Hence this carrion is worse than that carrion, and its prohibition is greater. God says, “*Do not backbite one another. Would one of you love to eat the dead flesh of his brother? You would abhor it?* [49:12].

It has been said that an animal whose flesh is eaten has two states: One is that, when it is killed by the stipulation of the Shariah, it is pure. Taking it is allowed and eating it is permitted. When it dies by itself, it is defiled, and eating it is forbidden.

By way of allusion He is saying that when this Adamic soul is killed by the sword of struggle in the path of discipline according to the Shariah—that is, when it has been subjugated by the religion and come to be commanded by the Shariah, made a servant and abased by the burden of obedience—the soul with this description is pure. Nearness to it is allowed, being its companion is lawful, seeing it is the heart’s repose, and companionship with it is the spirit’s happiness. But whenever a soul dies in the darkness of its own heedlessness such that it no longer perceives the work of the religion and exerts no effort in the limits set down by the Shariah, this soul is like the carrion whose body is defiled and nearness to which is forbidden.

*The strangled, the beaten down, the fallen to death, the gored.* Beneath each of these words is an allusion in keeping with the tasting of the chevaliers of the Tariqah and according to the creed of the wayfarers of the Haqiqah’s road. *The strangled* is an allusion to someone who places himself in the bonds of wishes, puts the chains of avarice on his own hands and feet, and throws the rope of wanting around his neck until he is killed by avarice and appetite. It is forbidden for the wayfarers and desirers to walk on the path of someone like this or to follow someone like this.

*The beaten down* is an allusion to someone who stays a prisoner of caprice and a captive of Satan, beaten down by the fanciful notions of his soul and the disquieting thoughts from Satan, so

that his heart dies in that beating and imprisonment. He becomes the carrion of the Tariqah, and companionship with him is forbidden.

*The fallen to death* is an allusion to someone who has fallen into the valley of dispersion and been destroyed, losing the road of the Haqiqah.

*The gored* is an allusion to someone who quarrels with his likes and similars for the sake of this world of carrion and is gored such that his adversary wins; he becomes carrion under the blows of a carrion-eater.

*What has been eaten by predators* is that toward which the seekers of this world turn their heads; it is carrion and its seeker is like a dog. Only dogs eat carrion.

It is nothing but rotting carrion  
which dogs try to drag away.

Then He says, “*except what you slaughter.*” In the outward Shariah, He is saying that whenever a Shari’ite slaughtering takes place in the forbidden things that He mentioned such that it is allowed by the Shariah, then it is allowed and eating it is permitted. So also in the road of the Tariqah, whatever may be the traveling supplies of the road of the next world and the goods of this world necessary for life, taking them and having them is permissible in the religion and seeking them is allowed. The supplies for the religion’s road pertain to the road of the religion. God says, “*And take along supplies, but the best of supplies is godwariness*” [2:197].

*What is sacrificed on stone alters.* Everything that is done for the caprice of wanting and not in conformity with the Shariah is *sacrificed on stone alters*. Making the caprice of your soul your object of worship and going forth according to what it desires is not the work of the religious, nor is it the state of the faithful. God says, “*Hast thou seen him who has taken his caprice as his god?*” [25:43].

*And that which you allot by divining arrows—that is ungodliness.* Every transaction and companionship that does not go forth with the permission of the Shariah and in conformity with the religion, the goal being to obtain this world and what is desired by the soul, is nothing but gambling. Its form is deception and deceit, its result ungodliness and corruption, and its final outcome punishment and chastisement.

*Today I have perfected for you your religion and I have completed My blessings upon you.* Ja’far ibn Muḥammad said that “today” is an allusion to the day when Muṣṭafā was sent to creation and the crown of messengerhood was placed on the head of his prophecy. The carpet of his Shariah was pulled around the world and the rug of mercy was spread out. The smoke of associationism was wrapped up in its own misfortune and the traces and remnants of unbelief were effaced and dissolved. From the four corners of world the sound of the drum of Muhammad the Arab’s good fortune rose up: “*The truth has come, and falsehood has vanished away*” [17:81].

God bless the son of Āmina, who  
brought him forth open-handed and generous.  
Say to those who hope for Ahmad’s intercession,  
“Bless him and wish him great peace.”

\*

O you whose visage is everyone’s gazing place  
before you all have fallen in the road.  
O Venus of the months and moon of all,  
your beauty has taken away everyone’s luster and rank!

The night of mortal nature still did not exist when the sun of his prophethood was set firmly in place in the heaven of its loftiness, for “I was a prophet when Adam was between water and clay.”

“O great one! Show your beauty, so all of existence may become a sun. O master! Open the oyster shell of mercy, so these destitute ones may fill their pockets with pearls.

“Why don’t you take that face to the idol-worshippers—  
why not display it and take the unbelief from their hearts?”

“O master, We will mention your innate beauty only within *By thy life!* [15:72]. We will make the kiblāh of the first and the last only the circle of your servants. O master, if We open up the desire of the sun you have in your heart, no crucifix will remain in Byzantium, no unbelief or sash in the world.”

Have mercy on the creatures' hearts and come out from the veil  
so that the seventy-two creeds may end their disputes.

*And I have completed My blessings upon you.* This is addressed to Muṣṭafā's Companions. He is saying, “I have completed My blessings upon you in that I have singled you out among My servants to contemplate him. I have made you an argument for all the nations that will come until the Day of Resurrection.”

It has also been said that *Today I have perfected for you your religion* alludes to the first day of the beginningless covenant. He is saying, “In the Beginningless, I completed this religion for you and took care of your work, marking you with My brand. This is nothing new that I have done, for I have long taken care of it. But I have completed it and made manifest to you what I already knew, showing what I have done. *And I have completed My blessings upon you.* The completion of the work is that tomorrow in the Palisades of Holiness I will bestow upon you My approval. *And I have approved for you the submission as your religion.* I will make you worthy of union with My Presence, I will approve of you for My neighborhood, and I will also increase My caresses. I will say, ‘My servant. I have approved of you as a neighbor. Do you approve of Me as a neighbor?’”

It has been said that the perfection of the religion is the realization of recognition in the guidance at the beginning of the state, and the completion of blessings is the obtainment of forgiveness at the end of the work. He is laying a favor on the faithful: “At first I give recognition and at last I forgive.” This is addressed to the congregation of the faithful. And there is no doubt about the forgiveness of the community of the faithful. If there is doubt, it is about instances and individuals—whether or not they remained with faith. But the generality of the faithful are forgiven.

It has been said that this is the submission that is approved by God. *And I have approved for you the submission as your religion* is an allusion to it. It is like a house that is reached by four gates, behind which are four bridges, and behind the bridges are degrees and levels. As long as people do not pass through the gates and over the bridges, they will not reach the degrees and levels.

The first gate of the traveler is performing the obligations, the second is avoiding forbidden things, the third is having confidence in God's assurance, and the fourth is having patience in trials and sufferings.

When you have passed through these gates, the bridges appear. The first bridge is approval: approving of God's decree, placing it on one's neck, and leaving aside the road of protest. The second bridge is trust in God: relying on God, taking Him as one's support and refuge, and recognizing Him as one's trustee. The third bridge is gratitude: recognizing God's blessings on oneself and putting these blessings to work in obedience to Him. The fourth bridge is self-purification in deeds, in the Shahadah, in service, and in recognition: the Shahadah in submission, service in faith, and recognition in the Haqiqah.

Once you have passed over the bridges, then there are degrees and levels—as is worthy for everyone and as God wants. This is why the Lord of the Words says, “*They have degrees with their Lord, and forgiveness, and a generous provision*” [8:4].

**5:6** *O you who have faith, when you stand for the prayer, wash your faces and your hands up to your elbows.... If you find no water, have recourse to goodly dust.*

Outward purity has three sections: First is purity after impurity. Second is purity after excretion and sexual activity. Third is purity from the sheddings of the body, such as nails, hair, dirt, and so on. Each of these three sections has an explanation and an explication, and these will be spoken of elsewhere, God willing.

Inward purity has three duties: First, purity of the limbs from disobedience, such as back-

biting, lying, eating the forbidden, betrayal, and looking at women illicitly. When this purity is gained, the servant is adorned with obedience and reverence. This is the degree of the faith of the pious. Its mark is that the remembrance of the Real is always on their tongue, the fruit of the promise in their heart, the freshness of His favors in their spirit. They are always visiting the sick, going to cemeteries, hurrying to supplicate for good people, and reaching for paradise.

The second duty is purity of the heart from unapproved character traits, such as self-admiration, envy, pride, hypocrisy, avarice, animosity, and frivolity. Self-admiration ruins the mirror of friendship, envy reduces the worth of people, pride darkens the mirror of the heart, hypocrisy dries up the wellspring of obedience, avarice puts aside respect for people, animosity blocks up the water of familiarity, and frivolity takes away the tent-pole of companionship. When the servant has become pure of these defilements, he is numbered among the godwary. His mark is that he flees from concessions, he does not cling to ambiguity, he is always fearful, trembling, and fleeing from hell; he is content with a morsel and a tattered cloak, he has put aside the world and the world's folk, and he has melted himself in the crucible of sorrow. Faith is his basis, godwariness his traveling supplies, the grave his way station, and the afterworld his goal. With all this, he constantly weeps with the tongue of pleading and says, "O God, everyone is upon something, but I don't know what I'm upon. I fear only the moment when who I am appears. O God, I am always talking and speaking. So long as You do not show Yourself I will be searching and seeking. Because of unsettledness I run in the field of incapacity. I'm in the midst of the work, but I smell no scent. O God, my mount has stood back, my feet are worn down, my fellow-travelers have gone, and nothing has increased except bewilderment."

I am bewildered in Thee, take my hand,  
O guide of those bewildered in Thee!

The third duty is purity of the secret core from everything except the Real. God says, "*Say 'God,' then leave them*" [6:91]. This purity is their adornment today, for tomorrow the cup of *pure wine* [76:21] will be in their hand. Today the light of hope shines in their hearts, but tomorrow the light of face-to-face vision will shine in their spirits. Today in their yearning the liver's water flows from their eyes, but tomorrow contemplation's water will flow in the stream of gentle favor. Today the dawn of happiness has come up from the rising place of freedom, but tomorrow the sun of solicitude will advance in the heaven of face-to-face seeing.

The mark of this purity is that one washes away love for this world, effaces the tracks of human nature, and burns the veils of dispersion, so the heart is joyful in the garden of intimacy, and the spirit is occupied with the Real in the seclusion of face-to-face vision.

How well was it said by that chevalier! "At last will be a day then this drum will give forth a sound, and that Generous One will whisper in secret to the lover's spirit. What a wonderful work, what a marvelous bazaar! Here we have intimate togetherness without being the same in kind. Since there is no one of the same kind, what is this intimacy? Since there is no one like Him, what is this love? Since you have not seen Him, what is this incapacity? Since the wine is still in the grape, what is this existence? Since waiting is all tribulation, what is this happiness in the heart? Since the eye of the secret core is veiled from Him, what is this ecstasy like fire? Since this path is all trial, what is this enjoyment in the midst of trial?"

Though Your ache has put me in the fire,  
how I will ache if Your ache ever leaves me!

*Wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows.* Just as the command of the Shariah makes it mandatory for outward purity to wash the face, so also the allusion of the Haqiqah makes it mandatory for inward purity to preserve one's honor and not to disgrace oneself by seeking the trifling things of this world. Just as the former purity makes it mandatory to wash the hands, so also the latter purity makes it mandatory to wash one's hands of the creatures and entrust one's work to the Real. Just as it is mandatory to wipe the head, so also it is mandatory to turn the head away from serving created things and to avoid humbling oneself before just any piece of straw or a nobody.

And just as it is mandatory to wash the feet, so also it is mandatory to step into good works and walk forth in obedience to God.

It has been said that these four bodily parts were specified for purity because man finds his eminence and superiority over other animals through these parts. First is the form of the face, for the other animals do not have this attribute. The Lord of the Worlds placed a favor on them and said, "*And He formed you, so He made your forms beautiful*" [40:64]. Second is the two hands with which the Adamite eats, for all other animals eat with their mouths. The Lord of the Worlds placed a favor on them and said, "*And We honored the children Adam*" [17:70], that is, with the two worthy hands that hold for eating and so forth. Third is the head, within which is the brain, for within the brain is intellect. In intellect is the eminence of knowing, which the others do not have. The Lord of the Worlds placed a favor on them and said, "*signs for those who possess the kernels*" [3:190]. Fourth is the two legs which He pulled into an upright, beautiful stature for walking, whereas others do not have legs with this attribute. God says, "*We created man in the most beautiful stature*" [95:4]. Having completed these blessings on the children of Adam, He asked them to show gratitude for these bodily parts by keeping them pure.

It has also been said that purity is the cause of ease and comfort after sorrow and tribulation, as has come in the story of Mary at the time of the birth of Jesus. When that spring appeared, she made herself pure and was released from the sorrow of childbirth and the alienation of exile.

It is also the cause of repelling Satanic disquiet, as Muṣṭafā said: "When one of you is angry, let him make an ablution." It is the cause of the removal of trial and tribulation, as has come in the story of Job the prophet in His words, "*Stamp thy foot; here is a cool washing place and drink*" [38:42].

It has also been said that the secret of the purity of these four members, even if they are not defiled, is in two respects. First, tomorrow at the resurrection Muṣṭafā will discern his community and intercede for their sake. Their mark will be that they have faces bright and shining because of washing; and so also their hands, feet, and head will be white, bright, and fresh because of purity's water. Concerning the Prophet said, "Surely my community will be mustered on the Day of Resurrection white-faced and white-footed from the traces of the ablution." The second respect is that when a slave is sold, the custom is that he is taken to a slave-trader, and his hands, feet, face, and head are shown to the customer. Even if it is a slave-girl, the Shariah instructs that they should look at the face, see her hair, and look at her hands and feet. Tomorrow, Muṣṭafā will be the slave-trader of the resurrection and the Real will be the customer. Hence the servant was commanded to do a good job of washing these bodily parts today. As much as he can, he should not take away the water from them and he should try to renew the purity. Then, tomorrow, the light of his bodily parts will increase, and when he is shown in the house of the slave-trader at the resurrection, his hands, feet, face, and head will be bright and pleasing.

*If you find no water, have recourse to goodly dust.* God connected purity to water or, at the time of constraint, to dust, and not to anything else. The wisdom here is that the Lord of the Worlds created Adam from water and dust, and the Adamites should always be aware of this. They should know that their own eminence lies therein and that they should give gratitude for this blessing.

Adam found eminence over Iblis because Iblis was from fire and Adam from dust, and dust is better than fire. Fire shows defects, and dust conceals them. Whenever you put something in fire, it shows its defects. It distinguishes genuine from false silver and adulterated from pure gold. Dust, however, conceals defects. It conceals whatever you give to it, so the defects do not show.

Fire is the cause of cutting off, and dust is the cause of joining. With fire there is cutting and burning, with dust there is joining and keeping. Iblis was from fire, so he broke off. Adam was from dust, so he joined.

Fire's nature is arrogance, so it seeks to be higher. Dust's nature is humility, so it seeks to be lower. Iblis brought highness with his words, "*I am better*" [38:76]. Adam brought lowliness with his words, "*Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves*" [7:23].

Iblis said, "I and my substance." Adam said, "Not I, rather my God."

They have also spoken about another wisdom in specifying water and dust for purity. They

say that whenever something catches fire, the force of that fire is put out by water and dust. There are two fires in front of the person of faith: One is the fire of appetite in this world, and the other the fire of punishment in the afterworld. The Lord of the Worlds made water the cause of his purity so that today it will put out the fire of appetite for him and tomorrow the fire of punishment.

Know also that purity began in an era that was made known by a report from God's Messenger by way of the Commander of the Faithful, °Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. He said, "When the angels heard talk of Adam and his description, they said, 'What, wilt Thou set therein one who will work corruption there and shed blood?' [2:30]. Afterwards, they regretted saying that and they feared God's punishment. They wept and wailed and asked God for His approval. The command came from God, 'You want Me to pass over you, lift away the heaviness of those words from you, and have mercy on you. I have created an ocean under the Splendorous Throne and named it "the Ocean of Life." Go to that ocean and, with its water, wash your faces and hands, wipe your heads, and wash your feet.' The angels obeyed the command. The command came, 'Each of you now say, "Glory be to Thee, O God, and Thine is the praise. I bear witness that there is no god but Thou. I ask forgiveness from Thee and I repent to Thee.'" They said that and the command came, 'I have accepted your repentance and will pass over you.' They said, 'O Lord, is this generosity specific to us, or do we share in it with others?' He said, 'It is for you, for the vicegerent whom I will create, and for his children until the coming of the Hour. Whenever someone conveys water to these four members as I have commanded you, even if he has filled heaven and earth with sins, I will pass over him and bestow upon him my approval and mercy.'"

In keeping with this meaning is the sound report from °Alī Murtaḍā. He said, "Whenever I heard something from God's Messenger, God gave me benefit from it. From him I came to know the certainty of knowledge and the worthiness of deeds. If I myself had not heard his report, but someone narrated it to me, I would make that person swear an oath. When he swore it, I would rely on him. Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq narrated to me, but I did not make him swear an oath to the truthfulness of his words, because he always spoke the truth. He said, 'I heard God's Messenger saying, "Whenever a servant with faith does a sin and, after that sin, makes an ablution and washes himself fully, then, after finishing, he performs two cycles of prayer, God will pass over that sin from him and will pardon him.'" The explication of this report is in the Splendorous Qur'an: "Whoever does something ugly or wrongs himself and then asks forgiveness of God, he will find God forgiving, ever-merciful" [4:110].

**5:35** *O you who have faith! Be wary of God, and seek the means of approach to Him. And struggle in His path. Perhaps you will prosper.*

Here you have a call of generosity, here you have an address with gentleness, and here you have an arrangement to be applauded, sweet to the hearts. It is a cause of familiarity and an aid to clarity. It makes one secure from distance and permits response. He is saying, "O you who are the faithful. You have heard the message, bowed your heads, and approved of the intermediary. *Be wary of God.* Fear God, avoid His anger, and think about Him, for everything is from Him. *Say: All is from God* [4:78]. Who in the world is like Him in loving kindness and servant-caressing? The hope of the disobedient is in Him, the remedy for trials is with Him. No one has pride save in His name, no one has ease save through His mark. There is no deliverance and joining without His guidance and kind favor."

This is why He says, "*Seek the means of approach to Him.*" This is the means of nearness, and nearness is the cause of joining and deliverance. The means of approach is the intermediaries that mark the friendship between the servant and the Patron. The cause of the conjunction between the two is obvious. From what come union and conjunction? Revering the commands, respecting the prohibitions, tenderness towards people, serving the Real, striving in the various supererogatory acts, and building up the spirit and heart.

Striving in the various supererogatory acts can be done with three things: first, remembering the gaze of God; second, keeping one's days away from damage; and third, recognizing one's poverty at the halting place of exposure. When you remember God's gaze, you are one of the godwary.

When you keep your days away from damage, you are one of the worshipers. When you recognize your poverty at the halting place of exposure, you are one of the humble.

One can build up the heart with three things: listening to knowledge, mixing little with people, and curtailing wishes. As long as you are listening to knowledge, you are in the circle of the angels. As long as you are apart from the people, you are counted among the sinless. As long as you have curtailed your wishes, you are one of the sincerely truthful.

*Seek the means of approach to Him.* He is saying, "O you who are worshipers, seek nearness to God with the virtues; O you who are knowers, with proofs; and O you who are recognizers, by abandoning means!"

What is the worshipers' means of approach? *The repenters, the worshipers, the praisers, the journeyers, the bowers, the prostrators, the commanders to the honorable and prohibiters of the improper, the keepers of God's bounds* [9:112].

What is the knowers' means of approach? *Have they not gazed upon the dominion of the heavens and the earth?* [7:185].

What is the recognizers' means of approach? *Say "God," then leave them* [6:91].

The worshipers' means of approach is practice, the knowers' means of approach unveiling, and the recognizers' means of approach face-to-face vision.

The worshipers' means of approach is truthfulness, the knowers' means of approach friendship, and the recognizers' means of approach nonbeing.

The worshipers' means of approach is remembrance with need, the knowers' means of approach remembrance with joy, and the recognizers' means of approach remembrance with neither need nor joy. This story is long.

This is why the Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, if anyone has found You by seeking, I have found You by fleeing. If anyone has found You by remembering, I have found You by forgetting. If anyone has found You by searching, I have found searching from You. O God, the means of approach to You is You. First were You, last are You. All is You, and that's it. The rest is folly."

It has also been said that the means of approach is the precedent solicitude concerning which the Exalted Lord says, "*those to whom the most beautiful has preceded from Us*" [21:101], and the mercy that He wrote against Himself in the Beginningless: "*Your Lord has written mercy against Himself*" [6:54]. He caressed the servant without the servant, placed the army of solicitude in front and wrote mercy against Himself.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, where will I find again the day when You belonged to me and I was not? Until I reach that day again, I will be in the midst of fire and smoke. If I find that day again in the two worlds, I will profit. If I find Your being for myself, I will be pleased with my own nonbeing."

*And struggle in His path.* This is addressed to the warriors. His words, "*Struggle in God*" [22:78], are addressed to the recognizers. The struggle of the warriors is with the sword against the enemies of the religion. The struggle of the recognizers is with severity against their own souls. Tomorrow the warrior's fruit will be houris and palaces, but the realizer will be inundated by light in the ocean of face-to-face vision. The struggle of the warriors goes forth from worship and, at the time of contemplation, they will gaze on the Endless. Hence He says to them, "*Perhaps you will prosper,*" that is, in the Endless. The struggle of the recognizers goes forth from recognition and, at the time of contemplation, they will gaze on the Beginningless, so the Exalted Lord says about them, "*He chose you*" [22:78].

**5:48** *For every one of you We have appointed an avenue and a method.... So vie in good deeds.*

The avenue is the Shariah, and the method is the Haqiqah. The avenue is the customs of the Shariah and the method is the road toward the Real. The avenue is what Muṣṭafā brought, and the method is a lamp that the Real holds next to the heart. The avenue is following the Shariah, and the method is finding access to the light of that lamp. The avenue is the message that you heard from the Messenger, and the method is the light that you find in the secret core. The Shariah belongs to everyone, and the Haqiqah belongs to some rather than others.

*So vie in good deeds.* The vying of the renouncers is through rejecting this world, the vying of the worshipers is through cutting off caprice, the vying of the recognizers is through negating wishes, and the vying of the *tawḥīd*-voicers is through abandoning people and forgetting both this world and the afterworld.<sup>1</sup>

**5:51** *O you who have faith, take not the Jews and Christians as friends. They are friends of each other. Whoso of you takes them as a friend is one of them. Surely God does not guide the wrongdoers.*

The majestic compeller, the great Lord, the knower to perfection, the exalted Possessor of Majesty, calls to His servants with a call of generosity. By way of gentleness He caresses them and in the attribute of clemency and mercy He turns the faces of their hearts away from others toward Himself. He is saying, “Do not take the stranger as friend, and do not approve of the enemy for your companionship. When you take a friend and take a companion, approve of him for the sake of God. Take the friend in God’s work and approve of the companion in God’s religion. When you seek the realities of faith, seek them from friendship with God’s friends and enmity with the enemies of the religion.”

Muṣṭafā said, “The firmest handle of faith is love in God and hate in God.”

The enemies of the religion whose enmity is obligatory are first Satan, and second the commanding soul. The soul is harder than Satan, for Satan does not go after the faith of the faithful, but rather their disobedience. The soul, however, pulls him to unbelief and wants his unbelief. Satan flees from [the formula] “There is no power and no strength but in God,” but the soul does not flee.

Joseph the sincerely truthful suffered many trials—he was thrown into the well, sold into slavery, and remained in prison for years—but he never lamented the way he did at the commanding soul: “*Surely the soul commands to ugliness*” [12:53]. Muṣṭafā said, “Your worst enemy is the soul between your two sides.”

**5:54** *O you who have faith, if any of you turn back on your religion, God will bring a people whom He loves, and who love Him.*

This verse contains an allusion for the knowers and good news for the faithful. The allusion is that God is the guardian and defender of the creed of submission, the unswerving religion, the Muhammadan Shariah, and that it will always remain. What will this religion lose if some people turn away? If some people turn back, the Lord of Mightiness will bring others who embrace this religion with spirit and heart and nurture it joyfully. With them God will preserve the signposts of His commands and the foundations of His prohibitions. With their places He will decorate the carpet of the Shariah. Upon them He has inscribed the letters of love, for He says, “*whom He loves, and who love Him.*” Upon the page of their hearts He has written with the divine script: *He wrote faith in their hearts* [58:22]. He has illuminated their inmost eye with the lamp of recognition: *So he is upon a light from his Lord* [39:22]. The Divinity is their nurturer, the lap of prophethood their cradle, beginninglessness and endlessness their warders, the playing field of gentleness the lodge of their gaze, and the carpet of awe the resting place of their aspiration. This is just what God says in another place: “*So if they disbelieve, we have already entrusted it to a people who do not disbelieve*” [6:89]. The Prophet said, “A group among my people will never cease supporting the Real. None who oppose them will harm them, and then God’s command will come.”

The good news is that whoever does not turn back is counted among the friends, the folk of love and faith. Those who do not fall into the abyss of turning back have the good news that the name of love will fall upon them.

God says, “*If any of you turn back on your religion, God will bring a people whom He loves, and who love Him.*” First He affirms His love, then the servants’ love. Thus you know that so long as God does not love the servant, the servant will not love.

Wāsiṭī said, “Gehenna was nullified when He mentioned His love for them with His words,

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<sup>1</sup> LI 2:123.

'Whom He loves, and who love Him.' What do defective attributes have to do with beginningless and endless attributes?"

Ibn ʿAṭāʾ was asked what love is. He said, "Branches that grow in the heart and give fruit in the measure of intellect."

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "The sign of finding friendship's response is approval, the water of friendship increases through loyalty, the basis of friendship's treasure is light, the fruit of friendship's tree is joy. Whoever fails to keep away from the two worlds is excused from friendship. Whoever seeks from the Friend something other than the Friend is ungrateful. Friendship is friendship for God, all the rest disquiet."

*Whom He loves, and who love Him.* A great work and a magnificent bazaar rose up in water and clay and became the kiblah of the Real's friendship and the target of union's arrow. How could the traveler not be delighted that friendship is the nearest way station to the Protector? The tree that produces only the fruit of joy is friendship, the soil that grows nothing but the flowers of intimacy is friendship, the cloud that rains nothing but light is friendship, the drink whose poison turns into honey is friendship, the road whose dust is musk and ambergris is friendship. Friendship's inscription is beginningless, and friendship's burning brand endless.

When the Friend's friendship is my habit and disposition,  
I am all from the Friend, and all of me is the Friend.

Behold how long friendship's good fortune lasts! Listen how fitting is the tale of the friends! The field of friendship is a vast heart, and the kingdom of paradise is one branch of friendship's tree. He who drinks friendship's wine is promised vision. Whoever is truthful will one day reach his desire.

God revealed to David, "O David, he who seeks Me will in truth find Me, but how can those who seek others find Me?"

"O David, tell the people of the earth, 'Turn toward companionship and intimacy with Me! Become intimate with My remembrance! Then I will be your heart's intimate.'

"I have created the clay of my friends from the clay of My bosom friend Abraham, from the clay of My speaking companion Moses, and from the clay of My beloved Muḥammad.

"O David, I have created the hearts of those who yearn for Me from My light and nurtured them with My majesty. I have servants whom I love and who love Me: *whom He loves, and who love Him*. They remember Me and I remember them: *So remember Me; I will remember you* [2:152]. They are happy with Me and I am happy with them: *God approves of them and they approve of Him* [9:100]. They stay loyal to My covenant and I stay loyal to their covenant: *And be loyal to My covenant; I will be loyal to your covenant* [2:40]. They yearn for Me and I yearn for them: 'Surely the yearning of the pious to encounter Me has become protracted, but My yearning to encounter them is more intense.'

### 5:55 *Your friend is only God, and His Messenger.*

Abū Saʿīd Kharrāz said, "When God desires to take one of His servants as a friend, He opens for him the door to His remembrance. When he takes pleasure in the remembrance, He opens for him the door to proximity. Then He lifts him up to the sitting place of intimacy. Then He seats him on the throne of *tawḥīd*. Then He lifts the veils from him, puts him into the abode of solitariness, and unveils majesty and tremendousness to him. When his eyesight falls on majesty and tremendousness, he remains without himself. At this point he becomes a servant in annihilation, so he falls under His protection and is rid of the claims of his soul."

Abū Saʿīd is saying, "When God wants to choose a servant and make him His friend among His servants, the first caress that He places upon him is to keep him in His remembrance such that he turns away from his own work toward the Real's work and turns away from remembering himself to remembering the Real. He comes forth from love for himself to love for the Real. Once he is at rest in remembering and loving the Real, He brings him near to Himself. The mark of nearness is the sweetness of obedience, dislike of disobedience, retiring from the people, and pleasure in seclusion. Then He sits him in the sitting place of seclusion, on the carpet of inti-

macy, on the throne of *tawhīd*, free of creatures, happy with the Real, unsettled in passion, the veils lifted, brought into the playing field of solitariness, with majesty and tremendousness unveiled. He is a stranger to himself, one with the Real, consumed within himself, having reached the Patron.” He keeps on saying, “With reports I went forth seeking certainty, fear my resource, hope my companion. The goal was hidden from me and I was striving in the religion. All at once the lightning of self-disclosure flashed from ambush. With thought they see days like that, with the Friend like this.”<sup>2</sup>

Listen with your spirit to these words spoken beautifully by the Pir of the Tariqah: “O most generous supervisor! O most merciful Fount of Bounty! O veiled by majesty and disclosed by generosity, apportioner before Tablet and Pen, displayer of the celebration of guidance after a thousand misfortunes! May I be delivered one day from the bother of Eve and Adam and be freed from the bonds of existence and nonexistence! May I remove this remorse and regret from my heart and take ease with the Beloved for a breath, the cup of happiness in hand again and again in the sitting place of intimacy!”

How long talk of Adam’s attributes and creation?

How long debate about the world’s time and eternity?

How long ambushing the servants, how long  
not disowning the world and Adam?

**5:83** *And when they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, thou seest their eyes overflow with tears because of the truth they recognize. They say, “Our Lord, we have faith, so write us down among the witnesses.”*

This verse alludes to the fact that faith is to be heard, seen, recognized, spoken, and done. *They hear* is evidence that it is to be heard. *Thou seest their eyes overflow with tears* is evidence that it is to be seen. *Because of the truth they recognize* is evidence that it is to be recognized. *They say* is evidence that it is to be spoken. Then, at the end of the verse, He says “*That is the recompense of the beautiful-doers*” [5:85]. *Beautiful-doers* is evidence that its deeds are to be done.

He began with hearing because first there is hearing. The servant hears the truth, it makes him happy, he accepts it, he comes into work, and he acts upon it. The Lord of the Worlds is pleased with the group in whom all these traits are found.

It has been said that three things are the marks of recognition, and that this group has all three to perfection: weeping, supplication, and approval—weeping for disloyalty, supplication for bestowal, and approval of the decree. Anyone who claims to have recognition and does not have these traits is not truthful in his claim, is not counted among the recognizers, and has no standing among the chevaliers and the religious.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Recognition is two: the recognition of the common people and the recognition of the elect. The recognition of the common people is by hearsay, and the recognition of the elect is by face-to-face vision. The recognition of the common people comes from the source of munificence, but the recognition of the elect comes from what they find.”

Concerning the recognition of the common people He says, “*When they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger.*” Concerning the recognition of the elect He says, “*He will show you His signs, and you will recognize them*” [27:93].

*When they hear* is praise of the folk of the Shariah, and *He shall show you His signs* is a felicitation for the folk of the Haqiqah. When someone speaks of the Shariah and turns his back in any respect, he becomes a heretic. When someone speaks of the Haqiqah and looks at himself in any respect, he becomes an associater.

**5:89** *God will not take you to task for idle talk in your oaths, but He will take you to task for the oaths you have bound. The expiation thereof is the feeding of ten indigent people with what you*

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2 These are words of Anṣārī, also quoted elsewhere in the text (e.g., under 37:24 and 42:28). I have corrected two mistakes in the text here on the basis of the other instances.

***usually feed your own family, or clothing them, or freeing a slave.***

When overpowered by ecstasy the chevaliers of the Tariqah sometimes swear oaths renewing the covenant and affirming the compact. They say things like, “By your rightful due, I will not gaze at other than You, I will not speak to other than You, and I will not leave Your covenant!” By virtue of *tawhīd* these oaths are idle talk and negligence in the witnessing of Unity. How can it be the servant’s place to give himself worth, to fancy that he is someone, or to consider his own words to have such status that he can swear an oath to Him? Rather, what is fitting for the servant is to welcome His rulings with beautiful approval. Whether He summons or drives away, he should not protest and not turn away. He should not speak of the realities of union and separation. He should take what He gives, and accept what comes. He should know that in reality it is He who is lovingly kind to perfection and it is He who determines and governs in every state.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O closer to us than ourselves, O more lovingly kind to us than ourselves, O caresser of us without us by Your generosity—not because of our worthiness, not because of our works. The burden is beyond our capacity, the practice not proper to us, the favor not within our ability. Whatever we have done has damaged us, whatever You have done subsists for us. Whatever You have done in our place You have done by Yourself, not for our sake.”

Expiation in the Shariah is well-known to the folk of knowledge—freeing slaves, feeding people, and clothing them. So also, in the tongue of allusion, expiation in the Tariqah is of three sorts: expending the spirit by virtue of ecstasy, expending the heart in the soundness of intention, and expending the soul by constant effort. If you are not able to do this, then abstain and fast from prohibited and blamable things.<sup>3</sup>

**5:90 *O you who have faith! Wine, arrow-shuffling, idols, and divining arrows are a filth and of the deeds of Satan.***

The Prophet said, “Wine is the gatherer of sin and the mother of loathsome things”: Wine is the root of loathsome things and the key to great sins, the basis of misdeeds, the seed of misguided acts, and the source of discord. It dries up the springhead of obedience, holds back the water of remembrance, and opens the door to heedlessness. The soul becomes drunk from wine and is held back from the prayer. The heart becomes drunk from heedlessness and is held back from secret whispering.

The Pir of the Tariqah spoke to these heedless people in the tongue of admonition: “O drunkards full of appetite! O sleepers in heedlessness! Have shame before that Lord who knows the treachery of the eyes and sees the inside of the hearts! *He knows the treachery of the eyes and what the breasts conceal* [40:19]. Oh, where is a whip like that of °Umar or a sword like that of °Alī to give these discourteous drunkards the Shari’ite punishment in the world of justice and to get these sleeping, heedless people to move! Does the poor wretch who drinks wine not know that when he puts the cup in his hand, the Throne and the Footstool tremble? From the Exalted Presence comes the call, ‘By My exaltation and majesty, I will give them to taste of My chastisement in boiling water and Zaqqūm!’”

Arrow-shuffling is gambling. When someone plays everything and loses all in a gambling house, he is considered great and recognized as a preceder. This is an allusion to the path of the chevaliers: They throw themselves down on the highway of predetermination so as to become abased before every piece of straw and to come out from the bonds of every color, counting themselves as nothing.

As long as you stay in bond to color, nature, the spheres, and the stars,  
how can you be allowed to say, “Speak like a Qalandar”? [DS 972]

**5:95 *O you who have faith, do not slay game when you are ritually consecrated.***

He forbade hunting to the ritually consecrated because such a person has the intention of visiting the Kaabah. In terms of allusion, He is saying, “When someone aims for My house and turns his

<sup>3</sup> This paragraph is derived from LI 2:140.

face to the eminent, holy Kaabah, hoping to be in My neighborhood, at least desert game should be protected and secure from him, for in his undertaken goal he has brought himself into the crowd of the pious and the good, and the attribute of the pious is this: ‘They do not harm an ant, nor do they have hidden thoughts of evil.’”<sup>4</sup>

It has been said that ritual consecration is of two sorts: the hajji’s consecration in the body, and the recognizer’s consecration in the heart. As long as the hajji is consecrated in the body, game is forbidden to him. As long as the recognizer is consecrated in the heart, seeking, wanting, and free choice are forbidden to him. The mark of the heart’s consecration is three things: to be on loan to the creatures, to be a stranger to oneself, and to be at ease from attachment. The fruit of the heart’s consecration is three things today and three things tomorrow. Today it is the sweetness of whispered prayer, the birth of wisdom, and the soundness of perspicacity; tomorrow it will be the light of contemplation, the call of gentleness, and the cup of wine.

**5:98 Know that God is intense in punishment and that God is forgiving, ever-merciful.**

He is *intense in punishment* toward the enemies and *forgiving, ever-merciful* toward the friends.<sup>5</sup>

The *intense in punishment* is severity and harshness toward the enemies. The *forgiving, ever-merciful* is caresses and generosity for the friends. He combined severity and gentleness in one verse so that the servant would live in fear and hope between severity and gentleness. When he looks at severity, he fears, and when he sees gentleness, he hopes. Fear is the fortress of faith, the antidote to caprice, and the weapon of the faithful. Hope is the steed of service, the supplies for striving, and the provision of worship.

It has also been said that the servant’s faith and certainty have two wings: fear and hope. How can a bird fly with one wing? In the same way, the faithful cannot travel the road of the religion in fear without hope or in hope without fear. True faith is like a balance: One pan is fear, the other pan hope, and the beam is love. The pans are hung from knowledge. Just as a balance must have pans, so hope and fear must have knowledge, which is why He put *Know that* at the beginning of the verse. Fear without knowledge is the fear of the Khawarij, hope without knowledge is the hope of the Murji’ah, and love without knowledge is the love of libertines.<sup>6</sup>

**5:100 Say: “The vile and the goodly are not equal, even if the manyness of the vile stirs you to admiration.”**

In the tongue of the Shariah, the vile is the forbidden, and the goodly is the permitted. In the tongue of the Haqiqah, every occupation that is empty of the mention and remembrance of the Real is vile; and every occupation at the beginning of which comes the Real’s name, in the middle of which is the witnessing of the Real, and at the end of which is praise and gratitude is goodly.

°Ā’isha the sincerely truthful commanded that a shirt be sewn. The person who was sewing seems to have been heedless of remembering the Real. His heedlessness became known to °Ā’isha. She commanded him to undo the sewing. She said, “This is vile, and the vile is not appropriate for me.”

It has been said that every wealth from which God’s rightful due is taken and the alms tax given is goodly, and everything from which it is not taken is vile and on the edge of destruction. Muṣṭafā said, “No property is wasted in the land and the sea except by holding back its alms tax.”

It has also been said that the vile is what you accumulate and store up in this world, holding it back from the hand of expenditure and good. The goodly is what you send forth for yourselves, spend in the good, and store up for the next world. This is the meaning of “What we sent forward was our gain, and what we left behind was our loss,” which was already mentioned.<sup>7</sup>

4 Persian translation of the text of LI 2:143, where the saying is ascribed to “them.”

5 LI 2:145.

6 This last sentence is quoted from Anṣārī, *Ṣad maydān* 333.

7 This is apparently a reference a saying of °Alī that Maybudī cited in the second stage of the commentary on 2:110 (KA 1:315-16), though the text there is somewhat different. The passage there reads as follows: “*Whatever good you send forward for your souls, you will find it with God* [2:110]. This is just like what He says in another place: ‘*On the day*

**5:101** *O you who have faith, do not ask about things which would harm you if they were made to appear to you.*

He is saying, “Do not circle around the stations of the great ones, do not seek access to their states, and do not ask about their way stations, for then you will see that your level falls short of that and you will despair, and despair is the seed of remorse and the foundation of idleness.”

A merchant from the bazaar came to Junayd and said, “O Pir of the Tariqah! If servanthood is what you have, then what do we have? What can we hope for? This is a place for despair.”

That pir said, “The army of the commander is not all special friends and boon companions. There are also dog-keepers and herdsman. In the empire, all are useful and all live in their own places and their own measures.”

Though you be beautiful, do not disdain the ugly,  
for in this realm flies are as useful as peacocks. [DS 307]

You should consider exalted the state of the dervish who said in his whispered prayer, “O God, approve of me as a lover! If you do not approve of me as a lover, approve of me as a servant! If you do not approve of me as a servant, approve of me as a dog!”

O friend, if you won't give me the forefront of respect,  
at least keep me outside the door like the dogs.

**5:105** *O you who have faith! Against you are your own souls. Those who are misguided cannot hurt you if you are guided.*

The tongue of commentary is what I explained. The tongue of allusion in keeping with the tasting of the folk of desire is this: “O faithful, beware! Subjugate your own soul before it subjugates you. Busy it with obedience before it busies you with disobedience.”

When Abū °Uthmān was asked about this verse, he replied, “Against you is your own soul. If you occupy yourself with making its corruption wholesome and concealing its shameful parts, you will be too busy to gaze on the creatures and to occupy yourself with them.”

Ḥusayn Maṣūf gave advice to his disciple, saying, “Against you is your own soul—if you do not keep it busy, it will keep you busy.”

Muḥammad ibn °Alī said, “Against you is your own soul—if you spare the creatures its evil, you will have taken care of most of its rightful due.”<sup>8</sup>

The nature of the soul is always to be at rest with this world and to hurry toward disobedience. It counts disobedience as a small thing and is lazy in obedience. It is conceited and acts with eye-service toward the creatures. Within it are found associationism, eye-service, and hypocrisy. It is said, “The soul is duplicitous in all its states, hypocritical in most of its states, and an associater in some of its states.”

Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī said, “If in that world the Lord says to me, ‘Make a wish,’ I will ask permission to enter hell to punish this soul, for in this world it has always made me writhe and suffer.”

Muṣṭafā said, “Your worst enemy is your soul between your two sides.” He said this because when you get along with an enemy, you become secure from his evil, but when you get along with your own soul, you will perish. If you act well toward someone, he will thank you at the resurrection, and if you act badly, he will complain. The state of the soul is the opposite: If you act well toward it in this house, it will be your antagonist in that house, and if you act badly toward it in this house, it will thank you in that house.

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*when every soul shall find the good it has done made present* [3:30]. In the reports it has come that when the servant leaves this world, the people will say, ‘What did he leave behind?’ The angels will say, ‘What did he send forward?’ The Commander of the Faithful, °Alī, went out to the graveyard and said, ‘Peace be upon you, O folk of the graves! Your possessions have been divided up, your houses are occupied, and your women have been married. That is the news of what is with us. What is the news of what is with you?’ A voice from the Unseen said, ‘And peace be upon you. What we ate was our gain, what we sent forward we have found, and what we left behind we lost.’”

8 These three sayings are from Sulamī’s commentary on the verse.

Muṣṭafā said, “Whenever someone detests his own soul in God’s Essence, God will make him secure from the chastisement of the Day of Resurrection.” He also said, “O ʿAlī, when you see people occupying themselves with the defects of others, occupy yourself with the defects of your own soul. And when you see people occupying themselves with cultivating this world, occupy yourself with cultivating your heart.”

It has been said that in man’s makeup the heart is like the Kaabah, the soul is like a tavern, and the two are facing each other. Night and day the commanding soul raids the heart’s pavilion. Like someone stricken by affliction the heart complains each time to the Exalted Threshold, and each time a robe of honor is sent to the ledgers at the side of Eternity. “Surely in every day and night God has 360 gazes at the hearts of the servants.”

## Surah 6: al-An<sup>c</sup>ām

### **6:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

This is the name of a king who is not backed by armies and provisions, the name of an exalted one who is not exalted by tribes and numbers, the name of a tremendous one who is not constricted by time and duration. He is not grasped by utmost limit or returning place, He transcends likeness, peer, similar, and child. He is the One, the Unique, the Self-Standing, *the Self-Sufficient; He begets not, nor was He begotten, and equal to Him is none* [112:2-4].

This is the name of a Lord who is subsistent and lasting without duration, overpowering and able without companion or help. In Essence He is one without number, in attributes self-standing and self-sufficient, without associate or equal, without advisor, without child. His bounty has no limit, His decree has no repeller, *He begets not, nor was He begotten*, from the Beginningless to the Endless. He is a tremendous God, a generous all-compeller, splendid, renowned, and eternal.

He is the companion of every stranger, the intimate of everyone lonely, the foundation of everyone poor, the shelter of every wounded heart. All His deeds are pure, all His words true. His knowledge is without limit, His mercy without bounds. He is beautiful in artisanry, sweet in making, bestower of blessings, provider of turns, lovingly kind though hidden. He is hidden from the perception of how, outside the reasoning of imaginations, and pure of supposition, fancy, and being thus. He is higher than everything intelligence shows, far from everything on which fancy falls, and pure of every foundation laid down by reflection and investigation. It is forbidden for reflection and investigation to know and understand His Essence and attribute, and our religion is complete when we assent to the outward meaning, accept what has been transmitted, and give up on the meanings.

This indeed is the tongue of learning in the allusion of the Shariah. It is the resource of the wage-earners and the capital of the paradise-seekers. But the recognizers and God-perceivers have another tongue and another intimation. Their tongue is the tongue of unveiling, their intimation the intimation of love. According to the allusion of the Haqiqah, the tongue of learning comes from narration and the tongue of unveiling from solicitude. The narration is a banner flying over the world, the solicitude a sign in the two worlds. The narration is for the wage-earner seeking hours, and the solicitude for the one drowned in light in the ocean of face-to-face vision.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “If the share of the wage-earner is everlasting paradise, the recognizer hopes that the Friend will give him one glance. If the wage-earner is attached to loss and gain, the recognizer is burning in a smokeless fire. If the wage-earner melts in fear of hell, the recognizer is in joy from head to toe.”

So much is the joy in my head from loving You  
that I am confused—are You the lover in my arms,  
Has Your union struck its tent at my door,  
or will my head roll while busy with Your work?

*In the name of God* belongs to creatures in general, “in God” belongs to the elect of the Threshold, and “God” belongs to the sincerely truthful, secluded with Him. He who says *in the name of God* sees his own act, the secondary cause, and the Causer. He who says “in God” sees the cause and the Causer, but he does not see his own act. He who says “God” sees neither his own act nor the

cause; He sees all as the Causer. Say “*God,*” then leave them [6:91] is an allusion to this and a mark for the seekers of God.

One breath with the Friend is better than the everlasting kingdom, one blink of intimacy with the Friend is sweeter than the spirit. Exalted is the servant who is worthy for that which is the spirit’s ease, the spirit’s livelihood, and the spirit’s pain.

You are both my heart’s pain and my spirit’s ease—  
It is You who stir up trouble and You who quell it.

Say “*God,*” then leave them. He is saying, “My servant! See only My loving kindness, see only My taking care of you! Do not lay favors on Me with your acts. Look at My success-giving and do not take joy in remembering yourself. Look at My instructions and flee from the marks of yourself. See everything as My loving kindness.”

The tongue of the servant’s state replies, “O Lord, give me the lamp of knowledge and the burning brand of recognition so that I may see only You, I may know only You. O Lord, I have come to the Threshold as a servant. If You like, exalt me, and if You like, lay me low. O bringer of happiness and adorer of the secret cores! O thief of scatteredness and keeper of lights! An eye that does not see You is black, a heart that does not recognize you is carrion.”

When an eye sees You, it is relieved of pain.  
When a spirit finds You, it is exempt from death.

**6:1 Praise belongs to God who created the heavens and the earth and made the darknesses and the light.**

He begins by lauding Himself, thereby praising Himself with His own beginningless laudation and reporting of His own self-sufficient brilliance and unitary elevation.<sup>1</sup>

This is praise of the tremendous Lord, the wise Enactor. He is subsistent through His own subsistence, transcendent through His own attributes, magnificent through His own magnificence. His elevation is everlasting, His brilliance self-standing, His existence unitary, His being self-sufficient, His face majestic, His power perfect—*Glory be to Him! And God is the One, the All-Subjugating* [39:4], the exalted, the all-compeller, the great, the transcendent.

One of the great ones of the religion and leaders of the Tariqah said, “Who is worthy of praise other than He whose power *created the heavens and the earth and made the darknesses and the light?*” Who is fitting and who is worthy to be praised for purity and named for greatness other than He who created heaven and earth, created day and night, set up heaven like a roof, adorned earth like a cradle, readied the day for your livelihood, and made the night your time of rest?

It has also been said that heaven is an allusion to the heaven of recognition, which is the hearts of the recognizers. Earth is an allusion to the earth of service, which is the souls of the worshipers. He decorated heaven with the form of the stars, adorned it with sun and moon, and made it the gazing place of the earth-dwellers. In the same way, He adorned the heaven of recognition with the sun of knowledge, the moon of *tawhīd*, and the stars of thoughts, and then He made it the gazing-place of the heaven-dwellers. Whenever the satans aim to listen stealthily, they are subjugated from the heaven of exaltedness by the stoning of stars. This is why the Exalted Lord said, “*We have made them stonings for the satans*” [67:5]. In the same way, whenever Satan aims to instill disquiet, a lightning flashes in the heart of the faithful servant from the heaven of recognition and burns Satan. This is why He says, “*Surely the godwary, when a visitation from Satan touches them, remember, and then see clearly*” [7:201].

On the expanse of the earth there are seven seas in which are benefits and livelihood for creatures. In the same way, in the earth of service there are seven seas in which are the felicity and salvation of the servant. Abū Ṭālib Makkī, author of *Nourishment of the Hearts*, alluded to all of them by saying that the well-trodden paths of the wayfarers are seven seas: the intoxication of ecstasy, the lightning of unveiling, the bewilderment of witnessing, the light of proximity, the

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<sup>1</sup> LI 2:154.

friendship of finding, the splendor of togetherness, and the reality of solitariness. He said that these seven seas have been placed at the top of the street of *tawhīd*. God placed the seven depths of hell in the road of paradise for the sake of the mimickers, and until the mimickers and the common people pass them by they will not reach paradise. In the same way, so long as the wayfarers on the road of *tawhīd* have not passed over these seven seas, they will not reach the reality of *tawhīd*.

*And made the darknesses and the light.* Wherever there is ignorance, all is darkness, and wherever there is knowledge, all is light. Wherever there are both knowledge and deeds, there is *light upon light* [24:35]. As long as the servant governs over his own work, he is in the darkness of ignorance and the wrap of heedlessness. As long as he delegates it, he is in the brightness of recognition and the light of guidance. Among the traditions has come the saying, “O child of Adam! You have two great tasks ahead of you. One is putting the commands and prohibitions to work, and this I have placed upon you. Cling to it! The other is governing over your best interests, and that I have accepted for Myself and lifted from you. Do not busy your heart with it. I govern My servants through My knowledge—surely of My *servants*, I am *aware, seeing* [35:31].”

### **6:2 He it is who created you from clay.**

Adam was two things: clay and spirituality. His clay pertained to the World of the Creation, and his spirituality to the World of the Command. What pertains to creation is “He fermented Adam’s clay in His hand.” What pertains to the command is *I have blown into him of My spirit* [15:29]. *Surely God chose Adam* [3:33] pertains to the beauty of the command, and *Adam disobeyed* [20:121] to the taint of creation.

In Adam were both rose garden and field of clay, so the clay was the place of roses. Every rose, however, has a thorn. A rose like the bosom friend Abraham had a thorn like the rebellious Nimrod. A rose like Moses had thorns like Pharaoh and Haman. A rose like Jesus had thorns like those impure Jews. A rose like Muḥammad the Arab had a thorn like Abū Jahl the wretched.

Who knows the secret of Adam’s innate disposition? Who recognizes Adam’s good fortune and rank? No eagle of anyone’s mind has alighted on the branch of the tree of Adam’s good fortune. No eye of anyone’s insight has perceived the beauty of the sun of Adam’s limpidness.

When he was at rest in the highest paradises, he supposed that the same tent of safety would be pitched for him endlessly. Then he was addressed by the side of the Compeller and the court of the Exalted: “*What, one who is reared amidst ornaments?* [43:18]. O Adam, We want to make a man of you. You have become satisfied with color and scent like pretty brides!

“How long will you sit like a woman in hope of color and scent?

Fix your aspiration on the road and set out like a man! [DS 205]

“O Adam! Pull your hands back from the neck of Eve, for you must use your hands for the neck of passion’s crocodile. You must become the drinking companion of the Shariah’s lion. Pull back from the attributes of being, for you must travel with the feet of discipline and the boots of blame into the open horizons of poverty. Go, sit on the dust-pile, and be content with a piece of bread, ragged clothes, and ruins, so that you may become a man.

“Throw away life, travel the road, live upright, and be a man!

Then you will subsist—when you empty your skirt of these ruins.

“O Adam! Look carefully lest you be self-seeing. The angels who sang the song ‘O Glorified! O Holy One!’ to the melody of *We glorify Thy praise* [2:30] were self-seeing. They kept their eyes on their own beauty, so We emptied their inner selves of passion for the sake of your eminence. We pulled you up from the depths of the sea of omnipotence so that you would sing the song of *Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves* [7:23] to the melody of your disobedience.

“Quit being the companion of self-nurturing habit-worshippers!

Kiss the dust beneath the feet of those who have disowned self!” [DS 972]

**6:3 And He is God in the heavens and in the earth.**

One can say that He is in heaven through Essence, everywhere through knowledge, in the spirit through companionship, and in the soul through proximity. The soul comes to nothing in Him, and He takes the place of the spirit that comes to nothing in Him. He is in finding where found, and in recognition where recognized. Reports do not spoil the Haqiqah, nor does the Haqiqah nullify the reports. Say “*He sat*” [7:54], for He is upon the Throne through sitting. Recite “*He is with you*” [57:4], for He is with you wherever you are. He does not take up place through need, but rather displays places through mercy. He built the Throne for the God-seekers, not for the God-recognizers. If the God-recognizer should take one breath without Him, he would have bound the sash of unbelief.

O boast of my tongue in the two worlds and delight of my spirit in tomorrow’s vision! O my occupation in the two worlds, remake my situation’s occupation with Yourself! I have no spirit to scatter before the finding of You, no tongue to acknowledge Your favors. He who sees You is concealed in vision, and he who seeks You is neither on earth nor in heaven.

**6:12 Say: “To whom belongs what is in the heavens and in the earth?” Say: “To God. He has written mercy against Himself.”**

Ask them, O Muḥammad! Does anyone dwell in the house? In verified truth, does the rightful due of the realm of being have any weight with the Real? If they fail to answer, that will be a healing. So say, “God in His lordhood is enough.”<sup>2</sup>

God, and that’s it. The rest is folly. O God! It is not from anyone to You, nor from You to anyone—all is from You to You, all is You, and that’s it. Glory be to God! A world full of things and full of people—He overthrows it all in one breath. A hundred eyes would not be enough for me to gaze on this work.

*He has written mercy against Himself.* Before He began to create the newly arrived things and to originate the engendered beings, He struck the coin of mercy in the mint of the Unseen as the hard cash of the servants’ states and deeds: *Surely I am God; there is no god but I* [20:14]. “My mercy takes precedence over My wrath.”

Tomorrow on the Day of Mustering, the Messenger will call out at the top of the bazaar of the resurrection: “O King, here is a handful of the disobedient. Let me be instructed to clothe them in the shirt of Your mercy, for You have said, ‘*We sent thee only as a mercy to the worlds*’ [21:107]. O Lord, it is the day of the bazaar for these beggars. I was catching them with the lasso of the invitation, so I made them many promises. O Lord, do not shame Muḥammad in this gathering of the multitudes! Turn Your promise of mercy and generosity into reality, for You Yourself said, ‘*O My servants who have been immoderate against yourselves, despair not of God’s mercy*’ [39:53].”

From the Court of Majesty will come the call of generosity and mercy: “O Muḥammad! The work of your community is not outside of three: Either they are people of faith, or they are recognizers, or they are disobedient. If they have faith and are hoping for paradise, then here is My paradise. If they are the disobedient hoping for My forgiveness, then here is My mercy and forgiveness. If they are the recognizers hoping for vision, then here is My vision.”

Thus the road of the servants is to open their mouths in praise and laudation. In the state of brokenness they should keep on saying with the attribute of pleading and poverty, “O closer to us than ourselves! O more lovingly kind to us than ourselves! O caresser of us without us through Your generosity—not because of our worthiness, not because of our works. The burden is beyond our capacity, the practice not proper to us, the favor not within our ability. Whatever we have done has damaged us, whatever You have done subsists for us. Whatever You have done in our place You have done by Yourself, not for our sake.”<sup>3</sup>

**6:13 And His is whatsoever dwells in the night and the day, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.**

The newly arriving things are *God’s* as a kingdom, *in* God as manifestation, *from* God in appear-

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is from LI 2:158.

<sup>3</sup> The saying is by the Pir of the Tariqah (see under 5:89).

ance, and *unto* God in return. *And He is the Hearing* of the moans of the yearners, *and the Knowing* of the longing of the finders.<sup>4</sup>

It has been said that night is a general darkness that appears around the world, and day is a general brightness that reaches the whole world. Before the creation of the world and before the creation of light and darkness, there was neither night nor day. In paradise there is no sun, but all is day, for in reality the general brightness is there. Whatever is closer to God has a more complete light and luminosity. °Abdallāh ibn Mas‘ūd said, “Surely there is no day or night with your Lord—He illuminates the heavens with the light of His face.”

It is mentioned in the traditions that the Lord of the Worlds created a tremendous angel, placing night in one of his fists and day in the other. Whenever the angel closes one fist and opens the other, that is the ruling power of the day. When he closes this fist and opens the other, that is the ruling power of the night. By way of allusion, God is saying: “I placed the disk of the sun in the fist of the angel, but I did not give the hearts of My friends to anyone. The angel has no intervention in or power over the hearts of the friends.” Know that the disk of the sun is in the fist of the angel, but the heart of the lovers is in the fist of the King—majestic and high is He! Muṣṭafā said, “The hearts of the servants are between two fingers of the All-Merciful.”

**6:14 Say:** “*Shall I take as friend other than God, the Originator of the heavens and earth, who feeds and is not fed?*”

“After He has honored me with His beautiful friendship, shall I take another as friend? After the brightness of His solicitude has fallen upon me, shall I gaze on someone else in the two houses?”<sup>5</sup>

“The sun of solicitude and kind favor has shone upon me from the Majestic and Exalted Threshold and taken care of my business without me in the two worlds, lighting up my heart with the eternal love and adorning it with the ornament of intimacy. He gave me such eminence at the forefront of acceptance that sometimes He puts up with my disdain: *By thy life!* [15:72]. Sometimes the grasp of the attributes explains the polish of my heart’s mirror by virtue of solicitude: *Did We not expand for thee thy breast?* [94:1]. Sometimes the assessor of the beginningless and endless register turns over the acceptance and rejection of the creatures to my threshold: *Whatever the Messenger gives you, take; whatever he prohibits you, forgo* [59:7]. With all this good fortune, rank, solicitude, and kind favor, how would it be appropriate for my heart to request someone else or to gaze upon this world and the afterworld?”

Hence he said concerning this world, “What do I have to do with this world?” And concerning the afterworld: “*The eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass*” [53:17]. Neither this world, nor the afterworld—rather, seeing the Patron.

*The Originator of the heavens and earth*, the God who created earth and heaven. He is the enactor of the world and the world’s folk, the knower of the apparent and the hidden. He does not partake of daily provision, but He assigns daily provision to the servants.

*Who feeds and is not fed.* To Him belongs the attribute of generosity, so He feeds. To Him belongs the rightful due of eternity, so He is not fed.<sup>6</sup>

**6:17** *And if God touches thee with harm, none can remove it but He.*

Just as in creating harm, He is one and unique, so also in repelling harm, He is unique and without equal. If all the world’s folk were to gather together, the jinn and mankind holding hands to bring about a pain that is not there, they would not be able to do it; or to remove a pain that is there without God’s wish, they would not find a way. Know that the wellspring of pain and remedy is one! Recognize that the source of blessing and trial is one! And see that the rising place of unbelief and faith is one! In the circle of togetherness these have one color, and in the way stations of dispersion they are multicolored. This is what that chevalier put into verse:

4 LI 2:158.

5 LI 2:158.

6 These two sentences are from LI 2:158.

On your two cheeks are both unbelief and faith,  
in your two lips are both pain and remedy. [DS 810]

**6:18** *And He is the Severe over His servants.*

He breaks the pleasures of the servants, and in Essence and attributes He is above all the travelers. For the poor He is the good fortune of the heart and the life of the spirit. He perceives the unperceivable and sees the unseen face-to-face. One breath with the Real in exchange for the two worlds is cheap, one vision of Him for a hundred thousand spirits is gratis, one moment of intimacy with Him is sweeter than the spirit. He who is slain in this work is between fire and joy, and he who is unaware of this work is jailed in the prison of mortal nature. O God, vision of You is close, but at such closeness the work is too subtle. O God, everyone is upon something, but I don't know what I'm upon. I fear only the moment when who I am appears. Since he who is in remembrance is happy with You, why is he who is happy with You lamenting?

When someone has a sweetheart like You in his arms,  
how would he be aware of the noise of the Resurrection?

**6:19** *Say: "What thing is greater in bearing witness?" Say: "God."*

There is no bearing witness more truthful than the Real's own bearing witness to what He witnessed at the first. That is His words, "*God bears witness that there is no god but He*" [3:18]. This is the Real's bearing witness that the Real is the Real.

On the first day, at the beginningless covenant, with true words and pure speech, He reported of the unitary existence, the self-sufficient being, the endless majesty, the eternal beauty, the continuous Essence, and the self-standing attributes.

Abū °Abdallāh Qurashī said, "This is a teaching for the servants and a right guidance for the seekers. With His own gentleness He is teaching the servants to bear witness in their measure to His oneness and solitariness, just as He bears witness as is fitting for Him. Put aside the path of resistance, lest you fall into the pit like the abandoned Iblis."

One of them said, "God bears witness to His oneness, His unity, and His self-sufficiency. Others, like the angels and the possessors of knowledge, bear witness by assenting to the truth of that to which He bears witness concerning Himself."

He Himself bore witness to His lordhood, greatness, and oneness, for no one else was worthy of bearing witness. The creatures cannot reach the core of His majesty and tremendousness, and their bearing witness is nothing but assenting to the truth of the Real's bearing witness.

Ja°far ibn Muḥammad said, "The bearing witness of people is built on four pillars: first following the commands, second avoiding prohibitions, third contentment, and fourth approval."

It is said that people's bearing witness is of three sorts: the bearing witness of the common people, the bearing witness of the elect, and the bearing witness of the elect of the elect. The bearing witness of the common people is to emerge from associationism. The bearing witness of the elect is to enter into contemplation. The bearing witness of the elect of the elect is the breeze of companionship from the side of proximity for the sake of union.

The self-purifier sees all from Him, the recognizer sees all in Him, the *tawḥīd*-voicer sees all as He. Every named being is a loan. True being is He—the rest are suspect.

Say "God," then leave them [6:91]. Oh, all is You, and that's it! How could anyone appear alongside You?

**6:28** *No, what they had been concealing beforehand now appears to them, and even if they were sent back, they would return to what had been prohibited to them.*

This is an allusion to the Day of Resurrection, which is the day of the unveiling of states and the manifestation of secrets, *the day secret cores will be tried* [86:9] and hidden things will become manifest. There will be many who were counted among the renunciants in this world and who wore the color of the friends and the dress of the familiar but who will see on that day the burning

brand of wretchedness on their own foreheads, having been brought down to the dwelling place of the strangers. There will also be many whom you recognized as shameless and knew as bound for the manacles, who had nothing in this world, who were no one and nameless, yet in whose name on that day will be brought the treasuries of the unseen and the robes of generosity. The holy ones of the Higher Plenum and the dwellers in the Gardens of the Shelter will be staring and astonished at His work. It will be as the poet said:

Many a prayerful pir will be left behind without steed,  
many a tavern-going scoundrel will saddle a roaring lion. [DS 110]

*And even if they were sent back, they would return to what had been prohibited to them.* Even if the folk of punishment were sent back to this world of theirs, they would return to their refusal and denial. And even if the folk of limpidness and loyalty were sent back to this world of theirs, they would return to the beauty of their deeds.<sup>7</sup>

**6:40** *Say: “Do you see: Were God’s chastisement to come to you or were the Hour to come to you, would you supplicate other than God, if you are truthful?”*

If harm touches you, whom will you want to remove it? If an affair turns against you, from whom will you hope for gentleness in it?<sup>8</sup>

The poor child of Adam who does not know the worth of this gentleness and does not recognize the danger of this exaltedness! This verse is both a manifestation of His exaltedness, majesty, and unneediness toward the servants, and a preparation for His gentleness, bounteousness, and largesse of mercy toward them. He is saying, “If in My lordhood I should assault these creatures because of justice, who is it that will hold that assault back from them and come to their aid? Were I suddenly to bring forth the banner of the resurrection from the ambush of the Unseen, where will these servants flee? Whose hand will they grasp? Whom will they call?” Then, with His own generosity, he answers:

**6:41** *No, He it is whom you will supplicate, so He will remove that for which you supplicate Him if He will, and you will forget what you associated with Him.*

“You will call upon Me, you will know Me, and you will ask Me to remove the trial. It is I who am powerful to perfection, I who am bounteous with bestowal, I who am the beautiful doing, beautiful-wanting friend and companion.”

In the reports of David has come this: “O David! Ask the earth-dwellers why they do not become friends with Me, for I am worthy of friendship. I am the Lord with munificence and without niggardliness, with knowledge and without ignorance, with patience and without incapacity. There is no change in My attributes and no alteration in My words. I am the bestower upon the servants and vast in mercy. I have never turned back from bounty and generosity. In the Beginningless I wrote mercy toward them against Myself and burned the incense of love. I lit up their hearts with the light of recognition.” The tongue of the servants’ state says in the tune of thanksgiving,

“Love for Your Essence, my God, is the belief of the friends,  
remembering Your description, O Lord, dispels the grief of the grieving.  
The cash in hand of the servants is the treasure-house of Your bounty,  
so the hopeful keep on sewing the purse of hope.”

“O David, if those who turn away from Me knew how I wait for them and how I yearn to put aside their acts of disobedience, they would die in yearning for Me and would cut off all their ties because of love for Me. O David, this is what I desire for those who turn away from Me. How then is My desire for those who turn toward Me?!

“O David! I give blessings, and they show gratitude to others. I fend off trial, and they see

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7 LI 2:162.

8 LI 2:166.

that from others. Their shelter is My Presence, and they take shelter in others. All right, let them go, let them flee, and they will return at last.”

You also have brightness from Me—  
you’ll keep wandering, then you’ll come to Me.

“O David! I am the friend of him who befriends Me. I am the companion of him who takes Me as companion. I sit with the one who sits with Me in the seclusion of remembrance. I am the intimate of him who becomes the intimate of remembering Me.

“O David! Whosoever seeks Me finds Me, and he who finds Me is worthy of not losing.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O Remembered in the proofs, O Reminder of intimacy! Since You are present, of what use to us is seeking? O God, everyone has a hope, and my hope is vision. Without vision I have no need for any wage nor any use for paradise.”

As long as I have this hidden pain  
I will be seeking You—You know the remedy.

*No, He it is whom you will supplicate.* Concerning the intimations of this verse Jurayrī said, “The recognizers return to Him at the first beginnings, and the common people return to Him after despair of the creatures.” At the first of the work and the beginning of their states with the Real, the recognizers flee to the Real, do not set their hearts on the creatures, and do not see the secondary causes. The common people get caught up with the secondary causes and set their hearts on the creatures. Finally, once they despair of the creatures, they return to the Real.

Junayd said, “Those who supplicate the creatures are supplicating Him, for God says, ‘*No, He it is whom you will supplicate.*’”

By putting the pronoun referring to the Real first and placing the call of the creatures afterwards, He is alluding to the fact that the servant reaches supplication by means of the response of the Real; he does not reach the response of the Real by his own supplication. This is the same as saying that the recognizer finds seeking from finding, not finding from seeking. This question has details, which were explained in the Surah of al-Fātiḥa.

**6:42 *Indeed We sent to nations before thee, and We seized them with misery and hardship that perhaps they would plead.***

Ibn ʿAṭāʾ said, “‘We seized from them all the paths so that they would return to Us.’<sup>9</sup> I shut down all the roads to them so that they would turn away totally from the realm of being and busy themselves with My companionship, putting love for Me in their hearts.”

Conforming with this is the story of Majnūn. He was seen circumambulating the Kaabah, out of touch with himself and agitated. The sea of passion was sending up waves in his breast, and his hands were raised in prayer: “‘O God, increase me in love for Laylā!’ Lord God, increase the passion for Laylā in my heart and multiply the trial of her love a thousand times!”

His father, who was the prince of the time, said, “O Majnūn! Many antagonists have risen up against you. Go away for a few days, and perhaps they will forget about you, and this madness for Laylā will become less.”

Majnūn went and on the third day came back. He said, “Father, excuse me. Passion for Laylā has closed all the roads to me, and I can only take the road to Laylā’s street.”

Each has a prayer-niche in some direction,  
but Sanāʾī’s prayer-niche is Your street. [DS 1004]

**6:52 *And drive not away those who supplicate their Lord morning and evening, desiring His face.***

The unbelievers came before Muṣṭafā and said, “O Muḥammad, we want to have faith in you, but it is beneath our dignity to sit with these beggars and smell the unpleasant scent of their shabby clothes. Keep them away from you so that we may have faith in you.”

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9 Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* 6:42.

God’s Messenger desired eagerly for them to have faith, which is why God said, “*Perhaps thou art consuming thyself with grief that they do not have faith in this talk*” [18:6].

One narrative has reported that God’s Messenger sent ‘Umar with a message to these poor men, telling them to come less often for a few days so that perhaps those people would have faith. ‘Umar had not taken three steps before Gabriel came and brought this verse—“*And drive not away! O Muḥammad, do not drive them away, for I have not driven them away. Do not caress those whom I have not called.*”

Yes, those accepted by the Presence are one thing, those driven away by severance something else! Those poor men were the ones called by *And God invites to the abode of peace* [10:25], and those estranged ones were the ones driven away by *Slink into it, and do not talk to Me!* [23:108].

God’s Messenger called ‘Umar back. The unbelievers returned and said, “If you can, at least give us a turn one day and them a turn another day, and then we may have faith in you.” God’s Messenger aspired to set these turns as they wanted. Gabriel came and brought this verse: “*And keep thy soul patient with those who supplicate their Lord* [18:28]. Be with them, for I am with them. You should want them, for I want them.”

When the unbelievers despaired of his setting down turns day by day, they returned and said, “If you do not set down turns, we allow that. We will sit along with them for a time, and you look at us, not at them. You show respect to us, and then we will have faith in you.”

Muṣṭafā called ‘Umar and sent him to the poor men to make their hearts happy and to seek their heart’s approval for this so that perhaps those unbelievers would have faith. But the goal of the unbelievers in what they were asking was not to have faith. Rather, they wanted to torment the hearts of the poor so that perhaps they would find Muṣṭafā repellant and leave his religion. When ‘Umar set out on the road to take this message, Gabriel came and brought this verse: “*And let not thine eyes turn away from them*” [18:28], O Muḥammad, do not turn your face away from these poor men and do not lift your eyes away from them, for I am always gazing upon them.” God’s Messenger turned totally to the poor and sat with them. He always used to say, “Welcome to those concerning whom my Lord counseled me.”

*Desiring His face.* Abū Ya‘qūb Nahrjūrī was asked, “What is the attribute of the desirer?”

He recited the verse, “*Those who supplicate their Lord morning and evening, desiring His face*” [18:28]. Then he said, “They wake up and have nothing to ask from this world of theirs, nor any demand for their afterworld. Their only aspiration is to talk with their Patron. When they become disengaged for God, the Real’s solicitude devotes itself to them and undertakes to speak for them. Hence He said, ‘*And drive them not away, O Muḥammad!*’”

*Desiring His face.* The meaning of desire is a man’s wanting as he travels the road. It is of three sorts: One is desiring only this world, another is desiring only the next world, and the third is desiring only the Real.

Desiring this world is what He says: “*You desire the chance goods of this life* [8:67]. *Whosoever desires this hasty world* [17:18]. *Whosoever desires the tillage of this world* [42:20]. *If you desire the life of this world and its adornment* [33:28].” The mark of desiring this world is two things: approving of increase in this world by means of decrease in the religion; and turning away from the poor among the Muslims.

Desiring the afterworld is what He says: “*Whosoever desires the afterworld* [17:19]. *Whosoever desires the tillage of the next world* [42:20].” Its mark is two things: approving of the safety of the religion by decreasing in this world, and bosom friendship with the poor.

Desiring the Real is what God says: “*Desiring His face* [6:52]. *If you desire God and His Messenger* [23:29].” Its mark is stepping beyond the two worlds, becoming free of the creatures, and escaping oneself.<sup>10</sup>

This was an explication in terms of learning and the verification of the expression. As for the explication in terms of understanding in the tongue of allusion, it is what the Pir of the Tariqah said when he was asked about desire: “It is a breath between knowledge and the present moment

10 These three paragraphs are based on *Ṣad maydān*, no. 5 (262-63).

in the quarter of joy, the neighborhood of friendship, and the house of nonbeing. The house has four borders: one with the distraught, another with the strangers, a third with the heart-lost, and a fourth with the yearners.”

Then he said, “O helping and lovingly kind! Exalted is he who has one breath with You. O Found and Findable! What mark does the desirer show other than selflessness? Everyone’s tribulation is because of distance, but the desirer’s because of nearness! Everyone is thirsty from not finding water, but the desirer is thirsty from being quenched.

“O God, I seek the Found. I say to the Seen, ‘What do I have, what should I seek, when will I see, what should I say?’ I am entranced by this seeking, I am seized by this speaking.”

As long as I have the spirit, I will suffer in grief for You.

Without the spirit I will not entrust Your passion’s pain to anyone.

**6:54** *And when those who have faith in Our signs come to thee, say, “Peace be upon you. Your Lord has written mercy against Himself, that whosoever of you does an ugly deed in ignorance, and thereafter repents and makes wholesome, He is forgiving, ever-merciful.”*

“The faithful are one thing, the recognizers something else. The faithful first look at the artifacts and the signs, then they reach Us from the signs. The recognizers first reach Us, then they return from Us to the signs.

“O Muḥammad! Unto those who have faith in Us by the intermediary of the signs, convey Our greeting of peace by the intermediary of yourself! Unto those who recognize Us without intermediary and find Us without the artifacts, We will convey Our greetings of peace without intermediary.” That is in His words, “*Peace—a word from an ever-merciful Lord*” [36:58].

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, he who recognizes You through the artifacts depends on the secondary causes, he who recognizes You through the attributes is imprisoned by reports, and he who recognizes You by allusion seeks companionship. He who is snatched away by You is protected from himself.”

Although He has turned you over to the angel who writes your slips against you, He Himself has undertaken to write mercy for you. His writing for you is beginningless, and that writing against you is temporal. The temporal does not nullify the beginningless.<sup>11</sup>

Wāsiṭī said, “By His mercy they arrived at worshipping Him. It is not that by worshipping Him they arrived at His mercy. By His mercy they attained what is with Him, not by their acts, for the Prophet said, ‘Not even I, unless God envelops me with His mercy.’”

*Whosoever of you does an ugly deed in ignorance, and thereafter repents and makes wholesome, He is forgiving, ever-merciful.* It has been narrated in a report, “You called upon Me, and I said ‘Here I am!’ You asked from Me, and I bestowed upon you. You stood up against Me, and I gave you respite. You left Me, and I took care of you. You disobeyed Me, and I curtained you. If you return to Me, I will accept you. If you turn away from Me, I will wait for you.” He is saying, “My servants, My creatures! You called out to Me, I answered you with ‘Here I am!’ You asked for blessings from Me, I bestowed gifts upon you. You came out foolishly, and I gave you respite. You put aside My command, and I did not take away kind favor from you. You disobeyed, and I lowered the curtain over you. With all of this, if you come back, I will accept you, and if you turn away, I will await your coming back. I am the most munificent of the munificent, the most generous of the generous, and the most merciful of the merciful.”

**6:75-79** *So also We were showing Abraham the dominion of the heavens and the earth, that he might be one of those with certainty. When night darkened over him, he saw a star. He said, “This is my Lord.” When it set he said, “I love not those that set.”... Then when he saw the sun rising, he said, “This is my Lord, this is greater.” When it set he said, “O my people, I am quit of what you associate. Surely I have turned my face toward Him who originated*

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<sup>11</sup> This paragraph is derived from LI 2:172.

***the heavens and the earth, unswerving, and I am not of the associaters.”***

First He showed him the dominion of heaven and earth so that he would derive evidence of the existence of the Artisan by way of inference. He looked at the stars and said, “*This is my Lord,*” that is, “evidence of my Lord, for my Lord has no beginning or end, but this has set.” He said, “*I love not those that set.*” At last the beauty of the Haqiqah showed its face to him. By means of inference and proofs he went back to witnessing and face-to-face vision. He turned away from everything and said, “*Surely they are an enemy to me, save the Lord of the Worlds*” [26:77]. He said to Gabriel, “As for turning toward you, no.” First he was like a knower, then he became like a recognizer.

Wāsiṭī said, “The world’s creatures are going to Him, but the recognizers are coming from Him.”

He also said, “If someone says, ‘I recognized God through the evidence,’ ask him how he recognized the evidence.”

True, at the beginning there is no escape from evidence, as was the beginning of Abraham’s path. All that evidence came into Abraham’s path—the star, the moon, the sun. When he reached each piece of evidence, he would cling to it and say, “*This is my Lord.*” When he passed beyond the degrees of the evidence, he saw the beauty of *tawḥīd* with the eye of face-to-face vision. He said, “*O my people, I am quit of what you associate,*” that is, I am quit of inference from the creatures to the Creator, for there is no evidence for Him save Himself.

This is the same as that great one of the religion said: “I recognized God through God, and I recognized that which is beneath God through God’s light.” This is alluded to in His words, “*And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord*” [39:69].

Here a chevalier of the Tariqah made an exalted point and clarified the traveling of the travelers and the pull that takes those who are snatched away. He said, “When the caress of *And God took Abraham as a bosom friend* [4:125] reached Abraham from the court of Unity in the attribute of clemency and mercy, the command came, ‘O Abraham, there is no stipulation that you stand still in the road of bosom friendship. Go higher than the way station of *I submit to the Lord of the Worlds* [2:131]. Make the journey that is called the journey of solitariness. ‘Travel with the precedence of the solitary!’”

Abraham was a fast-going seeker, looking for the reminder of the Beginningless. He put the sandals of intention on the feet of his aspiration and went forth on the journey of *I am going to my Lord* [37:99]. The treasuries of exaltedness were opened up from the hiding place of the Unseen, and many pearls of the Unseen and wonders of the treasuries were strewn in the road of *I am going*.

Abraham was still a traveler and became attached to *I am going*. He had not yet reached the center point of togetherness. He looked back and saw plunder, so he busied himself with the plunder. The beauty of *tawḥīd* unveiled itself to him: “Why did you look back?” Finally he asked forgiveness with *I love not those that set*.

He still saw those pearls of the Unseen and he stood back: “*This is my Lord, this is my Lord,*” for those pearls of the Unseen were so heart-deceiving and preoccupying.

It was said to him, “O Abraham, you should not have halted like this. Why did you go forth on the road of *I am going to my Lord* and then look back at the plunder and treasures? Why did you not turn the eye of aspiration away from that? Why did you not put to use the Sunnah of *the eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass* [53:17]?”

This is the Sunnah of that paragon of the world and the characteristic of that master of Adam’s children. On the night of nearness and familiarity, *the greatest signs* [53:28] disclosed themselves in his road, and he remained in this courtesy: *The eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass*.

“O Abraham! When someone is searching for the reminder of the Beginningless and the mystery of the Beneficent, what use has he for plunder and treasures?”

When a serpent bites a man’s liver,  
they give him the antidote, not candy.

Abraham pulled the hand of disengagement from the sleeve of solitariness and turned away from the secondary causes: *Surely I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and*

*the earth, unswerving, and I am not of the associaters.* In other words: “I aim solely for God, I have made myself pure of ties to anything but God, I have preserved my covenant in God for God, I have purged my finding through God. I belong to God in God, or rather, I am effaced in God, and God is God.”

**6:91** *They measured not God with the rightful due of His measure.... Say “God,” then leave them to play in their plunging.*

In other words, they did not recognize Him with the rightful due of His recognition, they did not describe Him with the rightful due of His description, and they did not venerate Him with the rightful due of His veneration. No one has recognized Him as is worthy of Him. No one has known Him as is worthy of Him. *They encompass nothing of His knowledge* [2:255]. *You have been given no knowledge save a little* [17:85].

Majestic is the Unity, so how can there be finding? Holy is the Self-Sufficient, so how can there be arrival? He is known, but encompassing Him in knowledge is absurd; He is seen, but perceiving His attribute is impossible; He is recognized, but having an overview of His description is not correct. He took away His attribute and measure so that no one exalted would reach His exaltation, no understanding would perceive His extent, no knower would know His measure.

What familiarity has water and dust with Him who always was and always will be? What affinity has eternity with new arrival? How can the subsistent Real join with the trace of what undergoes annihilation? How can the worthy link up with the unworthy? How can the prisoner of variegation reach the guise of stability?

If others were of any use in His gentle presence,  
the passionate for His beauty would have a hope for union.  
It would be possible to search, were there a way to seek;  
He would be known in the end, were there a way to ask.

*Say “God,” then leave them.* This is an eloquent allusion to the reality of solitariness, the center point of togetherness, making the aspiration one-pointed, recognizing the Real as one, and turning away from others toward Him. *Say “God,” then leave them:* Keep the heart turned toward Him and leave aside the others. What does someone seized by His love have to do with others? In this work, this world and the next are like a wall, and, for the recognizer, talking about the two is nothing but defect and shame.

Shiblī said to one of his companions, “Stick to God, leave everything else, and be with Him. *And say, “God,” then leave them to play in their plunging.*”

**6:93** *Who does greater wrong than he who forges a lie against God?*

In the tongue of commentary placing lies on God and tying lies to Him is what we explained and clarified in the story of Musaylima and °Anṣī.<sup>12</sup> As for the tongue of the folk of allusion and the tasting of the chevaliers of the Path, this has another secret and intimation, by virtue of the report given by Muṣṭafā, “Every verse has an outwardness and an inwardness.” The reality of this secret is that anyone who claims recognition of God is a forger in reality, for the majesty of Unity is pure and not in any need of recognition by water and dust. This is why the pirs of the Tariqah have said, “Whoever remembers has forged, whoever shows patience has been audacious, and whoever recognizes is cut off.”

Junayd said, “My greatest sin is my recognition of Him.” In other words, “It is that I should fancy and claim that I have recognized Him as is fitting for Him in the rightful due of His reality and the limits of His exaltedness.” But such recognition does not come from the Adamite, nor do his understanding and imagination reach it. This recognition fits only into the Lordhood’s own knowledge, for in reality He recognizes Himself and knows Himself. God says, “*They measured not God with the rightful due of His measure*” [6:91]. The attributes of new arrival have no access to eternity, and everything that comes from the compass of power to the world of ignorance is im-

<sup>12</sup> In Stage Two (3:428-29), Maybudī provides traditional accounts of two pretenders to prophecy during the lifetime of the Prophet: “The liar of Yamāma,” Musaylima ibn Ḥabīb, and “The liar of San°ā°,” Aswad ibn Ka°b al-°Anṣī.

prisoned by variegation, and variegated things have no access to stability. Whenever someone is guided by gazing and inference, he is walking in his own tracks. Whoever walks in his own tracks is nothing but deluded. Whoever hopes for recognition is seeking his own portion, and whoever seeks his own portion is nothing but self-nurturing and self-worshipping.

Quit being the companion of self-nurturing habit-worshippers!

Kiss the dust beneath the feet of those who have disowned self! [DS 972]

The Adamite was not, then he was. That which was not, then was, is nonbeing. How can recognition of being come from nonbeing? Someone who exists between two nonexistences is nothing at all. How can all things come to a nothing?

Good fortune does not come by artifice, nor recognition by causes. Felicity does not come by worship, nor recognition by sufficiency. Shibli said, "You did not recognize Him with your recognition. On the contrary, you perceived Him with your knowledges and your opinions and you intellected Him with your imaginations and your understandings. You measured Him with your beliefs and your hearts, and all that is turned back upon you and created like you."

**6:95 *Surely God is the splitter apart of the grain and the date-stone.***

He splits open the seeds of food so that plants will come out and be suited for nourishment. In the same way He splits open the seed of the heart so that the jewel of self-purification, within which is the servant's deliverance, will show its face. The former becomes the cause of the abidance of the servant's soul, and the latter the cause of the firm fixity of the servant's faith. He Himself nurtures both and provides daily provision to both. He nurtures the heart with witnessing Him, and He nurtures the soul with His blessings. Then He makes the soul the steed of the heart. It rides upon it in the playing field of worship and makes it pass over the way stations of the acts of worship, arriving at the goal of *Surely the final end is unto your Lord* [53:42]. This is the day of triumph, endless felicity, and boundless good fortune, risen up gratis for the servant—the fragrant herb of boasting sprung from the thorn of poverty, and the dawn of happiness risen from the horizon of freedom.

**6:96 *Splitter apart of the dawn; and He has made the night as a stillness.***

If He brightens the regions of the world with the morning of being, what wonder is it that He should brighten the secret regions of the heart with the morning of recognition! One of the pirs of the Tariqah said, "*Splitter apart of the dawn* means that He splits open the hearts with the explanation of the lights of unseen things and He illuminates the secret cores with the remembrance of the good things and the repose of the reports."

**6:98 *He it is who has configured you from one soul.***

By way of allusion He is saying, "I created you from Adam, that unique soul, and among all the created things, I gave no one else the good fortune I gave to him and the rank and level I appointed for him."

He called Himself, "*the most beautiful of creators*" [23:14], and He said of Adam, "*in the most beautiful stature*" [95:4]. In other words, God is the most beautiful of creators, and Adam is the most beautiful of creatures. "O Adam, in creativity, I am the unique, and among the creatures you are the unique." This is the same that is brought in one of the reports concerning the attribute of Adam's creation: The Exalted Lord said, "I loved something, so I created it solitary for the Solitary."<sup>13</sup>

**6:99 *And He it is who sent down out of heaven water, by which We bring forth the growth of everything.... Gaze at their fruits when they fructify and ripen. Surely in these are signs for a people who have faith.***

He alludes to the Essence of the Unity, *who* alludes to the attributes of the Lordhood, *sent down* alludes to the artisanry of the Divinity. He is a Lord who is existent by Essence, described by at-

13 See the full text of this report under 2:34.

tributes, and recognized through artifacts and signs. It has also been said that *He* alludes to what is beyond being, so that the listener will give ear to it, the seeker will find access to it, and the gazer will look to it. *Who* alludes to being, so that the listener will become familiar, the seeker will come to see, and the wanter will come to know.

*He it is* comes in the Qur'an thirty-nine times, twenty with *and*, and nineteen without.

*Sent down out of heaven water* until the end of the verse—all these are marks that the Creator is one and has no peer in Godhood. He is without contrivance in power, without changing of state in self-standingness, secure from cease in kingship, transcendent in Essence and description. The Lord of the Worlds is calling the servants to this *tawhīd*. Do you not see that at the end of the verse He says “*Gaze*”? Look carefully so that you may know, and know so that you may perceive! Here He speaks of gazing. Elsewhere He says, “*None will remember but those who are penitent*” [40:13]: No one will gaze, accept, and recognize the reminder except the one whose heart is right with the Real and who gazes upon Him before his eyes. This is the allusion at the end of the verse: “*Surely in that are signs for a people who have faith.*” The ones who find access to the signs of power are those who have faith in the signs of the attributes, the ones who have shame before God are those who are aware of His gaze, and the ones who will fear God are those who know that God is powerful over them.

**6:111** *Were We to send down the angels to them, were the dead to speak to them, and were We to muster all things in front of them, they would still not have faith, unless God willed.*

He is speaking about those rejected by the Presence, those driven away by severance. “If We were to send the angels of heaven—the proximate and the cherubim, the emissaries and the pious, the watchers over the decree and the measuring out, the trustees of the Exalted Threshold—to the earth to invite the abandoned to Us and to report about Us; and if We were to muster the dead in the earth to direct them to Our threshold; and if We were to bestow eloquence on all the animals and inanimate things, the entities and bodies of the created things, the form and essence of the determined things, and the instances and individuals of the known things and send these to them to offer them the signs of Our divinity and the signposts of Our lordhood so that they may see and know all of the reports, still, as long as I, who am the Lord, did not want and did not show them the road, they would not have faith and they would not find the way to recognize Us. How can a handful of dust talk about the eternal were it not for the eternal solicitude and want of the Generous?”

Who is the heart that it should scatter pearls without You?

What is the body that it should run a kingdom without You?

By God, intelligence does not know the way without You,

the spirit has not the gall to remain without You

The belief of the Folk of the Sunnah is that as long as the Exalted Lord does not make Himself recognized to the servant's heart, and as long as He does not fix the marks that bear witness to the eternal attributes in the servant's heart, the servant will not find the road to recognition of Him. This is why the ulama of the Sunnah and the leaders of emulation have said, “Recognition becomes necessary when transmitted, requisite when conveyed, and acquired when made known.” Indeed, it is a candle, but when will He light it? It is a pearl, but where will He deposit it? God says, “It is one of My secrets that I deposit in the hearts of those whom I love among My servants.”

One must have both recognition and familiarity to be the target of this work and worthy for this robe. Claiming familiarity without recognition is rejecting the truth, just as He reports about those estranged ones who said, “*We are God's children and His loved ones*” [5:18]. Claiming recognition without familiarity is nothing but deception, as in the case of him who was abandoned by the Threshold, the head of the wretched, Iblis, who had recognition, but not familiarity. Both his beginning and his end were nothing but deception, concealed in the depths of unbelief. Outwardly he had the angelic form, wearing the mask of calling God holy, but inwardly he was corrupt. For thousands of years he had walked on the carpet of worship in the hope of union. When he fancied

that the eye of his hope would be opened, or the breath of union would blow inside him, he fell from the heaven of loftiness to the dust of the curse: *Upon thee shall be My curse* [38:78].

I said, “My heart wants to be Your comrade,  
so I will be worthy of thanks and applause.”  
By God, I did not think, O Spirit of the world,  
that all my hopes would come to this.

**6:112** *Thus have We made for every prophet an enemy, satans of jinn and men.*

When someone’s rank is higher, his trial will be more complete. When someone is nearer to the Real and his heart more limpid, his soul will be more captured by the hand of the enemy. Yes, without the grief of tribulation, the story of love cannot be told. Without the venom of trial, the honey of friendship cannot be found. Look at what Adam the Chosen, that sapling honored by the Real and nurtured by hallowing, saw from his enemy Iblis. God says, “*Then Satan made them slip therefrom and brought them out from what they were in*” [2:36].

And that other elder of the prophets and father of the world’s folk, Noah—look at what he saw from his own people. For nine hundred and some years he invited them, and every day they beat him so much that he became unconscious, and they advised his own children to be his enemies. That paragon was patient in this trial and he kept hoping that they would have faith. Finally it was said to him, “*None of your community will have faith except those who already have faith*” [11:36]. He said, “Lord God, since my hope has been cut off and there is no way to wholesomeness, their being in this world will do nothing but increase corruption and cause ruin. *Leave no disbeliever dwelling on the earth* [71:26].”

After that Abraham, the prophet who was the tree of *tawhīd*, fell to his knees night and day, placing his white old age in his hands: “*Keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols*” [14:35]. Look at what reached him from the rebellious Nimrod and what hardship he suffered from his arrogance and obstinacy!

So also the prophets one by one—Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot, Zachariah, John, Jesus, Moses—came to lamentation at the hands of the tyrants, the arrogant, and the refractory, weeping to the Real. Then, after all of them, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā’s trial was more complete and his torment from enemies greater. Thus he said, “No prophet whatsoever has been tormented as I have been tormented.” Those estranged and disrespectful people did not know the measure of that paragon. They did not have the eyes to recognize him. They set out to kill him and bound their belts in cruelty toward him. The elders ridiculed him, the poets lampooned him, the children threw stones at him, the women poured dust on him from the roofs. Then they came to an agreement and made a compact among themselves to remove him and to help their own gods. At that point Gabriel came and said, “O Master! Get up, and leave the city to them. Set out for exile, for ‘Seeking the Real is exile.’”

In commanding him to exile there is a secret that a chevalier has brought out in his verses of poetry:

O you who were an orphan, now be gentle to orphans!  
O you who were a stranger, now be kind to strangers!  
The generosity We showed to you in your poverty and orphanhood—  
you show the same, O generous in character, to Our creatures!  
Be a mother to orphans, nurture them with gentleness,  
be noble to askers, fulfill their requests. [DS 36]

**6:114** *What, shall I want other than God as a judge?*

“Shall I take other than God as an object of worship? Certainly not! Should I know a god other than God? No, never.” The object of worship without peer is He, for He is one and unique. In activity and all-compellingness He has no equal, in running the work and mastering the work He has no similar. In caressing servants He is well known, in loving kindness and showing love, He is the one described.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, You are found by the recognizers, You are the wish of the hearts of the yearners, You are mentioned on the tongue of the praisers! How should I not want You, for You hear the voice of the supplicators. How should I not praise You, for You make the hearts of the servants happy. How should I not know You, for You are the adornment of the universe. How should I not love You, for You are the delight of the spirit.”

**6:116** *Wert thou to obey most of those in the earth, they would misguide thee from the path of God.*

In terms of number, God’s delegates are few, but they have weight and gravity. The folk of falsehood are many, but they have no weight or meaning. For a world of metaphor, one iota of reality is enough. For a world of foolishness and falsehood, one breath of the lords of finding is enough.

One swat of the Lion for a world full of carrion-eaters,  
one blast of the Trumpet for a hundred thousand Pharaoh-natures! [DS 184]

“O Muḥammad! If you see them in terms of number and manyness, they will throw you into trouble. If you seek to get along with them, they will hold you back from the Real. Obey Our command, and turn away from them. *So shout out what thou art commanded, and turn away from the associaters*” [15:94].

**6:120** *Leave aside the outward of sin and its inward.*

Know that the Exalted Lord created the creatures with His majestic power and perfect exaltation and arranged them in keeping with His subtle artisanry, wise gaze, and limitless generosity. He completed their limitless blessings both outwardly and inwardly. He said, “*He has lavished on you His blessings, outward and inward*” [31:20]. Then He asked the servants to be grateful for the blessings: “*And be grateful for the blessings of God, if He it is whom you worship*” [16:114]. If you want to show what is stipulated for servanthood, then display gratitude for His blessings and do not employ the blessings of your Lord in opposing Him, whether outwardly or inwardly. This is why He said, “*Leave aside the outward sin and the inward.*”

Just as He made blessings two sorts, the outward and the inward, so also He made opposition two sorts, the outward and the inward. The outward blessing is the perfection of creation, and the inward blessing is the beauty of character. The counterparts of these are outward sin, which is opposition that enters the outward bodily parts, and inward sin, which is love for disobedience that enters the heart. This is why Sahl Tustarī said concerning the meaning of this verse, “Abandon acts of disobedience with your limbs and also love for those acts in your heart.”

It has also been said that outward sin is seeking this world and inward sin is seeking paradise. Even though seeking paradise is not disobedience in the tongue of learning, in the path of the chevaliers and the tasting of the recognizers, seeking paradise is to seek blessings. When someone seeks blessings, he is held back from the mystery of the Beneficent and the joy of the Presence. They count anything that holds you back from that mystery and joy as association and disobedience, even if, for some people, it is obedience and worship. In this meaning they sang,

Any talk that keeps you back from the road—let it be unbelief or faith.  
Any picture that holds you back from the Friend—let it be ugly or beautiful. [DS 51]

**6:122** *What, is he who was dead, and We gave him life, making for him a light whereby he walks among the people, like one who is in the darknesses, not coming out from them?*

The life of recognition is one thing, and the life of mortal nature something else. The world’s folk live through the life of mortal nature, and the friends live through the life of recognition. The life of mortal nature comes to an end when this world ends and the term arrives. *When their term comes, they shall not put it back by an hour, nor put it forward* [7:34]. But it is fitting that the life of recognition never come to an end, for recognition will never be finished. Day by day it is more and closer to the Real. God says, “*We shall surely give him to live a goodly life*” [16:97].

Junayd was washing the corpse of one of his disciples. He took hold of Junayd’s index finger

and said, “This one is being transferred from abode to abode. His friends do not die. Rather, they are taken from their secret cores to another house.”

Junayd said, “Yes, I know, such is the case. But you must let go of my finger so that I can wash you and carry out the custom of the Shariah.”

Abū ‘Abdallāh Khafīf said that Abu’l-Ḥasan Muzayyan said, “I went to Mecca, and Shaykh Abū Ya‘qūb Aqṭa‘ was in the state of going. They said to me, ‘If he looks at you, present the Shahadah to him.’ They took me as inexperienced because I was a child. I sat at his pillow, and he looked at me. I said, ‘O Shaykh, bear witness that there is no god but God!’”

He said, “You mean me? By the exaltedness of Him who does not taste death! Nothing remains between Him and me save the veil of exaltedness.”

Shaykh al-Islām said, “The curtain of His exaltedness is He, for He indeed is He, and you are you.”

Abū ‘Abdallāh Khafīf said, “A man was burning in the Divinity beyond the curtain of exaltedness, and they came and presented him with the Shahadah!”

Abu’l-Ḥusayn Muzayyan for a time used to say, “A beggar like me came so that I could present the Shahadah to His friends!”

Shāh Kirmānī recited this verse and then said, “The mark of this *life* is three things: Finding intimacy by losing dread, being filled with solitariness by the constancy of remembrance, and being aware of awe by the purity of watchfulness.” It is retirement from the creatures and solitariness with the Real, the tongue with the remembrance and the heart with reflection; sometimes in awe from gazing upon majesty and exaltedness, sometimes in hope from gazing upon gentleness during watchfulness. One’s spirit is constantly roasted in the pan of passion and burnt like a moth. In the dark night, at wit’s end like the distracted, one hopes that by dawn the morning of “God descends” will arrive, for He attends to the ill. He says, “O angels, you circumambulate their hearts so that I may place a balm on their wounds.” The tongue of the servant’s state keeps on saying in the attribute of need,

“O branch of the passionate man’s hope for union, grow!

O moon, leave the mansion of disloyalty!

O morning of union with the Friend, come one day!

O dark night of separation, come entirely to an end!”

### **6:125 *Whomsoever God desires to guide, He expands his breast to the submission.***

The mark of this expansion is that at three moments He throws three lights into the heart of the servant: the light of intellect at the beginning, the light of learning in the middle, and the light of recognition at the end. Then, with the sum total of these lights, all his difficulties are solved and he begins to see something of the Unseen. Muṣṭafā said, “Be wary of the perspicacity of the man of faith, for he gazes with the light of God.”

With the light of the beginning he knows his own defects, with the light of the middle he recognizes his own loss, and with the light of the end he perceives his own nonbeing. With the light of the beginning he escapes from associationism, with the light of the middle he escapes from opposition, and with the light of the end he escapes from himself.

Disown yourself, for what harms you is you.

Don’t talk about stars, for your heaven is you.

### **6:126 *This is the path of thy Lord, straight.***

The straight path is undertaking servanthood while realizing lordhood. This is a dispersion confirmed by togetherness, and a togetherness delimited by the Shariah. Dispersion without togetherness is the effort of the Mu’tazilites, who fell off the road and did not reach the station of the Haqiqah. Togetherness without dispersion is the path of the libertines, who let go of the Shariah and fancied a Haqiqah that was not.

It is said that dispersion is the Shariah’s place, and togetherness is the Haqiqah’s place. If the

Shariah is empty of the Haqiqah, this is deprivation, and if the Haqiqah is empty of the Shariah, this is abandonment.

The Shariah is explication, the Haqiqah face-to-face vision. Muṣṭafā was possessor of both face-to-face vision and explication. If the Shariah and the Haqiqah are not brought together in the servant, the Abode of Peace will not be his place and home.

**6:134 *Surely what you are promised will come.***

Take what is to come as come, take what is to go as gone, take this bright day as dark, and take this world's delusion as a day that has ended.

A chevalier was seen limping without a cause. They asked him, "Why are you limping?"

He said, "Tomorrow I am going to the thorn-field."

They said, "Then tomorrow!"

He said, "Take tomorrow as come, take this curtain as torn, and take the disgrace as arrived!"

How long making the abode of delusion an abode of joy?

How long making the abode of flight an abode of lodging? [DS 182]

O chevalier! The life of this world is wind—as soon as you look, it's gone. This world is like a mad man's laughter and a drunkard's weeping. The mad man laughs without happiness, and the drunkard weeps without grief. This world is like ice placed in the sun, and it passes in anguish. Or it is like a sugar cube put in the mouth, and it falls apart. Yes, the taste is so sweet, but the body melts away. As soon as you put it in your mouth, it melts. This world is a pleasant gazing place, a verdant disclosure, but as soon as you look, it passes. As soon as you bind your heart to it, it goes.

"If not for death, every man would claim lordhood." Were it not for the abasement of death, from all sides of the world would rise up the call, "*I am your Lord the most high*" [79:24].

You will see all these seats of honor emptied of chiefs. They bloomed like roses on the wall, then they dropped from the wall and slept in the dust. Why do you not take heed and think about your final end? The Lord of the Worlds says, "*You shall surely know whose outcome shall be the Abode*" [6:135]. Yes, know what this world will reach and who shall have the house of triumph and foreverness! See how the poor and broken will be brought on steeds of generosity, and the chieftains empty of meaning will be driven by whips of severity!

Wait—you'll find those you see as parts today are wholes.

Wait—you'll see those you see as thorns today are roses.

The exalted ones who'll be good fortune's garden there—  
don't take and treat them like lowly thorns here.

The rosebush that yesterday's cruelty makes appear to you like firewood—  
wait till the hand of Spring's justice brings it to display! [DS 185]

**6:160 *Whoso brings a beautiful deed shall have ten the like of it, and whoso brings an ugly deed shall be recompensed only with its like.***

The former will be bounty and the latter justice.

O Lord, if You show bounty, Your bounty has no limit, and if You show justice, Your justice cannot be rejected. If You show bounty, let others be just or unjust! If You show justice, others' bounty is like the wind. If You show bounty, bounty is appropriate for You. If You show justice, not increasing is appropriate for You.

Part of His bounty is that one beautiful deed of the servant becomes ten, and by His bounty, ugly deeds change into beautiful deeds. God says, "*Those—God shall change their ugly deeds into beautiful deeds*" [25:70].

Abū Dharr narrates: "I said, 'O Messenger of God, teach me a deed that will bring me near to the Garden and keep me far from the Fire.'

"He said, 'When you do an ugly deed, follow it with a beautiful deed.'"

“I said, ‘Is “There is no god but God” one of the beautiful deeds?’

“He said, ‘It is the most beautiful of the beautiful deeds.’”

The beautiful deeds of the worshipers are one thing, the beautiful deeds of the recognizers something else. The worshipers are in the station of service, but the recognizers are on the carpet of witnessing in the station of nearness and the intimacy of contemplation.

Each one’s beautiful deeds are in the measure of his traveling. The beautiful deeds of the renunciants are an aspiration greater than this world, the beautiful deeds of the desirers are an object of desire greater than the afterworld, the beautiful deeds of the sincerely truthful are a yearning to see the Patron. The renunciants have service according to the Sunnah, the desirers have recognition in contemplation, the sincerely truthful have laudation in the Reality. This is the end of the traveling of the wayfarers, the final goal of the levels of the sincerely truthful, and the beginning of the Real’s attraction. Muṣṭafā was in this station when he opened the tongue of laudation and said in the attribute of confoundedness, “I do not number Thy laudations—Thou art as Thou hast lauded Thyself.”

**6:161 Say: “As for me, my Lord has guided me to a straight path.”**

The straight path has a beginning and an end. The beginning is the Sunnah and the congregation, and the end is the intimacy of finding and the continuity of contemplation. The Sunnah and the congregation are that you accept the verses and reports about the unperceived attributes with spirit and heart. You come forward with assent and surrender and you stand with the name and the outwardness. You do not wander around it with imagination. You avoid self-exertion, interpretation, and reflective thinking about it. You stipulate it in its entirety, without addition or subtraction, without judgment, declaring similarity, or concealment. And you convey it exactly as you received it.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Everyone who enters by the door of surrender and assent is given one of three drinks: Either he is given the drink of recognition, so his heart comes to life through the Real, or he is given poison through which the commanding soul is slain beneath his own severity, or he is given a wine through the finding of which the spirit becomes drunk and perplexed. From here begins the finding of the Haqiqah and the intimacy of companionship. He finds the pleasure of service and the sweetness of obedience. He joins with the joy of recognition and reaches the repose of whispered prayer. Then he falls into an occupation that cannot be expressed until he becomes all life in that.”

O life of the spirit, what is it with me that I know nothing of my state?

The spirit from You fills me, but my heart’s blood is empty of You.

\*

You are not empty of me, but I do not see Your face,

You are a spirit with me, but I do not see You.

**6:162 Say: “My prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death, belong to God.”**

He who knows that he is in God knows that he belongs to God. When he knows that his soul belongs to God, no portion of him remains for other than God. He surrenders to God’s decree, he does not protest against God’s predetermination, he does not oppose God’s chosen ones, and he does not turn away from embracing God’s command.

This verse about Muṣṭafā alludes to the station of union. Union is joining with the Real and being released from oneself. The mark of this work is a heart alive through meditation and a tongue loosed in remembrance. One becomes a loan to the creatures, a stranger to oneself, at ease from attachment, at rest with the Real.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, ever since You called me, I have been alone in the crowd. When You said ‘Come!’, my seven bodily parts heard. What comes forth from the Adamite? The Adamite’s worth is clear: His purse is empty, he treads on air.

“This work was before Adam and Eve, a bestowal before fear and hope, but the Adamite undergoes trials because of seeing. He alone is joyful who is free of seeing causes and disloyal

toward his own self. Though the millwheel of the states is turning, so what? The pivot of His will is in place.”

O friend, I have become all yours.

In truth these words have no lying, no deceit.

Were you to jump right out of your own selfhood,  
I would likely be there in your place, my dear.

## Surah 7: al-A<sup>c</sup>rāf

### **7:8** *The weighing that day is true.*

The weighing of deeds with the scales of self-purification is true, and the weighing of states with the scales of truthfulness is just. Hapless and deprived is he whose deeds are tainted with eye-service and whose states are mixed with self-admiration, for in the station of the scales these states will have no value and those deeds will have no weight. God says, “*On the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign them no weight*” [18:105]. Among the traditions of ‘Umar is this: “Take an accounting of yourselves before you are brought to account, weigh your deeds before they are weighed, and prepare for the Greatest Exposure.” He is saying, “Weigh your own deeds before they are weighed against you, take an account of yourself and gaze upon your own works: What have you made ready for the Greatest Exposure and the gathering place of the resurrection?” This is why the Lord of the Worlds said, “*Let every soul consider what it has forwarded for tomorrow*” [59:18].

A report has come that an intelligent man has four hours in which to seek his felicity and adorn his days: the hour in which he takes an accounting of himself and weighs his own deeds and states, the hour in which he whispers secretly with the Real and shows his need to Him, the hour in which he takes care of his own livelihood, and the hour in which he takes his ease in whispered prayer and in what he has been given of this world.

*The weighing that day is true.* The pirs of the Tariqah and the lords of recognition say that the scales are diverse. The soul and spirit have a scale, the heart and intellect have a scale, and recognition and the secret core have a scale. The scale of the soul and spirit is commands and prohibitions, and its two pans are the Book and the Sunnah. The scale of the heart and intellect is reward, and its two pans are threats and promises. The scale of recognition and the secret core is approval, and its two pans are fleeing and seeking. Fleeing is to escape from this world and to cling to the afterworld. Seeking is to leave aside the afterworld and seek the Patron. Nothing will be found without seeking, but until you find the Real, you will not seek. This is why seekers of the Real are rare.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, if anyone has found You by seeking, I indeed found seeking from You. If anyone has found You by searching, I found You by fleeing. O God, since finding You is before the seeking and the seeker, the seeker seeks because unsettledness has overpowered him. The marvel is that finding has become hard cash when seeking has not yet arisen. The Real is seen, but the curtain of exaltedness is in place.”

O Beauty from whose union a world is deprived and distant!

Aching for You, they bind the sash of bewilderment and unbelief.

Things are there to be seen, yes, but nothing can be said—

inside the serpent’s maw there’s no way to talk.

### **7:11** *We created you, then We formed you, then We said to the angels, “Prostrate yourselves before Adam.”*

The wise Lord, the renowned and tremendous all-compeller, the enactor, the knowing keeper of servants, is reminding the children of Adam of His favors. He is teaching them about His good Godhood and His holding to the Covenant. He is saying, “I created you, and I sculpted your beautiful faces. I drew your tall statures and gave you two seeing eyes, two listening ears, and a speaking tongue. I

am the Lord who makes being from nonbeing, who brings forth what is from what was not, and who makes things newly from the outset. The painter of faces is I, the adorer of beauties is I, the one who pairs everything with its companion is I, the maker of every being in a fitting way is I. I created heaven, earth, and the inanimate things to manifest power. I created the angels, satans, and jinn to manifest awe. I created Adam and the Adamites to manifest forgiveness and mercy.

“For 700,000 years Gabriel, Michael, Seraphiel, the Cherubim, the Circlers, and the Row-keepers circumambulated the Kaabah of All-Compellingness saying ‘The Glorified! The Holy!’ They never gained access to or recognized My names of love, loving kindness, and friendship. They never had the gall to claim friendship with Me, but I claimed friendship with the dust-dwellers: *We are your friends* [41:31]. *He loves them* [5:54]. I derived several of My names from My friendship and loving kindness toward them: the Forgiving, the Loving, the Clement, the Ever-Merciful. To the angels I showed only severity and all-compellingness. I kept them behind the veils of awe. To the dust-dwellers I showed only clemency and mercy. I kept them on the carpet of expansiveness.”

Among the angels, Gabriel was honored and foremost, and he was singled out for the special favors of proximity. His name was Servitor of the All-Merciful. He was standing constantly on the carpet of justice with the attribute of awe. He had never seen the carpet of bounty and expansiveness. Before Adam the Chosen came, there was no separation or union, no rejection or acceptance. There was no talk of heart, sweetheart, and friendship. These wonders and storehouses all pertain to the register of passion. Other than Adam’s heart, there was no oyster shell for the pearl of love. Everyone came by the road of creation, and he alone came by the road of love: *He loves them, and they love Him* [5:54].

From the angels there was nothing other than glorifying and hallowing—their work was one color. The wonders of service, the courteous acts of companionship, the storehouses of affection, the subtleties of love—all appeared with Adam, for he was the chameleon of predetermination.

The rule of selfless wandering and the custom of gambling away  
was brought to the city by you, O beautiful companion!

*Then We said to the angels, “Prostrate yourselves before Adam.”* The angels were commanded to prostrate themselves before Adam. The secret here is that the angels were looking at their own ceaseless worship with the eye of high regard and giving great weight to their own glorifying and hallowing. That is why they said, “*We glorify Thy praise and call Thee holy*” [2:30]. The Majesty of Unity, the Side of All-Compellingness, showed them Its exalted and endless unneededness toward the obedience of all the obedient and the worship of all the heaven-dwellers. It said, “Go, prostrate yourselves before Adam, and do not give your prostration any weight in the Exalted Presence. I still had not written out existence for the existent things when My majesty witnessed My beauty. In My own Selfhood I was enough for Myself. Today that I have created the creatures, I am the same Exalted One that I was. I have no need to join the faith and obedience of newly arrived things to My beginningless majesty.”

Her own face had itself as a moon,  
her own eye had itself as collyrium.

Listen to another subtle point from the secrets of *We created you, then We formed you, then We said to the angels, “Prostrate yourselves to Adam”*: The Adamite is body and spirit, and what lies beyond body and spirit cannot be brought into expression.

Make not your home in body or spirit, for that is low and this is high.  
Take a step outside of both—be not here and be not there. [DS 51]

He said to the body, “*We created you,*” and He said to the spirit, “*then We formed you.*” This is just what He said elsewhere: “*We created man from an extraction of clay*” [23:12]; again He said, “*Then We configured him as another creature*” [23:14].

Know also that these houses of the creatures were brought out from seventy thousand curtains—curtains of light and darkness. The report speaks of this: “God has seventy thousand veils

of light and darkness.” Whatever is light is the seed of the *goodly word* [14:24] and whatever is darkness is the seed of the *vile word* [14:26] Then all were covered with dust, and dust became the curtain for all. In all this one wonders who is the storehouse of secrets? For whose home is that hidden pearl prepared?

You have a secret wink with each spirit,  
You have a passage into the street of every heart.

In the age of Adam the chosen, the exaltedness of the religion shone from the tower of his eminence. Everyone came to see with his own coin, and Adam was the touchstone. *And Adam disobeyed* [20:121] was the blackness of the touchstone. All struck their coin against the touchstone so that it would be clear what their coin was. With the coin of fancy the Higher Plenum saw that *We glorify Thy praise* [2:30]. Iblis the Abandoned saw that *I am better* [38:76]. Right there he was a verified thorn and a false rose. He pulled out the rose and threw it away, and the thorn remained in the eye of fancy.

The roses I picked from the garden of Your union,  
the pearls I stole from the sweetness of Your lips—  
Those roses all became thorns in my spirit,  
those pearls all rained down as my tears.

For seventy thousand years, that abandoned and rejected one was the guest of fancy. In himself he was sure that his quarry was gold and he was the Red Sulfur. When he struck his coin against the touchstone of Adam’s limpidness, his coin came out counterfeit. In his own quarry he saw naphtha and tar; in place of gold he saw black jet.

I painted an image of you in my eye,  
and a life passed by in seeing that image.  
When the sun rose in front of me  
folly remained in my eyes, fancy in my head.

It has been said that Iblis deserved to be cursed and abandoned by the Court of Unneediness for five things, and in contrast Adam found the Real’s generosity, the light of guidance, and the acceptance of repentance for five things.

One is that Iblis “did not acknowledge his sin.” Pride did not let him come forward with acknowledgment. But Adam came back with the attribute of incapacity and acknowledged his sin.

Second, “He did not regret what he had done” and did not apologize, but Adam regretted his own deed, apologized, and pleaded.

Third, “He did not blame himself.” In that disobedience he did not take himself on and did not blame himself, but Adam turned back on himself and blamed himself for abasement.

Fourth, “He did not see that it was necessary for him to repent,” nor did he apologize or plead. But Adam knew that repentance was the key to felicity and the interceder for mercy, so he considered it necessary for himself. He hurried and did not look back until he saw the face of acceptance.

Fifth, “He despaired of God’s mercy.” That ill-fortuned one did not know that one despairs of the base, but the Exalted Lord is not base. And just as there is no despair, so there is no security, for one feels secure from the incapable, and God is not incapable. So, when that wretched one despaired, the door to repentance was shut to him. But Adam did not despair. He bound his heart to mercy and forgiveness. He wept and moaned at the threshold of Unneediness until mercy and forgiveness arrived.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The field of friendship’s road is solitariness. The drinker of friendship’s wine is promised vision. Whoever is truthful will one day reach his desire.”

**7:19 O Adam, dwell thou and thy spouse in the Garden, and eat from wheresoever you will, but come not near this tree.**

Adam has four names: Adam, vicegerent, mortal, and man. He was called Adam because he was

created from the surface [*adīm*] of the earth, drawn from every region. Thus He said, “[*We created man*] from an extraction of clay” [23:12]. In other words, he was extracted from every region—sweet and briny, soft and hard. In Adam’s clay were salty and sweet, coarse and soft, so the natures of his children became diverse. Among them are both sweet-tempered and bad-tempered, open and closed, generous and stingy, easy-going and difficult, black and white.

Elsewhere He said, “[*He created man from dried clay, like pottery*]” [55:14]. Pottery is dried clay that gives off sound and is full of noise. In other words, the Adamite is noisy, his head full of tumult and turmoil, attached to talking.

Elsewhere He said, “[*from clinging clay*]” [37:11], from a clay that is sticky, clings to everything, and mixes with everyone.

Elsewhere He said, “[*from fetid mud*]” [15:26], a clay that is dark and black.

Thus He taught him his measure so that he would not transgress his stage. He was shown his own root so that, if he should see generosity, he would not see it from himself. He would know that eminence lies in nurture [*tarbiya*], not in soil [*turba*].

What arises from soil? Wrongdoing, ignorance, and harshness. *Adam disobeyed his Lord* [20:121]. What arises from nurture? The generosity of guidance, the acceptance of repentance, and caresses. *Surely God chose Adam* [3:33]. The fruit of nurture is what He says: “[*He loves them, and they love Him*]” [5:54].

Maḥmūd went to the house of Ayāz. He saw all the property, blessings, gold, silver, jewels, multicolored silks, and robes of honor that Maḥmūd had given to him and bestowed upon him. In a corner he saw an old cloak made of patches of cloth hanging from a nail. He said, “So, what is this?”

Ayāz answered, “This one is me in all my helplessness and abasement. All that beauty, adornment, and all that exaltedness and delight are you. When I look at this, I see my own incapacity and know my own worth. When I look at that, I see you and know that it belongs to you, so I am delighted and lift my head.”

Tell them to call me nothing but lord—  
that’s a name suited for your serving boy.

The reports say that He created Adam’s body from clay and put it between Mecca and Taif for forty years. Every time Iblis passed by it, he would say, “Why have you been created?”

The Exalted Lord was saying to the angels, “[*When I have blown into him of My spirit, prostrate yourselves before him*]” [15:29]. So, when the spirit came into his secret core, Adam opened his eyes and saw that his body was all clay. The wisdom in this is so that he would know his root, recognize his own soul, not be deceived by himself, and see the subtleties he saw as coming from the Real.

When the spirit reached Adam’s breast, it saw darkness. Some say that this was the darkness of the slip. Others say that it was the darkness of the dust, for the root of dust is from darkness, and the root of the spirit is from light. The spirit wanted to go back, and when its breeze reached his nostrils, he sneezed. Adam said, “The praise belongs to God,” and the Exalted Lord said, “May your Lord have mercy on you!”

The spirit heard the mention of the Real’s praise and mercy and took up residence. It said, “If this is worthy for God’s praise and mercy, it is worthy to be my place.”

When the spirit reached the navel, the appetite for food appeared in Adam. He saw the fruit of paradise and he wished for it. He wanted to stand but he was not able to. The Exalted Lord said, “[*Man was created of haste*]” [21:37].

His second name was “vicegerent,” because he sat in the place of the angels. The first dwellers in the earth were the angels, and then this name was given to Adam. The secret here is that the Adamites would have an excuse for their inclination to and ease with this world. In other words, the angels were not of this world, nor were they created of dust. Once they sat in this world, they were at ease, so being brought out of it was difficult for them. Hence they said, “[*What, wilt Thou set therein one who will work corruption there, and shed blood?*]” [2:30]. What wonder is it then that Adam’s child should incline toward this world, for he was created and made from it? The report says, “When the faithful person dies in submission, the angels say, ‘How was he saved from

the world in which the best of us became corrupt?”

His third name is “mortal” [*bashar*]. God named him mortal because of his contact [*mubāshara*] with affairs.

His fourth name is “man” [*insān*], because he “forgot” God’s covenant. Thus He says, “*He forgot, and We found in him no resoluteness*” [20:115], that is, “We did not find in him resoluteness when he aimed to oppose Me; rather, that was because of forgetfulness [*nisyān*].” When there is solicitude, why should caresses have a limit? He overlooked his disobedience and He gave him an excuse. He said, “He did not act in opposition intentionally, nor did he have any resoluteness in that. Rather, he forgot My covenant, and it is My generosity to overlook that.”

It has also been said that “man” comes from “intimacy” [*uns*], that is, he had intimacy with his spouse and love in his heart, as God said: “*He placed between you love and mercy*” [30:21]. That is why the Exalted Lord said, “*O Adam, dwell thou and thy spouse in the Garden!*” He gave his kind to his kind, He tied the creature to the creature, and He made the shape in the shape. This is because newly arrived things can make do only with their own shapes, are attracted only to their own kinds, and take ease only with those like themselves. It is the Majesty of Eternity and the Exaltedness of Unity that is pure of shapes, likenesses, and kinds, and It is He who is uniquely holy through His own beauty and majesty and exalted through the attributes of His own perfection. He always is, and He is first before all things. He is great through Himself, He acts beautifully toward everything, and He is fitting for greatness and beautiful doing.

Then He said, “*And eat from wheresoever you will, but come not near this tree.* Eat what you want, wherever you want, in this paradise, and be joyful, but do come around this one tree.” He prohibited it to them, and He concealed their eating of it in His unseen knowledge. Then He put the decree into effect over them, so that they would know their own incapacity and weakness and see that protection from sin comes from the divine success-giving, not from the servant’s effort.

**7:20** *Then Satan whispered to them to show them their shameful parts that were hidden from them.*

This also is a mark of solicitude and a proof of generosity, for they sinned, but He turned it over to Satan’s whispering. Then He increased the solicitude. He said, “*to show them their shameful parts that were hidden from them.*” He said: “He made their pudenda appear to them, but not to others.”

They say that afterwards, Adam and Iblis met. Adam said, “You wretch! Do you know what you did to me and what dust you stirred up in my road?”

Iblis said, “O Adam, I take it that I took you from the road. Tell me then, who took me from the road?”

They also say that both of them turned away from the command, but there is a difference between the two. Adam slipped because of appetite, and Iblis slipped because of pride. Being prideful is worse than satisfying appetite. When a sin arises from appetite, there is room for pardon. When a sin arises from pride, faith gets lost in it. The report has come, “Magnificence is My cloak and tremendousness My shawl—if anyone contends with Me in either, I will smash him.”

**7:22** *And when they tasted the tree, their shameful parts were shown to them.*

Anyone who follows in the tracks of the soul’s appetite in opposition to the Real’s command will be held back from the Real and not reach the appetite. Adam the chosen had not savored more than a taste from that prohibited tree when the whip of rebuke came down on his head and his state was changed. He did not completely satisfy the appetite, nor did God’s approval remain with him. When he looked again, he did not see the crown on his head, nor the robe on his body. At first he had seen himself sitting on the throne of chosenness, leaning back on the cushion of vicegerency, adorned with the robes and trinkets of paradise. After this, he saw himself held back from all that, naked and hungry, in need of one leaf of a tree.

God bless the chevaliers who set out early  
like kings and took their ease like the indigent!

\*

Wonder not at my abasement—I am he with whose  
lifeblood time sported, then abased.

The command came: “O Adam! You were not able to enjoy all those blessings without suffering and toil. Now go to the house of tribulation and adversity and work, plant seeds, take pains, and be patient.”

Adam said, “All of this is trifling if one day I am again given access to this Threshold.” He lamented at the pain in his heart and placed his need and incapacity on the palms of remorse. He wept and said,

**7:23** *“Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If Thou dost not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.”*

“O God, if we weep, weeping for You is sweet. If we lament over you, our lamenting is appropriate. O God, what comes from dust other than error? What is born from defect other than disloyalty? And what comes from the generous other than loyalty? O God, we have come back with two empty hands. What would happen if You placed balm on the wounded? O God, You are the treasure of the poor, the traveling supplies of the distressed, the resource of the fleeing, the handholder of the helpless. You created, so You saw the faulty jewel, but You selected it and bought it with all its faults. You lifted us up and no one said, ‘Lift up!’ Now that You have lifted up, don’t put down! Keep us in the shadow of gentleness and entrust us to none but Your bounty!”

If You water, You Yourself planted.  
If You flatten the foundation, You Yourself raised it.  
I the servant am just what You fancied.  
Don’t throw me down—You lifted me up.

**7:29** *Say: “My Lord has commanded justice. Set your faces in every place of prostration and supplicate Him, purifying the religion for Him. Just as He began you, so you shall return.”*

In this verse the Lord of heaven and earth, the Creator of the world and the world’s folk, the bestower and forgiver, the lovingly kind toward the servants, brings together the foundations of service, the signposts of practice, and the realities of recognition. He makes the faithful aware of pleasing character traits and He instructs them in beautiful worship of Himself and beautiful living with the creatures. He honors them by letting them recognize the causes of His approval.

This verse is one of the all-comprehensive words concerning which Muṣṭafā said, “I was sent out with the all-comprehensive words, and knowledge was made very concise for me.”

In the Qur’an there is much of the same sort. Let me speak about one of them: “*Surely God is with those who are godwary and those who are beautiful-doers*” [16:128]. Consider how such a short verse has so many of the meanings. All of God’s caresses, the generous giving and bounteousness of the Real toward the servant, are included in *Surely God is with*. All service, such as the sorts of worship and the types of practice that the servant does for God, comes under *godwary*. All that is rightfully due to people from each other in the various sorts of practices comes under *beautiful-doers*.

In the same way, all the pillars of the religion, the standpoints of the Shariah, and the gates of the Haqiqah are included in the words, “*My Lord has commanded justice. Set your faces in every place of prostration and supplicate Him, purifying the religion for Him.*” He is saying, “God has commanded me to justice, that is, in my practice with the Real, the creatures, and the soul: with the Real by putting commands and prohibitions to work and approving of His decree in every state; with the creatures by living with good character, observing equity toward them in the varieties of practice, and not asking equity for myself; and with the soul by opposing it, pulling it into the field of struggle and discipline, and shutting the door to appetites and ease.”

The equal of this verse in the Qur’an is where He says, “*God commands justice and beautiful doing*” [16:90]. Justice is equity, and beautiful doing is preferring others. Justice is that you do to others what they did to you. Beautiful doing is that you do better than what they did to you. Justice is that you

do not take away from the mandatory, you do not put aside retribution, you do not add to the punishment, and you do not hope for that which cannot be. Beautiful doing is when someone does the beautiful toward you, you do more than what he did. When someone does what is bad to you, you do what is beautiful to him. This is the path of the chevaliers and the conduct of the Men.

It has also been said that justice in interactions is that you take the straight and you give the straight. Beautiful doing is that you take the withered and you give the plump. Justice is that in answering the greeting of peace you say, “And upon you be peace.” Beautiful doing is that you add to it “and the mercy of God.”

Justice is what He says: “*The recompense of an ugly deed is an ugly deed the like of it* [42:40]. *If you would punish, then punish with the like of that with which you were punished* [16:126]. *And expel them whence they expelled you*” [2:191].

Beautiful doing is what He says: “*And whoso pardons and sets aright—his wage is upon God*” [42:40]. Pardoning a bad-doer is beautiful, and more beautiful is to add to that pardon and act beautifully, as the Exalted Lord says: “*Repel the ugly with what is more beautiful* [23:96]. *And follow the most beautiful of what was sent down to you from your Lord* [39:55]. *So give good news to My servants who listen to the Word, then follow its most beautiful* [39:17-18]. *And command thy people to take their most beautiful*” [7:145].

Then He says, “*And set your faces in every place of prostration.*” Junayd said, “He commanded us to guard the secret core, to lift up the aspiration, and to approve of God in place of everything other than Him.” He is saying, “Keep your secret core limpid so that you may recognize the Real. Lift up your disposition to Him so that you may become bold. See that all is His gentleness so that you may place your love in Him. Sit on the mount of service so that you may reach the way station of honor. Come forth honorably so that you may reach companionship. Have a high aspiration so that you may remain with Him.”

In describing Muṣṭafā it has been said that God gave him two generosity that He did not give to any other child of Adam. One is that he had a large aspiration and the other is that he was humble. The highness of his aspiration reached the point that the report has come, “He never stretched forth his hand toward any want.” In humility he was as he said: “If I were invited for the trotter, I would answer, and I were given the shank, I would accept.” When he looked at himself he was so humble that he considered himself weaker than all the weak. When he looked at the Real, the two realms of being and worlds did not enter his eyes because of his great aspiration. This is why he said, “I am the master of the children of Adam, without boasting.”

*Just as He began you, so you shall return:* “In the endless We will bring to pass for you what We decreed for you in the beginningless: *A group He guided, and for another group misguidance was the rightful due* [7:30].”

It has also been said, “*Just as He began you, so you shall return*—in knowledge, will, and predetermination.” Just as He began your creation with knowledge, predetermination, and want, so in the end you will become what He wanted at first.

Junayd was asked about this verse. He replied, “Every man’s first is similar to his last, and his last is similar to his first.” Then he said, “The end of every work is the return to its beginning.”

The road to the Real is a circle that comes out from Him and goes back to Him. Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, “The last of this work is so similar to the first of this work!” In other words, first of all is pleasure, comfort, and life with repose and happiness, and then man puts his foot into the trap. The collar comes around his neck, and for every comfort he has seen he sees a tribulation. For every rise there is a fall.

This is the reality of the words spoken by Abū Bakr Kattānī: “Between the servant and the Real are one thousand stations of light and darkness. All is not light, for with every light there is a darkness, with every fall a rise.” In other words, one is repose, ease, and life, another disappointment, suffering, and unreached desires. One is disclosure, the other curtaining; one is togetherness, the other dispersion. Were it not that repose and comfort were beforehand in the first of the desire, the servants would not have the capacity for those trials and sufferings. They keep on looking back at that, their hearts incline to it, and through the marks bearing witness to it they carry the burden

of tribulation. Finally, once they are made to pass through all of it and the term is completed, the hidden becomes apparent, and in the end they become what they were at first. This is the secret of the verse spoken by God, “*Just as He began you, so you shall return*” in keeping with the tasting of the lords of the recognitions and the companions of the realities. And God knows best.

**7:31 *O children of Adam! Put on your adornment at every place of prostration.***

In the tongue of learning, this is the curtaining of the pudendum during the prayer. In the tongue of unveiling, the adornment of every servant is in the station of contemplating the heart’s presence, clinging to the Presence, and the continuity of witnessing the Haqiqah.

It has been said that the adornment of the worshiper’s soul is the traces of prostration, and the adornment of the recognizer’s heart is the lights of finding. The worshiper has the attribute of servanthood in the prostration, and the recognizer is on the carpet of proximity in the repose of witnessing.

**7:32 *Say: “Who has forbidden the adornment of God?”***

The adornment of the tongue is remembrance, and the adornment of the heart is reflection.

Everything has an ornament. The ornament of the soul is beautiful practice along with the attribute of struggle. The ornament of the heart is continuity of union at the moment of contemplation. The ornament of the secret core is the realities of proximity in the field of face-to-face vision.

What the Exalted Lord said—“*Who has forbidden the adornment of God?*”—alludes to the fact that these adornments are not kept back from the seekers and are not withheld from those whose hearts are present. The treasure-house of blessings is full of blessings—it needs seekers. The table of gentleness and mercy is set and ready—it needs eaters.

The Pir of the Tariqah said in whispered prayer: “O seekers, hurry, for the hard cash is near! O night-travelers, sleep not, for the morning is near! O hurriers, be happy, for the abode is near! O thirsty ones, be patient, for the spring is near! O strangers, be joyful, for the master of hospitality is near! O seekers of the Friend, be glad, for response is near!

“O Opener of my heart! What harm if You were to open my heart and place Your balm on my spirit? How can I search for gain when my hands are empty of capital? What if You threw me into good fortune with Your bounty?”

**7:43 *We shall strip away all the rancor that is in their breasts.... And it will be called out, “This is your Garden; you have been made to inherit it for what you were doing.”***

This is the attribute of the chevaliers of the Tariqah and the wayfarers of the road of the Haqiqah. The Exalted Lord first made their hearts pure of caprices and innovations so that they would step onto the avenue of the Sunnah and find the way to the plain texts of God’s Book and Muṣṭafā’s Sunnah. They let go of their own imagination and understanding in the signs of the attributes and dismissed the discernment of their own intelligence. They put forth their necks in compliance, accepted with their hearing, and set out on the road of surrender so as to escape from asserting His similarity and declaring His ineffectuality.

Once more He made their hearts pure of this world and the defilement of this world so that the light of recognition shone in their hearts and the eyes of wisdom appeared in their hearts. He honored them with His gaze and removed friendship for the creatures from their hearts so that they were with Him entirely. They went forward in the reality of solitariness and came back from the secondary causes to the Causer. They saw One, they heard One, and they reached One, their tongue with remembrance, their hearts with reflection, their spirits with love; their tongues in mentioning, their hearts in secret whispering, and their spirits in joy.

As soon as my heart became entranced by Your beauty,  
it became the slave of Your majestic loveliness.

Oh, exalted is he who sees Your face,

Oh, magnificent is he who goes into Your sack.

Know, however, that as long as the beginningless covenant does not seize your skirt, your heart will not accept this work. As long as the Real does not join with you, this path will not get along with you. As long as the Real does not gaze upon you, your heart will not want Him.

*And it will be called out, "This is your Garden; you have been made to inherit it for what you were doing."* He said "for what you were doing" to soothe the heart of the servant and to increase His caressing of him. Otherwise, the servant knows that his own neglectful deeds are not fitting for that Threshold and that those way stations and degrees are not the recompense for these acts. Nonetheless, through His bounty He makes the unworthy worthy and He adorns the displeasing. In this He shows the servant His good Godhood and loving kindness.

**7:46** *And upon the Ramparts are men who recognize everyone by their marks.*

What men are they that the Exalted Lord should call them men!? They are men over whom the wind of solicitude and breeze of kind favor has suddenly passed from the side of Proximity.

When the north wind passes over the rose,  
the rose leaves its scent in the garden.

When the wind of solicitude passes over them, it brings their hearts to life with the light of recognition, it makes their spirits sweet-scented with the perfume of union with Him, and it brightens their secret cores with the polish of solicitude. It lets them enjoy the togetherness of aspiration and the beauty of conduct so that they may lift their aspirations entirely away from the creatures and busy themselves with love for the Real.

Yearning for You has perplexed the yearner in Your street.  
Separated from the creatures, he is happy with rags.  
His eyes are like a circle of pearls from the burning in his liver,  
his sighs like a string of coral from the fire in his heart.

Hence in this world the Exalted Lord lets them gaze down on the secret cores and states of the servants, and in the afterworld He will let them gaze down on the way stations and degrees of the faithful. He will make their station above that of the creatures so that they will know everyone, but no one will know them. They will recognize everyone, but no one will recognize them. This is why He says, "*who recognize everyone by their marks.*" Everyone has a mark, and their mark is their marklessness. Everyone has remained with an attribute in himself, and their attribute is selflessness. The hell-dwellers are held back from the Real by the shackle of opposition, the paradise-dwellers are at ease in paradise with their own shares, but He keeps them away from both and gives them an overview of all.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, how lovely are the days of Your friends with You, how beautiful their practice in hoping to have a vision of You, how sweet their conversation in the road of searching for You, how magnificent their time when in Your work!"

**7:54** *Surely your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then sat upon the Throne.*

*Lord* is the name of the Lord whose name is light and whose message is light joined with love. He is the nurturer of the world's folk, the keeper of the creatures, the requiter, the lovingly kind. He is pure and peerless, the judge of how and why, not defiled by any unworthy thing. He is apparent to Himself in rightness, apparent to Himself in being, apparent to the heart in friendship. He is one and enough, taking care of what everyone has, able to keep the hearts straight, the Lord of everything, the keeper of every being, the nurturer of everything apt to go higher.

First He said *Lord* as the portion of the common people, then He said *God* as the portion of the recognizers and the sincerely truthful. *Lord* puts the hearts of good men at ease, *God* plunders the spirits of the recognizers. *Lord* bestows blessings on the askers, *God* throws love into the hearts of the friends. *Lord* pours the blessings of vision on the faithful, *God* lights up the lamp of love in the recognizers with vision.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Love and vision met. Love said to vision, ‘You are like light, for you brighten the world.’

“Vision said to love, ‘You are like fire, for you burn the world.’ Then vision said, ‘When I disclose myself, I pull suffering from the heart.’

“Love said, ‘Well, when I settle down in the heart, I plunder it.’

“Vision said, ‘I am a gift for those who are tested.’

“Love said, ‘I throw tumult into the world.’”

Vision is the share of those who recognize Him in the artisanries. They reach Him on the basis of the artisanries—the engendered, determined, and newly arrived things, namely the creation of the earth, the heavens, the sun, the moon, and the subjected stars. Love is the share of those who recognize Him through Him and who come from Him to the artisanries, not from the artisanries to Him.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Indigent is he who recognizes Him through the artisanries! Wretched is he who loves Him for the sake of blessings! Foolish is he who searches for Him with his own effort!

“He who recognizes Him through the artisanries worships Him in fear and want. He who loves Him for the sake of blessings turns away on the day of tribulation. He who seeks Him by himself fancies that the not found will be found.

“The recognizers recognize Him through His light, but no one can give expression to the radiance of finding. Burning in the fire of love, they never turn away from joy.”

*Then sat upon the Throne.* His Throne in heaven is well known. His Throne in earth is the heart of the friends. He said about the Throne in heaven, “*Upon that day eight shall carry above them the Throne of your Lord*” [69:17]. The angels will lift it up. He said about the Throne in earth, “*We carried them on land and sea* [17:70]. We Ourselves will carry it. We will not give it over to the angels.”

The angels gaze on the throne of heaven, but the God of the universe gazes on the throne of earth. Concerning the throne of heaven He said, “*The All-Merciful sat on the Throne*” [20:5]. Concerning the throne of earth He said, “I am with those whose hearts are broken.” “The heart of the person of faith is between two fingers of the All-Merciful.”

### **7:55 *Supplicate your Lord in pleading and secret.***

Muṣṭafā said, “Supplication is worship.” Supplication is calling or asking. If it is calling, it is the same as laudation, and if it is asking, it is fitting for the servant. Both are worship and the means to salvation. Yahyā Mu<sup>°</sup>adh said, “Worshiping God is a storehouse, the key to the storehouse is supplication, and the teeth of the key are lawful morsels.”

The precondition of supplication is pleading, weeping, and throwing oneself in lowliness on the Exalted Threshold. This is why He says, “*in pleading and secret.*” It has come in a report that Adam mourned and pleaded over that slip of his for one hundred years. Finally Gabriel said, “Lord God, You Yourself see Adam’s pleading, You hear his weeping. Is there any way for You to accept his apology and place a balm on his wound?”

The command came, “O Gabriel! Leave Adam to Me, for if I had not known this pleading and weeping from him, I would not have decreed the slip for him. Indeed I decreed the slip for him because I knew that when he became helpless, he would loosen the tongue of supplication and pleading, and I love that the servant should lament and weep for Me. ‘The sinner’s sobs are more beloved to Me than the glorifier’s murmur.’”

The like of this verse is “*Your Lord has said, ‘Supplicate Me; I will respond to you’* [40:60]. He says, “Call on Me so that I may respond to you; know Me, so that I may forgive you; ask from Me, so that I may give to you.”

In another place He says, “*He who responds to the distressed when he supplicates Him* [27:62]. That hapless and helpless man, having lost the capacity to bear the trial—who will answer his call if not I? Who will hear his supplication if not I? Who will come to the aid of his helplessness if not I?”

The *distressed* is someone who has no handhold and gazes on his own days given to the wind.

He sees that his hands are empty of all the means of approach and acts of obedience. The supplication of such a person is like an arrow that goes straight to the target.

Among the preconditions for supplication, one is lawful morsels. Muṣṭafā said, “Keep your food goodly and your supplication will be responded to.” The second is wakefulness and sharp-wittedness with a heart in presence and far from heedlessness. Muṣṭafā said, “God does not respond to the supplication of an inattentive heart.” Third is fear and want, for the Exalted Lord says, “*Supplicate Him in fear and want*” [7:56]. This fear and want, meaning fear and hope, and that pleading and secrecy, meaning self-purification and truthfulness, are like four streams in the opened heart. As long as these four streams are flowing and bright, the heart flourishes, faith is in place, and supplications are answered. But, if these four streams are held back from the heart and their springs dry up, the heart becomes dead, tears are held back from the eyes, remembrance from the tongue, and love from the heart. Obedience does not grow up from him, and faith does not come. He becomes as they say:

That heart you saw has all been changed,  
my pool full of water has filled with blood.  
The garden full of blessings is now a desert,  
and the running water has left my garden.

**7:56 Surely God’s mercy is near the beautiful-doers.**

Muṣṭafā said, “Beautiful doing is that you worship God as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, surely He sees you.” This report alludes to the heart’s encounter with the Real, the secret core’s convergence with the Unseen, and the spirit’s contemplation of God. The verse incites the servant to self-purification in deeds, curtailment of wishing, and loyalty to what was accepted on the day of the compact and covenant of *Yes indeed* [7:172]. Since you know that He sees you, keep your heart on Him and take it away from other than Him. Be a self-purifier in your deeds and truthful in your states.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “When an eye has seen Him, how will it busy itself with glancing at other than Him? When a spirit has found companionship with Him, how long will it make do with water and dust? When someone has become accustomed to the presence of contemplation, how will he put up with the abasement of the veil? How will the ruler of his own city spend his life in exile? ‘As if you see Him’ is an allusion that the Real is to be seen, ‘for He sees you’ is the seeing of the Real.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “When the awe of seeing the Real is found, what fear will there be of the denier’s blame? Strive in service worthy for the Worshiped One, not the portion of water and dust, for the awe of looking on the Real is a flood, and the approval of the creatures is debris.”

**7:57 He it is who looses the winds as good news before the hands of His mercy so that, when they lift up a heavy cloud, We drive it to a dead land and thereby send down water, bringing forth thereby all the fruits.**

When the hearts inhale the breeze of proximity, they are enraptured in the dominion of majesty and effaced of everything delineated and customary.

When the breeze of the Beginningless wafts from the side of proximity and the wind of generosity blows from solitariness, servanthood turns into freedom and all suffering turns into happiness. The fearful one reaches the shore of security in the ship of fear, the hopeful one reaches the shore of bestowal in the ship of want, the disobedient one reaches the shore of repentance in the ship of regret, and the *tawḥīd*-voicer reaches the shore of solitariness in the ship of *tawḥīd*

*We drive it to a dead land and thereby send down water, bringing forth thereby all the fruits.* From heaven the rain comes, and thereby the dead earth comes to life. Plants, flowers, and blossoms appear. From the storehouse of power the rain of mercy comes, and thereby withered hearts come to life. In one the seed of regret was planted, the water of success was given, and he became a renunciant. In another the seed of solicitude was planted, the water of kind favor was given, and he became a repentant. In another the seed of awe was planted, the water of reverence was given,

and he became a recognizer.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O King, the water of Your solicitude reached a stone, and the stone became pregnant. Fruit grew from the stone, and the fruit gained flavor and became food. O King, Your remembrance brought the heart to life and threw down the seed of love. It made the tree of happiness grow and the tree gave the fruit of freedom. When the earth is soft, the soil sweet, and the clay receptive, the seed will grow only as a *goodly tree* [14:24] and will produce nothing but the jasmine of the Covenant.” This is why God says,

**7:58** *As for the goodly land, its plants come forth by the leave of its Lord. As for that which is vile, they come forth only scantily.*

One of them said, “Its goodliness is through the continuity of security, the justice of the sultan, and the obedience of the obedient.”

Abū °Uthmān said, “This is the heart of the faithful person, upon whose limbs the lights of obedient acts become manifest. ‘*As for that which is vile, they come forth only scantily.*’ This is the heart of the unbeliever, upon whose limbs only acts of opposition become manifest.”

**7:80** *And Lot, when he said to his people, “What, do you bring an indecency with which none in the worlds has preceded you?”*

Each person’s indecency is appropriate to his days and states. Look at a man’s station in traversing the road. Where is he located? His indecency follows the measure of his mortal nature right there.

The world’s creatures are no more than three groups: the common people, the elect, and the elect of the elect.

The indecency of the common people is explained by the tongue of the Shariah, and its penalty is either the whip or stoning.

The indecency of the elect is to look at the pleasures and appetites of this world with the eye of the head, to see their enjoyment and adornment, and to give them access to themselves, even if they are permitted and far from ambiguity. For, in the case of the elect, the blight of the permitted bliss of this world is more than the blight of the forbidden in the case of the common people. In the tongue of the Master of the Shariah the penalty of this indecency is what he said: “Lower your eyes and hold back your hands.”

The indecency of the elect of the elect is that they should gaze at other than the Real with the heart’s awareness despite the fact that this declaration has come from the Real: “*Say ‘God,’ then leave them*” [6:91]. He is saying, “My servant, do not gaze at yourself—see everything as My act. Do not lay favors on Me with your acts—look at My success-giving. Flee from your own marks—see only My love.” What does someone seized by His love have to do with others? Keep the heart turned toward Him and let the others go.

The world’s tumult is all this talk of you and me—  
give up “me” and the whole world will be your garden.

God says, “I wonder how anyone with faith in Me can depend on other than Me. Were they to gaze on the subtleties of My kindness, they would not worship other than Me.”

**7:96** *Had the folk of the towns had faith and been godwary, We would have opened up for them blessings from heaven and earth.*

*Had the folk of the towns had faith; had they assented to the truth of My promise, and been godwary, wary of opposing Me, I would have illuminated their hearts with the contemplation of Me, which is the blessing of heaven, and I would have adorned their bodily parts with serving Me, which is the blessing of earth.*

He called the heart’s contemplation the “blessing of heaven” because the heart pertains to the celestial world, whose root is from light. He called the service of the bodily parts the “blessing of earth” because the bodily members pertain to the terrestrial world, whose root is from dust.

*We would have opened up for them blessings.* By way of allusion He is saying, “What is taken

into account is not manyness—what is taken into account is blessing.” He did not say, “We will multiply their blessings.” He said, “We will put blessing into the favors that they receive.”

On the Day of the Moat, one thousand of the Messenger’s companions were working. They all became hungry but there was no food. Jābir ibn ʿAbdallāh said, “O Messenger of God! We have a half-bushel of oats and one sheep. What do you command?”

He said, “Make the oats into flour, prepare a dough, kill and clean the sheep, and place a pot on the fire.” Muṣṭafā went and placed his blessed hands on that dough. He moistened his finger with his mouth and put it on the top of the pot. Then they called the companions group by group and cooked bread with the dough. They ate from the pot until one thousand men had eaten, and there was still some left over. This was so that you would know that blessing gets the work done, not manyness.

**7:99 *Did they feel secure from God’s deception?***

Naṣrābādī said, “How can the sinner feel secure from deception? And which sin is greater than the sin of him who witnesses something of his own acts? Is that anything other than pouncing on the Lordhood and contending with Unity?”

**7:102 *We found nothing of covenant in most of them; indeed, We found most of them ungodly.***

Junayd said, “The most beautiful of servants in state is he who halts with God in preserving the limits and being loyal to the covenants.”

**7:142 *And We promised Moses thirty nights, and We completed them with ten. So the appointed time of his Lord was completed in forty nights. And Moses said to his brother Aaron, “Take my place among my people.”***

How exalted is making promises in friendship! How great is sitting in the promised place of friendship! How sweet is breaking promises in the religion of friendship!

Concerning the intimations of this verse the Pir of the Tariqah said, “The promises of lovers, even if broken, show intimacy.” Then he said,

“You put me off, You procrastinate,  
You promise, but You don’t come through.”

It is not approved to put back the promised time and to add days before the promised moment except in the religion of friendship, for in friendship disloyalty is the same as loyalty, and disdain friendship. Do you not see what the Lord of the Worlds did with Moses in this exchange? He promised him thirty days. When those passed, He added ten more. He added them because Moses was happy with that. Moses counted the thirty days as capital and the ten days as profit. He said, “Indeed, I heard the hard cash of the Real’s speech for a second time when He added that.”

Come forth, by your life! Stay not away!  
Give hope of your encounter, then put us off.  
Promise and put off as you like,  
for we love you when you put off the passionate.  
If you fulfill the promise, we will be happy,  
but we will live with your promise, content for a time.<sup>1</sup>

In this journey, Moses waited thirty days without remembering food and drink or being aware of hunger, for he was carried by the Real in a journey of generosity, waiting for whispered prayer. The other time, when he was sent to Khidr on the first journey in search of knowledge, he did not have the capacity for a half day of hunger, so he said, “*Bring us our food*” [18:62]. This is because that was a journey of teaching courtesy and of hardship. At the beginning of the traveling he was carrying; he was not being carried. He was aware of his own suffering, for he was with himself. He saw the marks of hunger because he was in the road of creatures.

<sup>1</sup> The three lines are from LI 2:258.

And Moses said to his brother Aaron, “Take my place among my people.” His intention was whispered prayer with the Real, so he left Aaron with the people and went alone, for there is no sharing in friendship. The friend’s attribute in the path of friendship is nothing but aloneness and oneness.

If you’re not busy and you’re alone,  
come to Me in loyalty—you’re worthy of Me.

Then, when he was going to Pharaoh, he asked for Aaron’s companionship: “*Make him share with me in my affair*” [29:32], for that was going to the creatures, and things having to do with the creatures bring aversion and dread. In carrying the burden of dread, no one flees from a kind companion and his companionship.

When Moses returned from whispered prayer and saw that the Children of Israel had left the circle of obedience and become calf-worshippers, he rebuked Aaron, not them, so that you would know that not everyone who sins is deemed worthy of rebuke. Rebuke is appropriate when a person still has something of friendship. He who burns in fear of separation is the one who recognizes the exaltation of union:

How can the Beloved’s passion be suited for just anyone?  
Only Majnūn was worthy of loving Laylā.

**7:143** *When Moses came to Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, “Show me, that I may gaze upon Thee.” He said, “Thou shalt not see Me, but look at the mountain. If it stays firm in its place, thou shalt see Me.” Then, when his Lord disclosed Himself to the mountain, He made it crumble to dust, and Moses fell down thunderstruck. When he recovered he said, “Glory be to Thee! I repent to Thee!”*

Moses had two journeys: one was the journey of seeking, the other the journey of revelry. The journey of seeking was the night of the fire, as in His words, “*He observed a fire on the side of the Mount*” [28:29]. The journey of revelry was this one: *When Moses came to Our appointed time.*

Moses came, having become selfless to self, lost to himself in his own secret core. He had drunk the wine of love from the cup of holiness, so the pain of this talk’s yearning was pressing into him and the wave of *Show me* was billowing up from the ocean of his passion. He wandered around the neighborhoods of the Children of Israel and gathered the words of their messages and goals so that he could draw out his words when he arrived at the Presence.

I consider it unlawful to talk with others—  
whenever I talk with You, I draw out my words.

When he reached the presence of whispered prayer, he was drunk with the wine of yearning and burnt by listening to the Real’s Speech. He forgot everything, and the hard cash of his state appeared like this: “*Show me, that I may gaze upon Thee!*”

The angels threw the stones of blame at his desire: “O child of menstruating women! Do you hope to see the Exalted Lord? What does dust have to do with the Lord of lords?” How can a being made of dust and water talk to Eternity? How can someone who was not, then was, be worthy of seeking union with Him who always was and always will be?

In drunkenness and selflessness Moses answered with the tongue of solitariness: “Accept my excuses, for I did not fall here by myself. First He wanted me—I did not want. I saw the Friend at my pillow when I woke up from sleep. I was seeking for fire, and being chosen came forth: *I chose thee for Myself* [20:41]. I was not aware, and the sun of bringing near rose up—*And We brought him near as a confidant* [19:52].

“From the first You began passion’s talk—  
now make me worthy of You!”

The command came to the angels, “Leave Moses alone, for when someone drinks the wine of *I*

*chose thee for Myself* from the cup of *I cast upon thee love from Me* [20:39], he will make no less of an uproar than this.”

In the realities of those unveilings Moses tasted the wine of love from the storeroom of gentleness. His heart flew into the air of solitariness, and the breeze of union’s intimacy blew on his spirit from the side of proximity. The fire of love shot up in flames, patience fled from his breast, and he lost all restraint. He said, “*Show me, that I may gaze upon Thee*: Please, at least a look!”

If sparks were to shoot from this burnt heart,  
 no trace would remain of Pleiades’ circle.  
 There’s danger when I stand before you, sweetheart—  
 at least lift separation’s veil for a look.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Everyone has a hope, and the recognizer’s hope is vision. Without vision the recognizer has no need for any wage, nor any use for paradise. People are all passionate for life, so death for them is difficult. The recognizer needs death in the hope for vision. Then his ears may enjoy the listening, the Real’s lips will pay back the debt of love, his eyes will be adorned with the day of vision, and his spirit will be drunk without giddiness from the wine of finding.”

I want a heart for choosing only You,  
 a spirit for breathing the pain of Your passion,  
 A body for desiring only Your love,  
 an eye for seeing You and only You.

*He said, “Thou shalt not see Me.”* They say that at the moment Moses heard “*Thou shalt not see Me,*” his station was higher than at the moment he said, “*Show me, that I may gaze upon Thee.*” At the former moment he was in what the Real desired, and at the latter moment he was in what he desired. Moses’ being was more complete in what the Real desired than in what he desired, for the latter is dispersion and the former togetherness, and inescapably togetherness is more complete.

*He said, “Thou shalt not see Me, but look at the mountain.”* Moses received the blow of *Thou shalt not see Me*. At once, however, He applied the balm of *but*. He said, “O Moses, I struck the blow of *Thou shalt not see Me* and applied the balm of *but* so that you would know that this was not My severity, but rather an excuse.”

*Then, when his Lord disclosed Himself to the mountain.* When a sliver of the signs of majesty and a trace of the exaltedness of unity reached the mountain, it returned to the state of nonexistence and no mark of it remained. He said, “O king! If a black stone had the capacity for this talk, it would have accepted the Trust at the beginning of existence and bought it with spirit and heart.” Here there is a subtle point: The mountain with all its tremendousness could not endure, but the hearts of the weak and the old women of Muḥammad’s community could endure. God says, “*And they feared it, and man carried it*” [33:72].

*And Moses fell down thunderstruck.* When Moses’ existence disappeared in that strike and his mortal nature was thrown to the mountain, the self-disclosure fell on the true center point: “Now, We are. When You disappear from the midst, It is We who are seen.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, I seek the Found. I say to the Seen, ‘What do I have, what should I seek, when will I see, what should I say?’ I am entranced by this seeking, I am seized by this speaking.

“O God, the splendor of Your exaltation left no room for allusion, the eternity of Your unity took away the road of ascription—I lost all that I had in hand, and everything I fancied came to nothing.

“O God, Yours kept on increasing and mine decreasing until at last there remained only what there was at first.”

You said, “Be less and less”—that was good and straight.  
 You are Being enough, less and less is fine for Your servant.

*When he recovered he said, “Glory be to Thee! I repent to Thee!”* When he came back to his

senses, he said, “O Lord, You are far too pure for any mortal to hope to reach Your self-sufficiency, or for anyone to seek You through himself, or for any heart or spirit to talk today about the vision of You. I repent.”

It was said, “O Moses, do people put down the shield all at once the way you do? Do they wander off all at once the way you do? Have you turned back so soon and so easily?” The tongue of Moses’ state was saying,

“I desire union with Him, He desires separation—  
I give up my desire for His desire.”

“What should I do? I did not reach the goal. Well then, let me go back to the place of service and the station of servanthood’s incapacity, and let me go to the beginning of the command.”

When someone’s perplexed in his own work,  
he’d best go back to the beginning of the thread.

When he went back to the place of service and the station of repentance, the Lord of the Worlds repaired his heart and spoke to him with benevolence:

**7:144** *O Moses, surely I have chosen thee over the people through My messages and My speaking. So take what I have given thee, and be one of the thankful.*

“O Moses, I have held you back from one thing, and that is vision, but I have specified you for many virtues. I have chosen you for messengerhood and I have honored you with eminence of state. Give thanks for all this and recognize these blessings. *And be one of the thankful*, and do not expose yourself to the station of complaint.” In this meaning has been sung,

If they turn away, they are the ones who came in tenderness.  
How loyal they were, so be patient with them if they break off.<sup>2</sup>

**7:145** *And in the tablets We wrote for him of everything an admonition, and a detailing of everything. “So take hold of them with strength, and command thy people to take their most beautiful. I shall show you the abode of the ungodly.”*

It has been mentioned in the traditions that one of the admonitions that the Exalted Lord wrote in the tablets for Moses and gave to him was this: “O Moses, if you want to be respected at the threshold of My exaltation and be specified for My nearness and proximity, act beautifully toward orphans and do not abase the poor. O Moses, I am the caresser and well-wisher of orphans, and the lovingly kind and bestower of bounty on the poor. Caress those whom I caress, and do not drive away those whom I call.”

Muṣṭafā said about the poor, “The poor who remain patient will be the sitting companions of God on the Day of Resurrection.” Concerning the orphans he said, “When an orphan weeps, the Throne of the All-Merciful trembles at his weeping, so God says, ‘If someone makes him approving, I will make that person approving.’”

“O Moses, if you want Me to brag about you among the angels, be without harm and keep stones and thorns away from the road of the submitted.”

[Muṣṭafā said,] “Faith has seventy-some branches, the highest of which is ‘There is no god but God,’ and the least of which is removal of harm from the road.”

“O Moses, if you want Me to answer your supplications, deal with people beautifully, learn knowledge, and teach others knowledge, for I have honored the knowers by giving them knowledge. For them I make the dust sweet, I illuminate and expand their graves, and tomorrow I will muster them among the troops of the prophets.”

Muṣṭafā said, “Do you know what Gabriel said to me? He said, ‘O Muḥammad, do not count as lowly a servant whom God has given knowledge, for God did not count him as lowly when He gave him knowledge. Surely God will gather the knowers in one place and say to them, ‘I have

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<sup>2</sup> The commentary and poem are from LI 2:263.

deposited My knowledge with you only because of a good that I desired for you. I forgive you for what has come forth from you.”

*And in the tablets We wrote for him.* Among God’s caresses and gentlenesses to Moses, one is that He kept him in the station of whispered prayer and wrote the Torah for him on the tablets, such that the sound of the pen’s moving on the tablet reached Moses’ ears. “O Moses, today be content with My name! Gaze on My writing so that it may be a consolation for you. ‘When someone is prevented from gazing, he is consoled by traces.’ O Moses, in the perfection of My wisdom I have decreed that as long as Muḥammad has not seen Me and Muḥammad’s community has not seen Me, I will not show the vision to anyone. I will not change or alter My decree. *With Me the word does not change* [50:29].”

Moses said, “Lord God, who are the community of Muḥammad?”

He said, “*The best community brought forth to mankind, who command the honorable, prohibit the improper, and have faith* [3:110] in both the first book and the last book. They will fight the folk of misguidance until they fight the one-eyed Dajjāl. They are those who ask for response and are given response. To them belong the interceders and those interceded for. Their scriptures are in their breasts. In their prayers they stand in rows like the angels. Their voices in their places of prostration are like the droning of bees. We have honored them and chosen them. *Among them are wrongdoers to themselves, among them are moderate, and among them are preceders in good deeds by God’s leave* [35:32].”

Moses said, “So make them my community.”

He said, “They are the community of Aḥmad.”

*So take hold of them with strength.* This is an exalted allusion that taking to the utmost is evidence of proximity. Then He says, “*And command thy people to take their most beautiful.*” There is a difference between the former taking and the latter taking. The former is taking from the Real, and the latter is taking from creation. The former is Moses’ taking from the Patron, and the latter is the people’s taking from Moses. The former taking is by way of the realization of nearness and the confirmation of union, and the latter taking is by way of accepting to serve and clinging to obedience.

*I shall show you the abode of the ungodly.* In the tongue of the folk of recognition, *the abode of the ungodly* alludes to the commanding soul and the ruined heart. The commanding soul is the source of appetites, and the ruined heart is the quarry of heedlessness. Just as no one sits and takes ease in a ruined house, so also obedience does not dwell in a ruined heart, nor does any good settle down there, nor does any worship come forth from it. We seek refuge in God from the depths of wretchedness!<sup>3</sup>

**7:146** *I shall turn away from My signs those who are proud in the earth without the Real. Even were they to see all the signs, they would not have faith in them. Were they to see the way of rectitude, they would not take it as a way.*

Pride is of two sorts: one with the Real, the other without the Real. That which is with the Real is the pride of the poor toward the rich. They are high in aspiration and rich in the heart through the Real. They have turned their aspiration away from the Throne and everything beneath it, cut their hearts off from the creatures, and busied themselves with love for the Real. Their aspiration is greater than this world and better than the afterworld. Their yearning is for the vision of the Patron. Wāsiṭī said, “Pride with the Real is pride toward the rich and the sinful and toward the unbelievers and the folk of innovation. It is been transmitted in the traditions, ‘Meet the ungodly with dark faces.’”<sup>4</sup>

The pride that is without the Real is the pride of the rich and the world-rulers toward the poor. This is what is meant by His words, “*who are proud in the earth without the Real.*”

Ibn ʿAṭā<sup>3</sup> said on this verse: “I shall keep back their hearts, their secret cores, and their spirits

3 This paragraph is a summary translation of Qushayrī’s interpretation (LI 2:264).

4 Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* 7:146.

from roaming in the dominion of holiness.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, “I will bind their hearts and secret cores from going. I will make their own being into their veil. I will turn them away from My road so that their secret cores will not be able to roam in the world of holiness and the Dominion. They will be held back from seeing the wonders of the Dominion and become intimate with their own souls and the creatures of this world. They will not taste the flavor of finding and they will remain unaware of the charismatic gifts of the folk of election. They will never see a day of good fortune for themselves, nor will the rose of union bloom for them.” The poor wretch who has never caught a scent of these words! How can he have anything of the ocean when he has no stream?

*Were they to see the way of rectitude, they would not take it as a way.* By way of allusion He is saying, “Not everyone who sees the road travels the road, and not everyone who has recognition finds the success of practice.” The Exalted Lord reports about the estranged when He says, “*And they denied them while their souls were sure of them because of wrongdoing and highness*” [27:14] So, whenever someone recognizes the Real through the Real, that is of no use until he finds success and puts it into practice. And whenever someone recognizes the unreal through the unreal, that has no profit until he is given protection from following the unreal. This is why Muṣṭafā said, “O God, show us the Real as Real and provide us with following it, and show us the unreal as unreal and provide us with avoiding it!”

**7:148** *And the people of Moses, after him, took of their ornaments a calf, a body that lowed. Did they not see that it did not speak to them?*

Sahl ibn ʿAbdallāh said, “Whatever in this world turns the servant away from the Real and holds him back from obeying Him is his calf, and he is its worshiper.”

The worshippers of the calf among the Children of Israel were delivered when they killed themselves by command, for He said, “*So kill your own souls!*” [2:54]. In the same way, the servant will gain deliverance in the road of the Haqīqah when he is made pure of his own portions and the secondary causes, or rather, when he disowns everything other than the Real. Thus someone said,

Disown everything in the realm of being—  
be that Heart-taker’s “companion of the cave.”

*Did they not see that it did not speak to them?* This denotes the rightful due of the Real. His description is that of a speaker who addresses the creatures and speaks to the servant, but the kings of the earth disdain to address their servitors with their tongues because of their majestic rank. In contrast, the Real put into effect His custom with His faithful servants. To the enemies He says, “*Slink into it, and do not talk to Me!*” [23:108]. To the faithful the Prophet said, “There is not one of you who will not be spoken to by his Lord without any interpreter between them.” In this meaning they have sung,

The Magnificence does not add to their ease  
when they speak to Us and We speak a little to them.<sup>6</sup>

**7:150-51** *He threw down the Tablets.... He said, “My Lord, forgive me and my brother.”*

In this there is an allusion that the servant must ask forgiveness in all states and realize that it is His to chastise the innocent, for all of creation is owned by him, and the owner’s determination permeates what He owns.<sup>7</sup>

The Children of Israel sinned, and Moses and his brother apologized and asked forgiveness. This is the path of the chevaliers and the road of the Sufis: They also place the sin upon themselves and apologize for sins not committed.

When we are ill, we come to You, we visit you.  
They sin, so we come to You and apologize.

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5 Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* 7:146.

6 Most of the paragraph and the poem are from LI 2:266.

7 LI 2:268.

**7:155** *And Moses chose his people, seventy men, for Our appointed time, and when the earthquake took them, he said ... "It is naught but Thy trial. Thou misguidest thereby whomsoever Thou wilt and Thou guidest whomsoever Thou wilt. Thou art our Friend, so forgive us and have mercy upon us, and Thou art the best of forgivers!"*

There is a difference between the community of Moses and the community of Muḥammad. The community of Moses was chosen by Moses, for He says, "*And Moses chose his people.*" The community of Muḥammad was chosen by God, for He says, "*We chose them, with a knowledge, above the worlds*" [44:32]. Then He said about those chosen by Moses, "*They said, 'Show us God openly,' and the thunderbolt took them because of their wrongdoing*" [4:153]. Here He says, "*The earthquake took them.*" Concerning those He Himself chose He said, "*Faces that day will be radiant, gazing upon their Lord*" [75:22-23].

The want is the want of the Real, the choice the choice of the Real. God says, "*And thy Lord creates what He wants and chooses. They have no choice*" [28:68]. Moses was bold on the carpet of proximity in the station of whispered prayer. He had the attribute of realization in the state of brokenness and poverty because of anguish and bewilderment, and he showed this remorse: "*It is naught but Thy trial.*" Then he perceived himself and returned to the attribute of incapacity and brokenness, entering from the door of awe and veneration. He threw the decree entirely back to the Real: "*Thou misguidest whom Thou wilt, and Thou guidest whom Thou wilt.*" He was not content with this, so he loosed the tongue of laudation and connected it with pleading and weeping: "*Thou art our Friend, so forgive us and have mercy upon us.*" He displayed his need and lowliness to Him and asked for mercy and forgiveness. He said, "*So forgive us and have mercy upon us, and Thou art the best of forgivers!*"

It has come in the traditions that on the day of the whispered prayer, Moses reached the edge of Mount Sinai. With every step he took, he lauded God, called upon Him, and displayed a need.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "There is no rejecting the needy, there is no deception behind the door of need, and there is no means of approach to the Friend like need."

When Moses reached the station of whispered prayer, the tree of his need gave fruit, and the instances of bounty came forth. The night of separation went down and the day of union rose up. Moses had yearning in the heart, remembrance on the tongue, love in the spirit, and staff in hand. The call came from the Compeller of all engendered beings, "O Moses, it is the moment of secret whispering, the time of joy, the day of access. O Moses, ask and it will be given to you. What do you need? What gift do you want? O Moses, ask and I will bestow, speak so that I may listen."

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "The servant who is wanted by the Real and worthy of His love is adorned with solicitude, given entrance by bounty, cloaked in a robe of honor by love, and caressed with generosity so that he may become bold. Then he is passed back and forth between jealousy and love. Sometimes jealousy shuts the door and the servant's tongue begins to beg, sometimes love opens the door and the servant is filled with the joy of face-to-face vision."

**7:156** *And write for us in this world the beautiful, and in the next world. We have turned to Thee.*

In other words, "We have turned toward Thy religion and we have come home to Thee entirely, without leaving anything for ourselves."<sup>8</sup>

O Lord, what we have come back to You entirely. We are quit of our own power and strength. We are content with whatever You have decreed. Do not turn us over to ourselves, and lift up our wretchedness from before us. This is the same as what Muṣṭafā said: "Entrust me not to myself for the blink of an eye, or even less than that." He also said, "Shield me as a son is shielded!"

Revelation came to David: "O David, what do My friends have to do with the sorrow of this world? This world's sorrow will take the sweetness of whispered prayer from their hearts. I love My friends to be spiritual, not to grieve for anything, to detach their hearts from this world, to throw all their work and business to Me, and to approve of My decree."

God's Messenger said, "Approval of the decree is God's greatest gate."

8 LI 2:271.

There was a worshiper among the Children of Israel who had spent long days in worship. It was shown to him in a dream that in paradise his close friend would be so-and-so. He set off in search of that person to see what his worship was. He saw that he had neither prayer at night nor fasting by daytime, only the obligatory acts. He said, "Tell me what you do."

He replied, "I have never done much worship outside of what you have seen. But I do have one trait. When I am in trial or illness, I do not want to be well. If I am in the sun, I do not want to be in the shade. Whatever God decrees, I approve of that, and I do not add my want to God's want."

The worshiper said, "That is what has conveyed you to this way station."

**7:159 Among the people of Moses is a community that guides by the truth and does justice thereby.**

This is the story of the friends and the description of the state of the chevaliers and the conduct of the wayfarers. The Lord of the Worlds has shown them the road of felicity, singled them out for the special favors of proximity and nearness, and honored them with the attraction of generosity. The relation of godwariness lives through them, the trodden path of truthfulness is built on the firm fixity of their feet, and the good fortune of the religion is joined with the blessings of their breaths.

God's Messenger said, "Were the light of one of them to be divided among the folk of the earth, it would embrace them." If the light of their hearts were given an open road and the glitter of its radiance were to fall on the world and the world's folk, all recalcitrant people would become *tawhīd*-voicers and replace their sashes of unbelief with belts of passion for the religion. They are rare and precious, however. He does not show them to anyone, nor does He give them over to this world or the afterworld. He keeps them like fugitives in His own protection and nurtures them with the attribute of love under the domes of jealousy.

Revelation came to Moses: "O speaking-companion of the empire! Be careful not to open up the oyster of your pain's pearl before those without eyes. Do not recite the verses of the form of passion for My majesty to the non-privy or those dismissed from the reality of hearing and listening. O Moses! If you want to expose My mystery to someone, then do so to those who are the locus of the covenant of My secrets, who are busy night and day serving My threshold, the tent of their passion pitched in the contemplation of My majesty, having been branded with this mark of most-worthiness by the threshold of Lordhood: *a community that guides by the truth and does justice thereby*. This brand of most-worthiness is one of the divine secrets, a lordly subtlety that departed from the World of the Unseen and settled down only within the curtain of the stages of the clay of the poor. If you want to catch a whiff of it, go into the curtains of the soul until you reach the heart, then go into the curtains of the heart until you reach the spirit, then go into the curtains of the spirit until you reach union with the Beloved, for you will not see it placed anywhere save in the spirit of the friends."

I said, "Where should I seek You, O heart-stealing moon?"

He said, "My resting place is the spirit of the friends."

I said, "Why do You make Your resting place in the spirit?"

He said, "Lest anyone find a trace of Me."

I said, "Be my guide to Yourself."

He said, "Look at the slain, left and right."

Whenever David the prophet saw a poor man burnt in harvest and plundered by love, he knew him to be a place of the covenant of the beginningless secrets. He would sit with him and be at rest. He would say, "My goal and my heart's repose has been placed in him."

When Jacob the prophet sat in the House of Sorrows and wept so much at the pain of separation from Joseph that he lost his eyesight, you would say that he was attached to Joseph's form. But in terms of the realities, it was the remnants of the purity and limpidness of [Abraham's] bosom friendship, placed on Joseph's forelock, that kept Jacob in turmoil. Ruwaym Baghdādī said, "The recognizer is a mirror. When someone gazes in the mirror, his Patron discloses himself there. To this He alludes with His words, 'We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in their souls until it is clear to them that He is the Real' [41:53]."

**7:160** *And We cut them up into twelve tribes, communities.... And We revealed to Moses when his people asked him for water, “Strike the stone with thy staff,” and twelve springs gushed forth from it. All the people knew their drinking places.*

Concerning the realities of this verse Ja<sup>c</sup>far ibn Muḥammad said that He made twelve streams flow forth from the wellspring of recognition and He made each the drink of one group. He made drawing the water of religion’s good fortune appear for each group in that watering place. This is the same thing He said briefly elsewhere by way of intimation and allusion: “*If they go straight on the Tariqah, We will draw for them copious water*” [72:16]. In other words, “We will appoint for them a constant watering.”

There are twelve rivers, the first of which is familiarity and the last of which is friendship. The ten between the two are first the truthfulness of belief, second self-purification in deeds, third approval of the decree, fourth the eye of certainty, fifth the joy of ecstasy, sixth the lightning of unveiling, seventh the bewilderment of witnessing, eighth the dissolution of the marks giving witness, ninth the observation of togetherness, and tenth the reality of solitariness. When the servant’s spirit tastes these drinks and finds their sweetness, and when the divine attraction joins with that, he becomes the Wellspring of Life itself, and anyone who sips a drink from his hand will be prosperous forever.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, I recognize the drinking place, but I’m not able to drink. Heart-thirsty, I weep in hope of a drop. The fountain cannot quench me—I’m seeking the ocean. I passed by a thousand springs and streams in hopes of finding the ocean. Have you ever seen someone drowning in the fire of passion? I’m like that. Have you ever seen someone thirsty in a lake? That’s what I am. I’m exactly like someone lost in the desert. Help me! I’m at wit’s end! I’ve lost my heart.”

**7:168** *And We cut them up into communities in the earth. Among them are the wholesome and among them other than that. And We tried them with the beautiful things and the ugly things.*

In terms of realization in accordance with the tasting of the Folk of Findings this is an allusion to the travelers in the community, the exiles of the Tariqah. They are constantly wandering around the world, from this region to that region, from this cave to that cave, to conceal their present moment from the people and struggle for their religion against the blights of others. Muṣṭafā alluded to this meaning: “There will come a time when those who are religious will not stay safe unless they become averse to people. You will see them like travelers fleeing from people, sometimes in the mountains, sometimes in the desert.”

Rushing, running, wailing in the world,  
in mountain monasteries, in desert caves,  
Totally effaced in the ocean of thought,  
of themselves they recite for all, “No home, no possessions.”

Bearing witness to this are the stories of the Companions of the Cave and that of the Prophet and Abū Bakr in the cave. God says, “*The second of two, when the two were in the cave*” [9:40].

Another meaning has also been given for their traveling and exile, namely that they were yearning. In most of their days and the generality of their states the yearners are without settledness and ease—perhaps they will reach someplace to see the mark of the friend or ask someone about the friend. In this meaning they have sung,

Surely our traces designate us—  
after us, look at our traces.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, the homeland of Your exiles is exile, so when will this business end? How can he who is being tested by You be worthy of relief? How can he whose homeland is exile ever reach home? O God, the yearner is slain by friendship, and the shroud of those slain by friendship is vision of You.”

*And We tried them with the beautiful things and the ugly things.* “We tested them with pleasure and disappointment. They are neither deceived by pleasure, nor do they turn away from Us because of disappointment.” They have in front of themselves an occupation that is more important than their own pleasure and disappointment. With people they are on loan, with themselves strangers. They are at ease from attachment, their hearts joined with the Patron, their secret cores having reached awareness of Him. They keep on saying with the tongue of poverty and the attribute of brokenness, “O Lord, we have come to the Threshold as servants. If You like, exalt us, and if You like, lay us low.”

**7:172** *When your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their offspring and made them bear witness concerning themselves. “Am I not your Lord?” They said, “Yes indeed.”*

In terms of understanding in the tongue of the Reality, this verse has another intimation and another tasting. It alludes to the beginning of the states of the friends and the binding of the compact and covenant of friendship with them on the first day in the era of the Beginningless, when the Real was present and the Reality was there.

How blessed were Laylā and those nights  
when we were meeting with Laylā!

What a fine day was the day of laying the foundation of friendship! What an exalted time was the time of making the compact of friendship! Those who desired on the first day will never forget their desire. Those who yearned at the time of union with the Friend know the crown of life and the kiblah of the days.

How blessed was the time of Your covenant, without which  
my heart would have no place for ardor!

The command came, “O Master, *remind them of the days of God* [14:5]. These servants of Ours have forgotten Our covenant and have busied themselves with others. Remind them of the day when their pure spirits made the covenant of friendship with Us, and We were anointing their yearning eyes with this collyrium: *‘Am I not your Lord?’*

“O indigent man! Remember the day when the spirits and the very persons of the friends were drinking the wine of passion for Me from the cup of love in the assembly of intimacy. The proximate angels of the Higher Plenum were saying, ‘These indeed are a people with high aspiration! As for us, we have never tasted this wine, nor have we found a scent of it. But the roaring and shouting of these beggars has risen to Capella: *“Is there any more?”* [50:30].”

Of that wine not forbidden by my religion  
my lips will not stay dry till I’m back in nonexistence.

One day that paragon of the world and master of the children of Adam was saying, “This is a mountain that loves me and that I love.”

They said, “O Master, you talk like this about a mountain? What is the intimation here?”

He said, “Yes, there I drank the wine of love from the cup of remembrance.”

In the beginning of the work, when the traces of prophecy and the marks of revelation were appearing to him, he used to spend days in the Mountain of Ḥirā, and the pain of this talk overtook him in that place of seclusion. That mountain was like his sympathizer.

Your ache knows only to circle round my heart—  
in its wonders Your ache is like You.  
Though Your ache has put me in the fire,  
how I will ache if Your ache leaves me!

For a time he was in contraction, for a time expansion, for a time intoxication, for a time sobriety, for a while affirmation, for a while effacement. Anyone aware of the beginning of the desirers’ desire knows what his state was, and what his pain! It was as they say:

Now at least I have the hard cash of pain—  
I won't give up this pain for a hundred thousand remedies.

The Pir of the Tariqah said in whispered prayer, “O God, what sweet days they are—the days of Your friends with You! What a sweet bazaar it is—the bazaar of the recognizers in Your work! How fiery are their breaths in mentioning and remembering You! What sweet pain—the pain of those yearning in the fire of yearning and love for You! How beautiful is their voicing Your names and marks!”

“*Am I not your Lord?*” They said, “*Yes indeed.*” On the Day of the Compact He disclosed Himself to their hearts in the majesty of His exaltation and the perfection of His gentleness—one group with the attributes of exaltedness and harshness, another group in respect of gentleness and generosity. Those who were the folk of dominance were inundated by the oceans of awesomeness and the waves of confoundedness. Upon them was placed the burning brand of deprivation: *Those are like cattle. No, they are further astray* [7:179]. Those who were fit for caresses and generosity were specified for the redoublings of proximity and the special favors of love. The signet of generosity was stamped on the edict of their faith: *Those—they are the rightly guided* [49:7].

*Am I not your Lord?* Here a beautiful and subtle point is made. He said, “*Am I not your Lord?*” He did not say, “Are you not My servants?” He connected His joining with the servant to His own Godhood, not to the servant’s servanthood. Had He connected it to the servant’s servanthood, then, when the servant did not comply with servanthood, the joining would be defective. Rather, He connected it to His own Godhood. Given that His Godhood is forever perfect, without any defect, it must be that the servant’s joining with Him is never broken.

Also, He did not say, “Who am I?” Had He done so, the servant would have been bewildered. He did not say, “Who are you?,” lest the servant become proud of himself or fall into despair. He did not say, “Who is your God?,” lest the servant be helpless.

On the contrary, He asked while instructing in the answer. He said, “Am I not your God?” This is extreme generosity and utmost gentleness.

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, “Generosity said, ‘*Am I not your Lord?*’ Kindness said, ‘*Yes indeed.*’ Given that the caller and the responder are one, what is the meaning of the two sides? The King called the servant to Himself. The servant listened to Him through Him, and He responded without him, bestowing the response on the servant.”

This is just like what He says about Muṣṭafā: “*Thou didst not throw when thou threwest*” [8:17]. In this verse, He burnt away claims and caressed his meaning, so that whenever he came back to himself, he would recognize Him. He assigned the flood of lordhood to the dust of mortal nature and snatched him away from himself, then made him a deputy. He is saying, “*Thou didst not throw when thou threwest.*” This indeed is “I am his hand and he grasps through Me”—if you recognize it.

**7:180** *And to God belong the most beautiful names, so supplicate Him by them, and leave those who deviate concerning His names.*

God has names, and those names are His attributes. By those names He is renowned, praised, and recognized. They are names full of blessing, sweet to the hearts. They are a pure arrangement and pure words from the pure Lord, a worthy arrangement and beautiful words from the one Lord, the ornament of the tongue, the lamp of the spirit, and the everlasting laudation.

He Himself says, “‘My light is My guidance, ‘No god but God’ is My word, and I am He’: The servant who gains access gains it with My light, when he finds the way he finds it with My lamp—the lamp of the Sunnah, the lamp of recognition, the lamp of love. I light the lamp of the Sunnah in their hearts, I light the lamp of recognition in their secret cores, and I light the lamp of love in their spirits.’” Happy is the servant who walks among these three lamps! Who is more exalted than he in whose heart the greatest light is shining and who sees the Friend face-to-face in his heart?

Then He said that “No god but God” is My word and My attribute. “God” is My name, and I am the name that I am, for My name is requiter and lovingly kind, the God of all, the keeper of the world, the giver of turns to the world’s folk.

The Pir of the Tariqah has a few words appropriate to this place. He said, “O worthy of Your own laudation, O grateful for Your own bestowal, O You who show Your own trial as sweet! In myself I am incapable of lauding You, in my intellect I am incapable of recognizing Your favor, in my ability I am incapable of what is worthy of You. O generous one! I am captive to the pain for which You are the remedy. I am slave of that laudation of which You are worthy. What do I know of You? You know. You are what You Yourself have said, and what You Yourself have said, You are that.”

This is the same as Muṣṭafā said: “I do not number Thy laudations—Thou art as Thou hast lauded Thyself.”

*And leave those who deviate concerning His names.* Deviation in God’s names is to turn back from the road of rightness and correctness. It is of two sorts: either it increases or decreases. Someone speaks of a name or an attribute that God Himself did not speak about, or someone does not mention what He did speak about. The first is an assertion of likeness and the second a declaration of ineffectuality. The folk of asserting likeness increased and thereby deviated, and the folk of declaring ineffectuality decreased and thereby deviated.

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, “What God showed of Himself, that He is and such is His attribute. God is the explication of Himself, and Muṣṭafā has face-to-face vision of Him. About Himself He says, ‘Ask about Him from one who is aware’ [25:59]. About Muṣṭafā He says, ‘He does not speak out of caprice’ [53:3].”

It is not appropriate for someone to affirm attributes for God on his own, nor to declare Him incomparable on his own. Keep your ears fixed on the Book and the Sunnah! Whatever they say, you say that it is that. God said there are attributes, there are names, so you should also say that. Since He did not say that there are not, you should not say that there are not. He did not say “how” He is. If He had said “how” He is, we would say that. God said, “I am.” He did not speak of howness. You should speak of being, but you should not speak of howness.

Anyone who comes to know two verses of the Qur’an will escape from declaring Him similar: “*Is He who creates like him who does not create?*” [16:17]. “*Nothing is as His likeness, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing*” [42:11]. These are affirmation of the name, not declaration of similarity. Calling holy while negating is the creed of Iblis. Those who declare similarity are outside the precinct of the submission, and those who reject attributes are heretics.

Know also that the Creator has names and created things have names. Every name of a created thing is an artifact, borrowed, made up, and metaphorical. Every name of the Creator is eternal, beginningless, worthy of Him, and true. None of His names is newly arrived. Some people have said, “There must be the created for there to be a Creator, there must be the provided for there to be the Provider.” But it is not as they have said, for no newly arrived thing has access to the name God. There was nothing created while our Lord was the Creator, there was nothing provided for while our Lord was the Provider.

God has ninety-nine names and is renowned by those names. He is not named by the things to which He gives names, for He is named in the beginningless. In heaven and earth He is, just as He is in the first and in the last. Imaginations have nothing to perceive, nor do understandings have causes. He causes things but He is not caused. He throws everything into “why,” but He Himself does not come under why. Thus all who go into whys and hows have gone outside the path of the Sunnah, for the Exalted Lord does not enter into opinions, is not encompassed by understandings, is not classified by intellects, and is not perceived by imaginations. He is recognized, but through attribute and name. In relation to Him all are standing on marks and messages through the light of recognition, the Book, the Sunnah, and inspiration.

**7:189** *He it is who created you from one soul and made of it its spouse so that it may rest in her.*

Great and magnificent is the lovingly kind Lord, the beautiful in name, the keeper of the servants, the creator of the world’s folk, the caretaker of all! He is pure and faultless in name and mark, pure of offspring and Himself unborn, pure of partner and helper, pure of spouse and of similar. When He created the creatures, He created them as pairs linked to each other. He made male and female

together, He bound similar to similar and genus to genus, as He says, “*and made of it its spouse, so that it may rest in her.*”

It is God who is one, who is peerless in attributes and separate from faults, the creator, the keeper, and the nurturer. When He wants to show power in creation, He brings forth a hundred thousand subtleties and wonders from one drop of feeble water. First some dust, then some water, then a clot, then tissue, then bones and skin, then an animal. When it becomes four months old, it comes to life in that *firm settledness* [77:21] in *three-fold darknesses* [39:6].

In this individual He creates three pools: one the brain, one the liver, and one the heart. From the brain the streams of the nerves open out to the whole body so that the strength of sensation and movement will go there. From the liver the veins open out to the whole body so that nourishment will go there. From the heart the arteries open out to the whole body so that the spirit will go there.

He created the brain in three strata. In the first He placed understanding, in the second He placed intellect, and in the third memory. He created the eye in seven strata and placed brightness and sight therein. What is more wondrous is the pupil, its measure that of a single lentil, but within it appears the form of heaven and earth with all this vastness. More surprising is the forehead, which He created stiff and hard so that it would not grow hair and take away beauty. In the midst He created the skin of the eyebrow, so that a bit of hair would come up and not become too long. He created the ears, a bitter water placed within so that no animal would go inside. He created within it many twists and turns so that, if you are asleep and the crawling things of the earth aim for it, the road will be long and you will become aware. He put the tongue in the place of saliva so it would move and you would not be held back from speaking. He made a spring of sweet water come forth from under the tongue so that it would give water in a flow and food would become wet. Otherwise, food would not go down the throat. At the top of the gullet He created a veil so that when you take down food, the top of the gullet closes so that food will not go down by the route of the breath. He created the liver to give all the multicolored foods one attribute in the color of blood, so that this would be the nourishment of the seven bodily parts.

Pure and faultless is the Lord who made apparent all this artisanry from one drop of feeble water! He showed so many wonders and marvels of power! When you think about it you will say, “*So blessed is God, the most beautiful of creators!*” [23:14]. Bravo O beautiful doing, lovely-sculpting Creator!

He sculpted the body and He sculpted the heart. When He sculpted the body, He praised Himself. He said, “*So blessed is God, the most beautiful of creators.*” When He sculpted the heart, He praised you, for He said, “*Those—they are the rightly guided*” [49:7]. In the beginningless knowledge and endless decree, it has gone out on the Pen that He will turn some faces away. When He arrived at sculpting the faces, He said, “He sculpted beautifully.” He praised the Sculptor, not the sculpture, for if He had praised the sculpture, it would not be permissible for Him to scour it away, for the generous one does not efface what He Himself praised; He does not reject the one whom He Himself has lifted up. When He reached the heart, He praised the sculpture, not the Sculptor, so you would know that He will never efface the sculpture of the heart.

**7:199** *Take to pardoning and command the honorable and turn away from the ignorant.*

The command came from the generous, lovingly kind Lord, the Lord God of all lords and masters, the generous and gentle in name and mark, to Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets and the emulated of the world’s folk: “O master, pass over the sins of the sinners, cover over their defects, and draw the pen of pardon across the register of the bad-doers. O master, take from Us a pleasing character, praiseworthy activity, truthful speaking, and peace with the people; be the friend of the good in companionship and attend to them in seclusion. O master, I am a clement Lord and I love the clement. I hear the unworthy from enemies and I see their insolence in private, but I keep the curtain lowered over them. I do not hurry to punishment, I offer them repentance and pardon, and I call them back to My Threshold, for *if they desist, He will forgive them what is past* [8:38].”

Among the traditions has come that God says, “You called upon Me, and I said ‘Here I am!’ You asked from Me, and I bestowed upon you. You stood up against Me, and I gave you respite.

You left Me, and I took care of you. You disobeyed Me, and I curtained you. So, if you return to Me, I will accept you. If you turn away from Me, I will wait for you.” He is saying, “My servants, My creatures, you called out to Me, and I answered with ‘Here I am.’ You asked for blessings from Me, and I bestowed gifts. You came out foolishly, and I gave you respite. You put aside My command, and I did not take away My kind favor from you. You disobeyed, and I lowered the curtain over you. With all of this, if you come back, I will accept you, and if you turn away, I will await your coming back. I am the most munificent of the munificent and the most generous of the generous.”

In a report has come, “When an old man repents, God says, ‘Now?! When your strength has gone and your appetite has been cut off? Indeed, I am the most merciful of the merciful, indeed, I am the most merciful of the merciful.’”

When this verse descended—“*Take to pardoning*”—God’s Messenger knew that pardon is one of the characteristics of the Real’s sunnah. He himself had said, “The believer takes from God a beautiful character.” He took this pleasing sunnah in hand to such an extent that, on the Day of Uḥūd, when he saw all that suffering and torment from the associaters, nonetheless he said, “O God, guide my people, for they do not know!”

**7:204** *And when the Qur’an is recited, listen to it and give ear. Perhaps you will be shown mercy.*

Listening [*samāʿ*] is the reality of giving ear to the Qur’an. Listening gives more life to a man’s days than the spirit gives to the body. Listening is a spring that bubbles up from the midst of the heart, nurtured by the well of truthfulness. Truthfulness is to listening as the sun’s body is to its rays. As long as the darkneses of mortal nature do not lift away from the heart, the reality of listening’s sun will not be permitted to disclose itself in the desert of a man’s breast.

Know that listening is of two sorts: The listening of the common people is one thing, the listening of the elect something else. The common people’s share in listening is sound and its melodies, and the elect’s share in listening is a subtlety in the midst of the sound and its meanings and allusions. The common people listen with the ear of the head, the organ of discernment, and the movement of the natures so as to be freed of sorrow and at ease from their preoccupations. The elect listen with a dead soul, a thirsty heart, and a burnt breath. They reap the fruit of the breeze of intimacy, endless reminder, and everlasting happiness.

It is said that the reality of listening is remembering the eternal call that came forth on the Day of the Compact from the Court of All-Compellingness and the Side of Unity: “*Am I not your Lord?*” [7:172]. It became connected to the hearing of the servants and its tasting reached their spirits. This is a call whose *repository* is in that world and whose *lodging place* [11:6] is in the spirit. What bears witness is the mark, what it expresses is the title-page. What is supposition in reports is face-to-face vision in finding. The servant’s seven bodily members listen to the Friend—the call of the Friend does not belong to the now, for it is everlasting.

**7:205** *And remember thy Lord in thyself.*

The rememberers are three men: One remembers with the tongue while the heart is unaware. Another remembers with both tongue and heart, but his work is in danger, as has been said, “The self-purifiers are in grave danger.” Still another is silent with the tongue but his heart is drowned in Him.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, how can I remember, for I myself am all remembrance? I have given the harvest of my marks to the wind. How can I remember Him whom I have not forgotten? O remembrance of the spirits, remembered by the hearts, and mentioned by the tongues! Remember me with Your bounty and make me happy with gentle remembrance!”

**7:206** *Surely those who are with thy Lord do not have too much pride to serve Him.*

*Surely those who are with thy Lord* alludes to the center point of togetherness and *do not have too much pride to serve Him* reports of the attribute of dispersion. Their with-ness affirms their

nobility and preserves them in the ruling properties of servanthood. Thus the servant goes forth between togetherness and dispersion. Togetherness shows the Haqiqah, and dispersion explicates the Shariah. *For every one of you We have appointed an avenue and a method* [5:48] alludes to this.

## Surah 8: al-Anfāl

### **8:2 *The faithful are only those whose hearts quake when God is remembered.***

The faithful are those who fear God. In this verse He makes fear a precondition of faith, just as He says elsewhere: “*Fear Me if you have faith*” [3:175]. Fear is the protection of faith, the fortress of the religion, and the interceder for sins. When a heart does not have fear, that heart is in ruins, a source of trouble and deprived of God’s gaze. In this verse He says that the faithful are those whose hearts fear and tremble at the remembrance of God.

In another place He says, “*Those who have faith and whose hearts are serene in the remembrance of God*” [13:28]. This alludes to the fact that the faithful are those whose hearts are at ease and rest in the remembrance of God. The former is the mark of the beginners, and the latter is the description of the advanced. At the beginning of his traveling, the servant always weeps, wails, and moans. He weeps so much in dread of separation that the call “*Fear not!*” [41:30] reaches his secret core. He comes away from the dread of separation to the repose of union. In this station he is at ease and delighted, his heart at rest. This is why He says, “*whose hearts are serene in the remembrance of God.*”

It has also been said that *whose hearts quake* is the description of the desirer, and *whose hearts are serene* is the attribute of the desired. *Whose hearts quake* is the watchword of the folk of the Shariah, and *whose hearts are serene* is the blanket of the folk of the Haqiqah. *Whose hearts quake* is the station of the travelers, and *whose hearts are serene* is the mark of the snatched away. The travelers are in the road of the Shariah in the station of service hoping for blessings, and the snatched away are caressed on the carpet of the Haqiqah, given access to proximity and nearness by the Patron of Blessings.

### **8:3-4 *Those who perform the prayer and expend from what We have provided them, it is they who are the faithful in truth. They have degrees with their Lord and forgiveness and a generous provision.***

In the previous verse, He counted out some of the inward deeds, such as godwariness, fear, and truth. Then, in this verse, He joins them with the outward deeds, such as prayer and alms tax. The former are marks of the Haqiqah, and the latter stipulations of the Shariah. Thus you know that these two are joined together. Without the Shariah the Haqiqah is of no use, and without the Haqiqah the Shariah is not correct. When the two are combined, then *it is they who are the faithful in truth*. The faithful in reality are they, for they are sound in both the Shariah and the Haqiqah. They have undertaken the Shariah, so *they have degrees* in the Garden *and forgiveness*; and they have truthfulness in the Haqiqah, so they have *a generous provision*. This is the provision of the secret cores through the unveilings and joinings which belong to them alone.<sup>1</sup>

It has also been said that the traits counted out in this verse are the realities of servanthood in the encounters [with God] and the unveilings of the Haqiqah in the finding [of Him]. These are reverence for remembrance, quaking at the time of listening, being overcome by increase at the time of recitation, the reality of trust in God, and undertaking the stipulations of servanthood in full loyalty. When these descriptions are perfected, they become realizers through faith. Hence it is said, “*It is they who are the faithful in truth.*” In other words, in reality the most beautiful has

<sup>1</sup> Some of this mixed Persian and Arabic paragraph is taken from LI 2:298.

already gone forth to them from God, so for them it has become blessedness, nearness, and the most beautiful with their Lord.

**8:7** *And when God promised you one of the two parties would be yours, and you wished that the one not armed would be yours.*

By way of allusion He is saying, “So long as the servant does not suffer he will not reach the treasure.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “How should I have known that suffering is the mother of happiness and that beneath one disappointment lie a thousand treasures? How should I have known that life is in death and that what is desired by all lies in unreached desires?”

Life is the life of the heart, and death the death of the soul. Until you die in yourself, you will not come to life through the Real. “Die, O friend, if you want to live!” [DS 52]. That chevalier said it beautifully:

“Passion does not accept living souls,  
falcons do not hunt dead mice.” [DS 202]

O God, when someone’s life is You, how can he die? When someone’s occupation is You, how can his occupation come to an end? O Found and Findable, nothing other than recognizing You is happiness, and nothing other than finding You is life. He who lives without You is imprisoned like a corpse, and he who finds companionship with You is neither of this world nor of that world.

**8:9** *When you sought the aid of your Lord, He responded to you.*

Seeking aid is of three sorts: One is from the creatures against the Real; it is the mark of being estranged and despairing of response. Another is from the Real against the creatures; it is the road of being a Muslim and the precondition of being a servant. Another is from the Real against the Real; it is the means of approach to friendship, and the response is an add-on.

Someone who complains of the Real to the people increases in pain. Someone who complains of the creatures to the Real finds the remedy. Someone who complains of the Real to the Real sees the Real.

The Pir of the Tariqah Shibli was saying the following words with the attribute of bewilderment in his encounters with Him: “O God, if I seek You, You drive me away, and if I leave You, You seek me. There is no rest with You, and no escape from You. I seek aid in You from You!” He is saying: “O God, if I want You, You drive me away. If I go, You call. What should I do in this bewilderment? With You I have no rest, and without You my work is disordered—no hope of being cut off, no hope of arrival. Help me against You! For these spirits are all mad for You and these hearts are all bewildered by You.”

Perhaps You will put things in order, smooth out my road to You,  
and give me a remedy for pain with Your balm and beautiful doing.

O God, today this burning of mine is mixed with pain. I have no capacity to wait it out, no place to flee. The secret of the recognizer’s present moment is a sharp blade—there is no place for repose, no way to avoidance.

**8:17** *Thou didst not throw when thou threwest, but God threw; and that He may try the faithful with a beautiful trial.*

*When thou threwest* is dispersion, *but God threw* is togetherness. Dispersion is the attribute of servanthood, and togetherness is the description of Lordhood. Dispersion without togetherness is of no use, and togetherness without dispersion is not correct.<sup>2</sup>

Sheer dispersion without togetherness is the belief of the free-willers, sheer togetherness without dispersion is the religion of the predestinarians, and dispersion along with togetherness is the

2 Translation of LI 2:305.

road of the Sunnis and is correct. The free-willers are those who give themselves ability and choice and do not step outside of themselves. The predestinarians are those who lose their own hands and feet to the harshness of all-compellingness; they do not see the secondary causes and give themselves no free choice. The Sunnis are those who say to them, “In your practice be at the threshold of *Thee alone we worship*; in your heart ask, weep, and supplicate at the threshold of *Thee alone we ask for help* [1:5].”

*Thou didst not throw when thou threwest, but God threw.* This is an allusion to the reality of solitariness and the path of unification. He is saying: “Leave aside all other objects of desire. What does he who is seized by My love have to do with other than Me? O Muḥammad, lay no favor on Me because of your activity, but look at My success-giving! Be not delighted at your own remembrance—look at My instruction! Flee from your own marks and see only My love!”

The path of unification is oneness and estrangement from self. Giving marks of “me” and “us” is duality, and duality is proof of estrangement. With duality there are today and tomorrow, but the *tawḥīd*-voicer is apart from today and tomorrow. As long as the *tawḥīd*-voicer has not found the shadow of the Sun of existence, he has not been released from self. As long as he has not been released from self, he has not found the Real.

*When thou threwest* is the attribute of the desirer who is sitting on the road of variegation and gazing on himself from the Real. *But God threw* is the description of the desired; having left himself behind and found stability, he gazes on the Real from the Real.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The self-purifier sees all from Him, the recognizer sees all in Him, the *tawḥīd*-voicer sees all as He. Every named being is a loan. True being is He—the rest is suspect. The desirer is a wage-earner, the desired a guest. The wage of the wage-earner befits the wage-earner, the feast of the guest befits the host. The guest is bound by the work with which he is busy. His eyes are in face-to-face vision, his spirit radiant in His love. His spirit is all eye, his secret core all tongue. That eye and that tongue are helpless in face-to-face vision’s light.”

*And that He may try the faithful with a beautiful trial.* The beautiful trial is to be given the success of showing gratitude for bestowal and to realize patience in tribulation. What the Real does is beauty from the Real because it is His to act, and this is the reality of beauty—it is what belongs to the doer to do.<sup>3</sup>

Whenever someone does an act appropriate for himself, that is beautiful from him. All that comes from the Real and is conveyed to His servant, whether blessing or tribulation, ease or hardship, is beautiful, for He is the Lord of all. No one has it over Him to ask why and how. What He does with His own creation is not injustice. *And to God belongs the conclusive argument* [6:149]. In whatever God does, He has the complete argument, for He is the Creator and Enactor of the world and the world’s folk. He is the bringer of nonbeing into being, the one who makes appear, the king over the servant.

**8:24** *O you who have faith, respond to God and the Messenger when he invites you to that which will give you life, and know that God comes between a man and his heart, and unto Him you will be mustered.*

In the tongue of the folk of allusion, response is of two sorts: one is the response of *tawḥīd*, and the other the response of realization. *Tawḥīd* is that the faithful say “one,” and realization is that the recognizers be one. *Tawḥīd* is the attribute of the travelers, and realization is the state of those snatched away. The first is the attribute of the Bosom Friend, the second the attribute of the Beloved.

The Bosom Friend was a traveler and stood before the Exalted Threshold in the station of service: “*Surely I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth, unswerving*” [6:79]. The Beloved was snatched away, sitting in reverence at the top of good fortune. The Beginningless Presence addressed him, “Peace be upon thee, O Prophet, and God’s mercy and His blessing.”

The traveling of the wayfarers lies in the outward response of following the Messenger. The

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3 LI 2:306.

attraction of the snatched away lies in the secret core's response of contemplating the Knower of Unseen Things.

This is why that master of the Tariqah said, "*Respond to God in your secret core and His Messenger through your outwardness when he invites you to that which will give you life.* The life of the souls is through following the Messenger, and the life of the hearts is through contemplating the unseen things."

May I be a ransom for the men dwelling in the Unseen,  
their secret cores roaming in all that is there!

The reality of life will not be turned over to anyone among the folk of creation without the response of *tawhīd* and the signet of realization. Hence this call of exaltedness came from the prophetic presence: "I have been commanded to fight the people until they say 'No god but God.'"

*When He invites you to that which will give you life.* In reality the folk of life and the living are those who are pure of backsliding, far from suspicion, famous for friendship, released from the ruling power of the soul, their hearts joined to the Patron, their secret cores adorned with awareness of the Real, alive in the breeze of intimacy, having found the beginningless reminder and reached the Friend

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, nothing other than recognizing You is happiness, and nothing other than finding You is life. He who lives without You is imprisoned like a corpse. Life without You is death, and the one who lives with You lives forever."

O life of the spirit, what is it with me that I know nothing of my state?  
The spirit from You fills me, but my heart's blood is empty of You.

\*

I will have no spirit if You turn away from me.  
O Spirit of the world, You are my unbelief and faith.

*And know that God comes between a man and his heart.* The wayfarers on the road of the Haqiqah are two groups: the knowers and the recognizers. The knowers find their hearts in keeping with the verse, "*Surely in that is a reminder for him who has a heart*" [50:37]. The recognizers lose their hearts in keeping with the verse, "*And know that God comes between a man and his heart.*"<sup>4</sup>

This is a strange intimation and a marvelous allusion: The heart is the road, and the Friend is the homeland. When someone arrives at the homeland, he no longer walks on the road. At the beginning, there is no escape from the heart, but at the end, the heart is a veil.

As long as someone stays with the heart, he is the desirer. The one without a heart is the desired. At first the heart is needed because one cannot traverse the road of the Shariah without the heart. Thus He said, "*a reminder for him who has a heart.*" At the end, remaining with the heart is duality, and duality is distance from the Real. Hence He said, "*comes between a man and his heart.*"

It is said that the possessors of the heart are four: The renunciant, whose heart is wounded by yearning; the fearful, whose heart is washed by doubt; the desirer, whose heart has tightened its belt in service; and the lover, whose heart is joined with the Presence.

Revelation came to David the prophet: "'O David, make for Me a pure house in which I may reside!' O David, make a house fitting to be the field of union with Me, and turn away from the others toward Me."

David said, "O Lord, which house can be fitting for Your majesty and tremendousness?"

He said, "The heart of the faithful servant. 'O David! I am with fevered hearts.' Wherever you see someone in the road of searching for Me whose harvest has been burned by the fire of passion in seeking Me, take that as the mark. The pavilion of My holiness is set up only when the heart of the burnt is annihilated. The heart of the faithful servant is the treasury of My bazaar, the domicile of looking upon Me, the prayer-niche of union with Me, the tent of yearning for Me, the

4 These two sentences are derived from LI 2:311.

lodging place of speaking with Me, the treasure house of My secrets, the quarry of seeing Me.”

When something is burnt, it loses value, but when a heart is burnt, it gains in value. Muṣṭafā said, “The hearts are God’s containers in the earth. The most beloved of the containers to God is the most limpid, the most tender, and the most solid.” He said that the hearts of this community’s lovers are cups for the wine of love for the Lord. Any heart that is more limpid in relation to engendered beings and more merciful toward the faithful is more exalted in the Exalted Presence.

Beware, consider the heart exalted! Protect its face from the opacities of caprice and appetite, for it is a lordly subtlety and the gazing place of the Glorified. Muṣṭafā said, “Surely God gazes not on your forms or your acts, but He gazes on your hearts.” In other words, “Do not adorn your faces, for the adornment of faces has no honor with the Exalted Presence; do not curl your hair, for curled and knotted hair is of no account in that Court. Do not be proud of your forms, for the form has no measure or worth. The only thing of any use is a heart full of pain.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “For this work, a man is needed with a heart full of pain. Alas that no pain remains in the world, nor in the hearts!”

Concerning His words, “*God comes between a man and his heart,*” one of the realizers said, “He is alluding to the hearts of His lovers, the fact that He takes the hearts away from them, protects them for them, and makes them fluctuate through His attributes, as the Prophet said: ‘The heart of Adam’s child is between two fingers of the All-Merciful—He makes it fluctuate as He will.’ Then He seals it with the seal of recognition and impresses it with the imprint of yearning.”

**8:29** *O you who have faith, if you are wary of God, He will appoint for you a criterion, acquit you of your ugly deeds, and forgive you. And God is the possessor of a tremendous bounty.*

He is saying to the faithful, “If you go by the road of godwariness and take godwariness as your refuge in every state, He will give you a criterion of knowledge and inspiration through which you will separate truth from falsehood, and the straightness of the road from the losing of the road. This is complete knowledge for those of you who are knowers, and sound inspiration for those of you who are recognizers.” The criterion of the knower is the indications of the Shariah and the clear proofs reached by expenditure of effort and the acquisition of servanthood. The criterion of the recognizer is a light from the Unseen and a clear mirror for the divine bestowal and lordly inspiration.

In this verse people have spoken of another intimation and beautiful subtlety: He is saying, “O you who have planted the root of the tree of faith! If you nurture it with godwariness, it will give forth three fruits: One is the criterion, as He says: ‘*He will appoint for you a criterion.*’ Another is acquittal: ‘*acquit you of your ugly deeds.*’ Third is forgiveness: ‘*and forgive you.*’” The criterion is bestowal of recognition, the acquittal lightening of burdens, the forgiveness bestowal of eminence. The bestowal of recognition is appropriate, the lightening of burdens beautiful, and the bestowal of eminence complete.

**8:41** *And know that, whatever booty you take, a fifth is for God, and for His Messenger and for kinsfolk, orphans, the indigent, and the son of the road, if you have faith in God....*

Booty is the property of unbelievers that Muslims capture in the time of battle and struggle.

It is said that struggle is of two sorts: the outer struggle and the inner struggle. The outer struggle is against the unbelievers with the sword, and the inner struggle is against the soul with severity.

Those who struggle with the sword are three men: the wage-earning striver, the forgiven wounded, and the martyred slain. In the same way, the strugglers against the soul are three men: One strives, and he is among the pious; one attacks, and he is among the Pegs; one is released, and he is among the Substitutes.<sup>5</sup>

He who struggles against the unbelievers becomes rich by possessing the booty. He who

5 “Pegs” (*awṭād*) and “Substitutes” (*abdāl*) are two sorts of friends of God often mentioned in Sufi texts. In Qurʾān 78:6, mountains are called pegs, which is to suggest that they hold the earth in place. Maybudī provides a bit of explanation of the two terms under 27:61 and mentions Pegs under 13:2, 13:3, 18:7, and 41:10.

struggles against the soul becomes rich in the heart. When someone is rich in property, the property is either permitted and a tribulation, or forbidden and a curse. When someone is rich in the heart, his aspiration is greater than this world and his desire greater than the afterworld.

Muṣṭafā called struggle against the soul more magnificent and greater. He said: “We have returned from the lesser struggle to the greater struggle.” This is because you can avoid the enemy, but you cannot avoid the soul. When you get along with an enemy, you will be secure from his evil. If you get along with the soul, you will see your own destruction.

One of the misfortunes of the soul is what Muṣṭafā said: “God gazes not on your forms or your deeds, but He gazes on your hearts.” He said that He gazes on the heart, but He does not gaze on the soul. It is well known that gazing is the result of love, and not gazing the result of hatred. If the Real did not consider the soul an enemy, He would gaze on it just as He gazes on the heart. This makes it mandatory to consider the soul an enemy. One must conform with the Real and not gaze on the soul with affection and love. In the battlefield of struggle, one must act against it severely with the sword of discipline. One must sew shut the eye of its desires with the needle of solitariness and disengagement. This is why Muṣṭafā said, “When someone detests his own soul in God’s Essence, God will keep him secure from chastisement on the Day of Resurrection.”

In this meaning, the story of Aḥmad ibn Khidrūya is well known. He said, “I was passing the days in severity toward my own soul in order to keep it back from its desires and pleasures. One day it became elated by battle. It clung to me saying that fighting in battle was a stipulation of the religion, the support of being a Muslim, and the mark of obedience. I was surprised at its elation, for the soul does not become elated by obedience and rarely inclines to the good. I was sure that there must be some deception connected to it. I was commanding it to fast. Perhaps it could not put up with hunger and wanted to travel so as to be delivered from it and break its fast while traveling, so it wanted to put to use the concession for traveling. I said to the soul that I had made a pledge not to break the fast while traveling but rather to increase it. The soul said that it would accept that and would not break the fast. I thought that perhaps it was not able to put up with standing in prayer all night. It wanted to be delivered from that while traveling. I put it into my heart that I would not decrease my standing in prayer at all and I would keep the soul on its feet from night to morning. The soul said that it would accept that and not complain at all. I thought that perhaps it was because it did not mix with people and that dread of seclusion made it do this. I decided that I would dismount only at ruined way stations and avoid people. It also accepted that from me and approved of it. Then, in incapacity and pleading with the Real, I wept and said, ‘O God, inform me of the soul’s deception by Your bounty and make me happy with Your gentleness!’

“In the end I found out that that this is what the soul was saying: ‘Every day you strike me with the sword of struggle and you kill me a thousand times, but the people don’t know anything about it. At least let me go to battle so that I may be killed once and for all. I will be a martyr, and the world’s folk will recount that Aḥmad Khidrūya was martyred in battle.’

“I said to myself, ‘It is a difficult enemy who shows himself to be in conformity in this world but does not want felicity in the afterworld. It wanted to spring the ambush of eye-service on me and destroy me that way, but the Exalted Lord informed me of its deception and gave me a place next to His generosity and gentleness.’ Then I increased my prayers of thanksgiving and saw many gentle favors of generosity.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, it may be from dread that I have come to the edge. I simply do not know how I fell in with this soul and this work. I have not taken heed, nor have I seen people taking heed. No matter how much I tried to see one breath of mine worthy of You, I have not seen it. O King, You know that it was not in Your tracks that I chose these days. O God, do not make manifest the secrets of someone You have called—the sins that You have concealed! Generous One, You are the judge between me and You. Do what is worthy of You!”

*A fifth is for God, and for His Messenger.* Just as booty is taken from wealth and a portion of it is for God and for the Messenger, so also God has a portion in the transactions of the Haqiqah, which are the heart’s booty: The servant should be free of his own share in it and of slavehood to the realm of being; all of him should be the Real and in the Real, disowned of

self and free of the world.<sup>6</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “A present moment comes to the servant when of the body the tongue remains, and that’s it. Of the heart the mark remains, and that’s it. Of the spirit face-to-face vision remains, and that’s it. Hearing goes, the Heard remains, and that’s it. The heart goes, the Shown remains, and that’s it. The spirit goes, what was remains, and that’s it.

“This chevalier arrived at the way station and asked, ‘What mark is given of a flood?’ When he reached the ocean, he fell into the ocean and all words were consumed. He who reaches the Patron reaches himself.”<sup>7</sup>

At the time of drunkenness, poverty is a marvelous falcon,  
taking fresh fish from a dry riverbed.  
First the diver abandoned spirit and children,  
then he went deep into the ocean after a pearl.  
For years Majnūn wandered the mountains and deserts—  
one night he found his beloved at home without her mother. [DS 835]<sup>8</sup>

**8:50 *Wert thou to see when the angels take those who disbelieve, beating their faces and their backs: “Taste the chastisement of the burning!”***

Death is of four sorts: the death of degradation and the curse, the death of remorse and affliction, the death of the gift and generosity, and the death of honor and contemplation.

The death of the curse is the death of the unbelievers, the death of remorse is the death of the disobedient, the death of generosity is the death of the faithful, and the death of contemplation is the death of the prophets.

About the death of the curse He says, “*Wert thou to see when the angels take those who disbelieve.*” In another place He says, “*Wert thou to see when the wrongdoers are in the throes of death...* [6:93]. O master! If only you were to see the unbelievers in the agonies of death and the blows and strikes of the chastising angels, before whose harshness, awesomeness, and fearsomeness heaven and earth tremble—the unbelievers caught amidst smoke, fire, unpleasant smells, and the striking of the angels, their hearts overcome by severance from possessions. If they complain, the pain increases, and if they weep, the call *no good news* [25:22] comes to them. The dust of unworthiness sits on their face, the fire of severance falls into their spirit, hell is filled with their moaning, and the angels disown them. Beware of the severity of severance! Beware of the wound of separation!”

As for the death of remorse, that is the death of the disobedient, who passed their days in heedlessness and fell short in the acts of obedience and worship. Suddenly they fall into the grasp of the angel of death and are caught by death’s agonies. On one side they see the angel of mercy, but they are ashamed because they did little good. On the other side they see the angel of chastisement, and they fear because they did bad and ugly things. The hapless, disobedient servant stays in the middle, his eyes toward the Unseen to see what will come. Will generosity or degradation come from there? Will he see bounty or justice? Then the angels present his obedience and disobedience to him, his obedience being little, his disrespect great. His many works add remorse to the remorse and disobedience to disobedience. Then those deeds of his—little obedience, much disobedience—are both sealed and hung around his neck. He remains like this in the bier, like this in the grave, and like this at the resurrection, just as the Exalted Lord says: “*And every man, We have fastened his omen to his neck*” [17:13].

Third is the death of the gift and generosity for the faithful and the good men. The angels of mercy will seize their pure spirits from them with hundreds of thousands of generousities, benevolences, comforts, good news, and glad tidings. They will give good news with the gentle favors of generosity and infinite caresses: “*Peace be upon you! Enter the Garden for what you were doing*”

6 This paragraph is a rough translation of LI 2:321.

7 This last sentence, repeated under 20:9, 28:23, and 47:19, is taken from Anṣārī’s *Ṣad maydān* 333. Cf. also under 2:277.

8 The second verse is not found in the printed Divan.

[16:32]. Muṣṭafā said, “The gift of the person of faith is death.” This is because what veils the person of faith from the Real is his soul, and death is the lifting of the veil. But the recognizers receive no bestowal and no gift from the opening up of the road to the Friend or the lifting of the veils.

Take care not to fear this death of form—  
 fear rather the life you have right now.  
 True life will not rise up from this life—  
 it’s a wolf, and wolves are not shepherds. [DS 675]

Bishr Ḥāfī said, “What a difference there is between two groups: a group who are dead but whose hearts are alive through their remembrance, and a group who are alive but whose hearts have become hard through their deliberation.”

It has been said that a poor man heard someone recite the verse, “*Surely the quaking of the Hour is a tremendous thing*” [22:1]. He became happy and began to dance. He shouted out, saying, “Oh! When will this day come so this poor man may be let out of his bonds?!”

It was said to him, “What was just shown to you?”

He said, “This world is a veil, and the resurrection is the time for contemplation. For the friends the veil is a trial, and contemplation a gift. When will we be released from this veil and reach good fortune and union?!”

When will I throw off this cage  
 and build a nest in the divine garden?!

Fourth is the death of contemplation, which honors and exalts the prophets. It is the caressing of them with the call of gentleness that comes forth without intermediary from the Exalted Presence: “*O serene soul, return to thy Lord, approving, approved!*” [89:27-28].

°Abdallāh ibn Masʿūd said, “A group of us Emigrants and Helpers were gathered in the house of °Āʿīsha. God’s Messenger looked at us and his eyes filled with tears. He said, ‘Welcome to you! May God give you life, may God gather you, may God help you, may God guide you, may God keep you safe, may God accept you! I advise you to be wary of God, and I will advise God concerning you and will earnestly entreat Him for you.’ Then he offered advice and eloquent counsel.

“The companions said, ‘O Messenger of God! Is it that the days of your life have come to their end and it is time for going?’

“Muṣṭafā said, ‘The fixed term has now drawn close, and the final return to God—and to the Lote Tree of the Final End, the Garden of the Abode, the Highest Throne, the fullest cup, and the highest Friend.’”

Yes, the bird of the Presence is set upon flying back to the nest of Exaltedness, the bird whose wings are passion, whose flight is desire, whose horizon is the Unseen, whose domicile is pain, whose welcome is the majesty of “I come to him rushing.”<sup>9</sup> Whenever this bird of the Presence flies from the cage of mortal nature to the horizon of the Unseen, the cherubim of holiness put their hands over their eyes. Otherwise, the lightning of its beauty would burn their eyes. At the moment of Moses’ death, lightning flashed from the pavilions of awesomeness in the air of passion, and that flash of awesomeness took one of Azrael’s eyes back to the state of nonbeing. It was said, “O Azrael, when you go to My friends, take care to observe courtesy. Do not go to them without their permission.”

The tongue of the yearner’s state, in the jealousy of friendship and the perfect burning of beginningless love, keeps on saying,

“O Lord, if You annihilate me with the sword of friendship,  
 the angel of death will have nothing to do with me.  
 Whoever drinks the draft of Your passion from Your cup  
 will know the pain of craving when none is left.” [DS 211]

9 The hadith is quoted in full under 2:152.

**8:72** *Surely those who have faith, who have emigrated, and struggled with their possessions and their souls in God's path, and those who have given refuge and help, they are friends of one another.*

O chevalier! The pearl of union with Him is not something that falls into the hand of someone with low aspiration. It is a gem that comes to hand in the box of the self-purification of the purifiers, a jasmine that appears in the gardens of the realities of the passionate. Each of those who dove for this pearl became on his own the sun of desire, the lodging place of the covenant of good fortune, and was accepted by the Divine Presence. Their attribute is what the Exalted Lord says at the end of the surah: They “*have faith, who have emigrated, and struggled with their possessions and their souls in God's path, and those who have given refuge and help.*” Their decree is this: “*They are friends of one another.*”

**8:74** *Those—they are the faithful in truth. Theirs is forgiveness and a generous provision.*

Their created nature is this: *Those—they are the faithful in truth.* Their reward is this: *Theirs is forgiveness and a generous provision.* The *generous provision* is that the sun of union shines forth from the east. It shines, and all of their hopes become hard cash, their increase becomes infinite, the story of water and clay is concealed, and the beginningless Friend is seen face-to-face. Both eyes and heart see through the Friend.

When the light of self-disclosure appears in someone's heart,  
it's no great wonder that like Moses he finds comfort in the mountain.

## Surah 9: al-Tawba

**9:25** *God has already helped you in many homesteads, and on the Day of Hunain, when you admired your own multitude.*

Self-admiration is the ghoul of the road. It is the blight of the religion, the cause of the disappearance of blessings, the key to separation, and the basis of heedlessness. Self-admiration is that you consider your own obedience important, you consider yourself the source of your service, and you look upon your service with the eye of approval. By the decree of the reports and the fatwa of prophethood, the obedience of such a person will never go any further than his own head.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, I am trying to avoid two claims, and from each I ask the help of Your bounty: fancying that I have something of my own, and fancying that I have a rightful due against You.

"O God, I have risen up from where I was, but I have not yet reached where I want to go.

"O God, anyone who has not yet been killed by selflessness is a corpse. When someone's portion of friendship is talk, he has been defrauded. When someone's religion is not the road of spirit and heart, what business has he with the Friend?"

Muṣṭafā said, "If you did not sin, I would be afraid that you would have something worse than sin: self-admiration! self-admiration!"

He also said, "What a bad servant! A servant who imagines, becomes conceited, and forgets the Great, the Transcendent. What a bad servant! A servant who dominates, transgresses, and forgets the All-Compelling, the Highest. What a bad servant! A servant who is negligent, inattentive, and forgets the tomb and disintegration. What a bad servant! A servant who is worried, oversteps, and forgets the beginning and the end."

**9:60** *The freewill offerings are for the poor, and the indigent.... and the son of the road....*

O you whose heart has never for one day walked in poverty and who, in your whole life, have never for one hour sat like Jacob in poverty's house of sorrows! O you who have never for one day placed your own attributes with the description of poverty in the mangonel of struggle and never for an instant sacrificed your spirit in the cave of exile and the state of indigence by following the beloved Prophet and the sincerely truthful Abū Bakr. You suppose that without tasting the drink of poverty and wearing the clothes of discipline today you will dwell tomorrow in the domiciles of the High Chambers with the poor among the Companions and the men of the road of poverty. Your supposition is erroneous and your self-governance wrong. They were a thousand times more passionate about that poverty of theirs than you are about being a chief.

°Abd al-Raḥmān ibn °Awf was one of the paragons among the Companions, but the beauty of poverty had hidden its face from him. One day he came in to the presence of Muṣṭafā, and Sa'd ibn Mu'adh, a poor Companion, was present. Words came forth from °Abd al-Raḥmān that made the poor man sad, and he became ill. Then °Abd al-Raḥmān made one-half of his wealth a sacrifice for the suffering of his heart, but he would not accept. God's Messenger said, "O Sa'd, why will you not accept?"

He said, "O Messenger of God! The pearl of poverty is too exalted to be sold even for the whole of this world."

For a hundred years the sun must rise in the east and set in the west before the beginningless decree gives a recognizer the eyes to see the beauty of poverty and recognize the exaltedness of

poverty. He must have a pain that makes him familiar with seeking. But this seeking is not like the seeking of other things. This pain is not like other pains, which arise from the vapor of forbidden morsels and appear at the top of the stomach. The pain of the religion and the vision of this seeking arise from the level of the liver of the free man, and the exaltedness of the poverty in the hearts of seekers appears in the measure of their pain. The more a heart is full of pain and burnt, the more the exaltedness of poverty remains with it.

Muṣṭafā was offered this world, but he was not pleased with it. He said, “What do I have to do with this world?” He was offered the afterworld, but he did not look at it. About him it was said, “*The eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass*” [53:17]. The poor were placed before his eyes and heart, and he wanted to turn away from them and not look. The Exalted Lord did not let that pass. He commanded him to gaze upon them: “*And let not thine eyes turn away from them* [18:28]: O Master, do not lift your eyes away from them and always honor gazing upon them. O Master, I who am the Lord gaze upon their hearts. Look at those at whom I am constantly looking!”

It has been said that poverty has three levels: first need, second poverty, and third indigence. The possessor of need turns his head to this world so that it may block his poverty. The possessor of poverty does not give his heart to this world but inclines to the afterworld and is at ease with the bliss of paradise. The possessor of indigence wants only the Patron. He does not want joy or blessing, rather the mystery of the Patron of Blessings.

Muṣṭafā wanted indigence. He said, “O God, let me live in indigence, let me die in indigence, and muster me among the indigent!” But he sought refuge from poverty: “I seek refuge in Thee from poverty.” This means that the possessor of poverty still has something left of his own shares, so he will be veiled from his Lord by what is left.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Here there are three stations. First, lightning shines from the heaven of poverty to make you aware, then a breeze blows forth from the air of indigence to make you familiar, then a door of recognition opens to make you a friend and dresses you in a robe of honor to make you bold.

“O God, You mixed the fire of finding with the light of recognition. You stirred up the breeze of proximity from the garden of union. You poured down the rain of solitariness on the dust of mortal nature. You burned water and clay with the fire of friendship. Thus You taught the recognizer’s eyes how to see You.”

Then, at the end of the verse, He finishes mentioning the owners of portions with “*the son of the road*.” In the tongue of the ulama, *the son of the road* is he who seeks separation from his homeland and passes his days in the abasement of exile and the suffering of travel. In the tasting of the chevaliers, it is he who cuts himself off from the habits and familiar things of his own caprice and detaches his heart totally from self, links, and all creatures. Like an exile, he takes up a corner with a heart full of pain and a spirit full of remorse. To the tune of longing and bewilderment he keeps on murmuring, “O God, everyone’s an exile in body, but I’m an exile in heart and spirit. Everyone’s an exile while traveling, but I’m an exile at home. Every illness is healed by a physician, but I have been made ill by the physician. Everyone has a portion from the apportioning, but I have no portion. Everyone who’s lost his heart has a friend and sympathizer, but I have no friends and am an exile.”

Every night the people sleep—what about me awake?

Everyone’s sleeping with a friend—what about me without a friend?

**9:100** *And the preceders, the first among the emigrants and the helpers and those who followed them in beautiful doing—God approves of them, and they approve of Him.*

**9:102** *And others who acknowledged their sins; they mixed a wholesome deed with another that is ugly. Perhaps God will turn toward them. Surely God is forgiving, ever-merciful.*

**9:106** *And others who are made to hope for God’s command; either He will chastise them or He will turn toward them. And God is knowing, wise.*

In these verses the Generous Lord, the lovingly kind, the able, the pure-knowing knower, the one

and unique in name and mark, divides Muḥammad's community into three groups according to the degrees of their faith, the disparity of their acts, and the difference of their character traits. This is the same classification that He provided in detail elsewhere: "*Among them are wrongdoers to themselves, among them are moderate, and among them are preceders in good deeds*" [35:32]. There He mentioned them together and here apart, but the classification and the ranking in terms of virtue are the same. First are *the preceders, the first*, and they are the preceders. Second are *others who have acknowledged their sins*, and they are the moderate. Third are *others made to hope for God's command*, and they are the wrongdoers.

He begins with the preceders. In the beginningless they have the precedence of solicitude and the bounty of guidance from God. They are the first chieftains and the forebears of this community, the best of creation, the lamps of guidance, the signposts of the religion, the treasurers of the Real, the pillars of the submission, the masters of this world, the interceders of the next world, the chosen of mortal man, the boast of Adam's children. They are the Companions of Muṣṭafā and the chosen of God, the leaders of the submission and the Sunnah, the first in the religion and recognition. They were the first to hear the Real's message and they were the first to accept the message-bringer and to welcome the Real. One group are the Emigrants. They left behind their homes and families and lost their means and homeland for God's sake. Another group are the Helpers, who accepted Muṣṭafā with heart and spirit and gave his companions refuge. As a bird nurtures its chick, they nurtured the submission. They made their bodies and spirits shields for the religion of the submission. They took this world as lowly and they placed their love in the religion. Another group are the Followers who came later: *and those who followed them in beautiful doing*. They learned the religion from them, took their character traits as their own, and then they conveyed their good qualities, their fatwas, and their conduct to the community. *God approves of them, and they approve of Him*. God is happy with them, and He will make them happy with themselves. This one group is the preceders.

The second sort are the moderate. Moderation is to go by the middle road, with neither the excellence of the preceders nor the excessiveness of the wrongdoers. Rather, they go by the middle road and mix obedience and disobedience together. They are like the companions of the Ramparts, whose good deeds and bad deeds are equal, and who stay far from hell but do not reach paradise. The moderate are the ones about whom the Exalted Lord says, "*And others who acknowledged their sins*": those who attest to their own sins and acknowledge their own bad disposition. They see their own faults and are ashamed of their own acts.

Acknowledgement is two: One is the acknowledgment of the estranged tomorrow at the resurrection. When they see the first parts of the chastisement and the traces of the Real's anger and vengeance, and the harshness and moaning of hell, they acknowledge their own sins. But what profit does acknowledgement have on that day? Of what use is attestation at that time? God says, "*So they acknowledge their sins. Away with the companions of the Blaze!*" [67:11]. "*We acknowledge our sins. Is there a way to go out?*" [40:11].

The other is the acknowledgment of the faithful in this world. They acknowledge their sins and attest to their faults, with regret in the heart, apology on the tongue, and burning and remorse in the midst of the spirit. This is acknowledgment in its own place and acknowledgment in its own time. God says, "*And others who acknowledged their sins.*" Then He says, "*They mixed a wholesome deed with another that is ugly*": They mixed together their acts, one good and one bad, some pure and some defiled, some permitted and some forbidden, some straight and some crooked, some faulty and some excellent.

It has also been said that this is to combine asking forgiveness with sin. They sin, and along with the sin they ask forgiveness. In the report has come, "He who asks forgiveness is not persisting [in his sin]." The Exalted Lord says, "*Whoever does something ugly or wrongs himself and then asks forgiveness of God, he will find God forgiving, ever-merciful*" [4:110].

It has also been said that when the servant combines slips with wholesome deeds, this is evidence that his sins do not nullify the reward of the obedience for, if they nullified it, He would not have said *wholesome deed*.

Then He says, “*Perhaps God will turn toward them.*” God makes it necessary to accept them with all their faults and to take them with all their offenses. *Surely God is forgiving, ever-merciful*, for God is fault-hiding, forgiving, and lovingly kind. °Uthmān used to say that there is no verse in the Qur’an offering more hope than this verse. And it is a sound report from Muṣṭafā, narrated by Samra ibn Jundab, that he said, “Two comers came to me last night and took me. We reached a city built of gold and silver bricks and were met by men, half of whose creation was like the most beautiful you have ever seen and half like the ugliest you have every seen. The two said to them, ‘Go and fall into that river.’ They fell into it, then they returned to us, the ugliness having gone from them, and they had become the most beautiful form. Then the two said to me, ‘This is the Garden of Eden, and it is your dwelling place. As for those who were half beautiful and half ugly, they mixed a wholesome deed with another that is ugly. God has shown forbearance.’”

The third sort are *others who are made to hope for God’s command*. He is saying, “There are others, a group with great faults and dreadful offenses, bad deeds, crooked words, and numerous plaintiffs—unfit children, impudent youths, weak old men, ungrateful poor, impure rich, cruel in the day of good fortune, insolent in the days of strength, no foundation except in the heart, strangers to familiarity and attestation.” Of them He says, “*made to hope for God’s command: Leave them to My will and put them down with hope, and do not throw them into despair. Either He will chastise them, or He will turn toward them.* Either He will chastise them with justice or accept their excuses through bounty. If He is just, that is permissible for Him, and if He shows bounty, that is fitting.”

Not everything that is permissible for justice is fitting for bounty, but everything fitting for bounty is permissible for justice. Bounty is ruler over justice, and justice is captive in bounty’s hand. Justice is silent before bounty, and bounty has the ring of union in its ear. Do you not see that justice is hidden and bounty apparent such that the enemy is deluded and the friend distracted?

Then He says, “*And God is knowing, wise.*” God knows through right knowledge, without error, and He is wise without negligence or fault. Nothing is missing from His knowledge, nothing is outside of His power, and nothing overcomes His decree. He keeps the creatures in His decree, between His bounty and justice, in His knowledge. He is alone in His creation without any other, knowing through beginningless knowledge before all known things, His Essence always before all creatures, right in knowledge, pure in knowing, always working, bestowing as fits Him; He is true in speech, pure in knowledge, fine in artisanry, complete in bounty, eternal in love—majestic is His majesty, exalted His magnificence, tremendous His rank! Majestic is His unity and holy His self-sufficiency!

**9:111** *Surely God has bought from the faithful their souls and their possessions so that they may have the Garden.... So rejoice in your sale you have made to Him.*

In the tasting of the recognizers and the path of the elect, this verse is a place for the joy of the friends and a playing field for the secret cores of the sincerely truthful. It is felicitation for the faithful, a fitting felicitation and an appropriate bestowal of eminence. It is a felicitation that is the heart’s intimacy and the spirit’s message, the ornament of the session and the capital of the indigent, the adornment of tongues and the life of hearts. It is a generous felicitation, from a generous Lord—generous in Essence, generous in attributes, generous in love, generous in caressing, generous in bestowal.

The servant himself is bestowed by His bounty, and then He buys back what He Himself bestowed. He makes the transaction, but He bestows all the profit on the servant and accepts the loss for Himself. This is beautiful doing and generosity, loving kindness and gentleness.

In the Torah of Moses God said, “The Garden is My Garden and the possessions My possessions. Buy My Garden with My possessions! If you profit, that is yours, and if you lose, that is Mine. O children of Adam, I did not create you to profit from you. I created you only so that you would profit from Me.”

In the Beginningless, before the servant’s existence, the Lord of the Worlds bought him. He was the seller and the buyer. He Himself sold and He Himself bought.

In the Shariah of Muṣṭafā, it is not permitted for the buyer and seller to be the same, unless

it be a father, for whom it is permitted on condition of tenderness, negation of suspicion, perfect loving kindness, and fatherly love. What then do you say about someone who is more clement and merciful toward the servant than a father, a God whose loving kindness has no bounds and whose love is greater? Given that it is permitted for a father, it is more appropriate and more complete in the case of the loving Creator.

Moreover, the Exalted Lord knew that the servants are bad-tempered, breakers of the Covenant, and disloyal to it. He knew that when they reached maturity they would protest. He shut down the road of protest by buying souls full of fault and blight in exchange for a paradise full of joy and blessing. He bought souls full of appetite and trial in exchange for a paradise that has the levels and degrees of proximity to the Real. According to the Shari'ite rules on transactions, when the price given for the bought object is more than it is worth, there is no way to protest.

Also, He bought the soul, not the heart. This is because the heart is an endowment to the Real's love and affection, and it is not permitted to buy or sell endowments.

Moreover, one of the conditions in transactions is delivery. When something cannot be delivered, the Shariah does not permit it to be bought and sold. Birds in the sky and fish in the sea cannot be sold, because they cannot be delivered. The state of the servant's heart is exactly the same, and surrendering it is impossible. Thus the Exalted Lord says, "*He comes between a man and his heart*" [8:24]. Naṣrābādī said, "He buys your attributes from you, but the heart is one of His attributes, so it cannot be bought and sold."

The Prophet said, "The heart of Adam's child is between two fingers of the All-Merciful."

It is also said that the soul is the heart's doorman, standing like a serving boy, a subject serving its lord. As for the heart, it has the place of witnessing. Carrying lordhood like a sultan, it governs the kingdom. So, if the value of the soul, which is the serving boy, is paradise with its treasuries of blessings, what do you say about the heart, with all its nearness and proximity? What is its value other than the neighborhood of the Exalted Presence and the continuity of contemplation and vision?

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "There is a pearl fallen in the dust in the middle of the road, and no one in the world is aware of its value. Suddenly a fortunate person happens upon it and finds an everlasting kingdom, but without drums and hats. In no way did the value of that pearl in the road become less. The value it had yesterday is still there.

"For whom does the light of that pearl shine? For him who knows solicitude. Then complaint rises up. But who began the kindness? Who wanted this work from the beginning? Who planted the tree of love? Who decorated the house of friendship? With all this gentleness, why all these bad thoughts?

"On the day of buying, He saw the faults and He said that it was permitted. O God, all this happiness from You is our portion! Who has a patron like You, where is a friend like You? With the attributes You have, nothing else is fitting. Then, when You say that this is the mark, and the celebration is tomorrow; that this is the message, and the robe of honor is in place, how can there be patience, how can there be repose?"

On the day You put Your head outside the curtain,  
I know You will bring down the realm of time.  
If You'll be adding to this adornment and beauty,  
O Lord, what will You do to our livers!?

*So rejoice in your sale you have made to Him.* He is saying, "Be happy, My servants, be joyful in the transaction you have made with Me. Rest in My name, take your ease in My name and mark."

When someone makes a sale, his happiness lies in the price of the object sold. The better and greater the price, the more his happiness. The Lord of the Worlds did not say, "Be happy with the price you received." Rather, "Be happy with the sale you have made with Me and the transaction you carried out with Me." What sorrow has he who has Him? What worth has he who is not worthy for His proximity?

A Psalm of David says, "O child of Adam, why do you love other than Me when I am worthy

for love? Why do you trade with other than Me when I am munificent and bountiful? Why do you not transact with Me when I am the bestower of great bestowals? O traders in this world, the profit of this world is evanescent, but My profit remains.” *What is with you runs out, but what is with God subsists* [16:96]. *The subsisting things, the wholesome deeds, are better with your Lord in reward, and better in expectation* [18:46].

*So rejoice in your sale*—the sale that He made in His own beginninglessness and that we did not make. He opened it with our name, and he called it out in our name: “The sale that I made you made.” In the same way, He said to Muṣṭafā, “*Thou didst not throw when thou threwest, but God threw*” [8:17]. This is an allusion to the center point of togetherness and the realization of solitariness. The breeze of the Beginningless blew, the lightning of oneness flashed, and the servant was stolen away from the hand of water and dust. Duality turned to nonexistence, the Haqiqah became limpid, and I-ness became a loan.<sup>1</sup>

The world’s tumult is all this talk of me and you—  
give up “me” and the whole world will be your garden.

**9:112** *The repenters, the worshipers, the praisers, the journeyers, the bowers, the prostrators, the commanders to the honorable and prohibitors of the improper, the keepers of God’s bounds—give good news to the faithful!*

These are the attributes of the faithful, the conduct of the familiar, and the custom of the friends, who are the hindmost in this world and the foremost in that world. They are the witnesses among the prophets and the interceders for the people, the masters of this world, the lovers of the religion and the beloved of the Real. In this verse their grades are mentioned in a pleasing arrangement. He praises them and bears witness to them, beginning with the lowest of them. First He mentions the lower ones, those who repent and turn back from sin, so that they will not stay ashamed and stricken in heart, but will have new hope. He is saying:

“*The repenters*, those who have turned back from sin, who apologize and are regretful; *the worshipers*, those who worship, observe the commands, and do service; *the praisers*, those who praise, extol, and laud; *the journeyers*, those who go on the hajj, keep the fast, and seek for knowledge; *the bowers*, those who are humble, who serve others, who obey the commands of a pir they have reached; *the prostrators*, those who say the prayer, who plead, and who put their faces in the dust for the sake of My majesty; *the commanders to the honorable*, those who command the people to the religion, who call out and invite to obedience, who give good counsel and advise each other; *and prohibitors of the improper*, the just sultans, those who call to remembrance and who bring the people away from evil and who receive them with spirit and heart. *Give good news to the faithful!* Give good news to the faithful that whatever shortcoming they may have, My unneediness is equal to it. Whatever may be displeasing from them, My loving kindness is on top of that. Whatever the servant may hope, My bounty is greater than that. Give good news to the faithful that when I chose them, I saw the faults. I did not approve before I had examined the hidden things. With My own unneediness I bought the servants as they are.”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’ said, “There is no correct worship without repentance, nor correct repentance without praise of Him for the path of repentance that came. Praise is not correct without constant journeying and discipline, nor are these stations and preliminaries correct without constant bowing and prostration. And none of this is correct without commanding the honorable and prohibiting the improper. And none of these are correct without keeping the bounds outwardly and inwardly. The person of faith is someone who has this description, for God says, ‘*Give good news to the faithful*’— those who have this description.”<sup>2</sup>

It has come in the traditions that tomorrow on the Day of Resurrection a group from the community will be brought to the place of the Scales. The angels to whom they were entrusted will begin to enumerate their bad acts: “O Lord, these are the breakers of the Covenant, the disloyal, the

<sup>1</sup> Much of the commentary on this verse is translated or quoted from LI 3:63-65.

<sup>2</sup> Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* 9:112.

forgetful, the sinners, the bold, the insolent.”

The Exalted Lord will say, “Inasmuch as this is their doing, that is the way they are, but inasmuch as this concerns My generosity and pardon, they are the repenters, the worshipers, the praisers, the fasters, and the performers of the prayer. They want My friendship with their spirits and hearts and they are One-sayers in My love.”

Through the attribute of brokenness and poverty the tongue of the state of these helpless ones is saying, “O Lord, whether ungodly or worshipful, we are Yours as we are. We are dependent upon Your keeping and Your will. We are recognized as Your servants—there’s no passing You by, and without You nothing is complete.”

The servants, whether beautiful or ugly, belong to You.

The passionate, whether knowing or not, are Yours.

**9:119 *O you who have faith, be wary of God and be among the truthful!***

This is a command, a bestowal of eminence, and a felicitation: a command of God, a bestowal of eminence through good news, and a beautiful felicitation; a lovingly kind command, a heart-holding bestowal of eminence, a magnificent felicitation. He is commanding to bring the servants near to Himself, bestowing eminence so that the travelers will give their hearts to His love, giving felicitation so that they will seek His companionship. The servants who get the work done are those who have His love in their hearts. Those who reap the Real’s fruit are those who have living hearts. Those who remember Him are those who receive eminence from the Real. They pass their days in the world with the world’s folk like strangers.

*O you who have faith!* This is a call of generosity and an infinite caress. The ears for the Real’s call are the seven members of the body. When He discloses Himself, the sorrows of the two worlds are forgotten. He put the call of generosity in front so that hearing it, the servant would find it easy to carry the burden of the decree. What is the decree? “*Be wary of God and be among the truthful!*” He commands to godwariness, and He commands truthfulness in godwariness.

Godwariness is the basis of the submission, truthfulness the perfection of faith. Godwariness is the beginning of familiarity, truthfulness the mark of love. Godwariness is the capital of the worshipers, truthfulness the mark of the light of recognition. Godwariness belongs to the travelers in the world of the Shariah, truthfulness belongs to the pain-stricken in the world of the Tariqah. When someone comes to possess the good fortune of godwariness and he is shown the beauty of truthfulness, his mark is that he strikes fire into the hut of his own existence, launches the ship of createdness in the ocean of nonbeing, makes his children into orphans, bids farewell to his near ones and family, and cleanses his inwardness of habits and customs. His outwardness comes to be adorned with the light of the Shariah, his secret core filled with love for the Real, his heart emptied of love for this world, his secret core of desire for the afterworld—he has no joining with this world or the folk of this world, and no ease with the afterworld.

Remembering the two worlds is no doubt to be pregnant.

If you claim to be a man, do not be pregnant.

You were good—do not be bad for the sake of talk.

You were a man—do not be a woman for color and scent. [DS 326, 325]

**9:128 *Now there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves; what troubles you is difficult for him; eagerly desirous is he for you, clement and ever-merciful toward the faithful.***

He is in contact with you through mortal nature, but he is different from you in election.<sup>3</sup>

“O Muḥammad, keep on saying, ‘*I am a mortal like you*’ [18:110]. I will keep on saying, ‘*Did He not find thee an orphan and shelter thee?*’ [93:6]. You are the orphan pearl, the like of whom is no other. How can a mortal reach the forefront of the Real’s acceptance such that He puts up with his disdain? *By thy life!* [15:72]. How can a mortal be worthy for the grasp of the attributes

3 Inspired by LI 3:76.

to explain the polish of his heart's mirror by virtue of solicitude? *Did We not expand for thee thy breast?* [94:1]. How can a mortal be such that the auditor of the beginningless and endless register turns over the acceptance and rejection of the creatures to his threshold? *Whatever the Messenger gives you, take; whatever he prohibits you, forgo* [59:7]. O Muhammad! You are something different, and your work is different!"

You are a tongue other than the speech of every mouth,  
you are a soul other than the gentleness of anyone else.  
You are a thought other than in anyone's mind.  
How can they reach you? You are indeed another world.

It has been said that in friendship are both separation and union. In the era of the Beginningless, when love was apportioned, the wail of separation's pain rose up from the house of Abū Jahl, and the glitter of union's sun shone from the chamber of Muḥammad the Arab. From that separation was created a hell in the heart of the estranged, and from this union was affirmed a paradise in the breast of the friends.

After the sun of union shone on that paragon, the world's folk were bewildered in his work. The wish for his beauty and for following him rose up in the prophets. Moses the Speaking Companion said, "Lord God, make me one of his community!" Jesus the Spirit of God said, "Lord God, make me the door-keeper of his threshold!" [Abraham] the Bosom Friend said, "Lord God, make my mention flow on the tongue of his community!"

More wonderful than all this is that the paragon himself became bewildered in the steps of his own path. This is just like Majnūn and Laylā. He said, "The means of my knowledge are lost in the ends of your tresses!"

She said, "O Majnūn, that is not such a great claim, for my tresses are themselves lost in my work!"

That chevalier said it beautifully in this poem:

O you who are bewildered in yourself, what image is this?  
O candle of the beauties, what union is this?  
O you like whom is none in the world, what perfection is this?  
O our candle and lamp, what beauty is this?<sup>4</sup>

Ibn °Aṭā° said, "His soul was in conformity with the souls of the creatures in created nature, but different from them in reality, for it was hallowed by the lights of prophecy, confirmed by the contemplation of the Haqiqah, and fixed in the closest locus and the highest station: *The eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass* [53:17]."

Take care not to say that his pure soul was like the souls of others. If one speck of his soul's shining were to shine forth on the spirits and hearts of all the sincerely truthful, they would all go forth to the world of holiness and settle down in the *seat of truthfulness* [54:55]. Despite all this, he used to say in supplication, "'Do not entrust us to our souls for the blink of an eye!' Lord God, lift up this curtain of the soul from before our heart and lift this burden of selfhood away from us, for it is our veil in the road of the Haqiqah."

The command came, "O Muhammad, unasked We put you beside Us: *Did We not expand for thee thy breast, and lift from thee thy burden?* [94:1-2]. O Muḥammad, We put aside that burden of you from you. Our desire took care of your work, Our solicitude lit up your lamp. You did not come for yourself, nor did you come by yourself. You did not come by yourself because We brought you: *Who took His servant by night* [17:1]. You did not come for yourself because you came as a mercy for the creatures: *We sent thee only as a mercy to the worlds*" [21:107]. Just as a bird takes its chick under its wing and nurtures it, in the same way the perfection of Muḥammad the Arab's generosity, clemency, and mercy nurtures his community under its wing: *And lower thy wing to the faithful who follow thee* [26:215].

Ja°far al-Šādiq said, "God knew that His creatures were incapable of obeying Him, so He

4 The second and third hemistiches are from two successive lines in DS 988, but the first and fourth hemistiches are not found in the printed Divan.

made them recognize that so that they would know that they would not reach the limpiness of serving Him. He set between Him and them a creature of their own kind in form and said, '*Now there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves.*' Then He clothed him in His attributes of clemency and mercy and sent him out to the creatures as a truthful emissary. He made obeying him obeying Him and companionship with him companionship with Him, for He says, '*Whoso obeys the Messenger has obeyed God*' [4:80]."

## Surah 10: Yūnus

### **10:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

It is *God* who brightens the hearts of the friends, the *All-Merciful* who takes away the grief of the helpless, the *Ever-Merciful* who forgives the sins of the disobedient. It is *God* who bestows vision without veil on the servant, the *All-Merciful* who gives daily provision without reckoning from His treasury, the *Ever-Merciful* who forgives without rebuke with His bounty. It is *God* in whose bounty the spirits of the preceders delight, the *All-Merciful* toward whose love the hearts of the moderate incline, the *Ever-Merciful* whose pardon washes away the sins of the wrongdoers.

Someone hears the address *God* and falls into unrest, another listens to the name *All-Merciful* and begins to seek, still another stays listening to the name *Ever-Merciful* and comes to revelry.

The body is the locus of the Trust; when addressed by God, it becomes unsettled. The heart is the court of love; on hearing the name *All-Merciful*, it falls into the circle of seeking and revelry. The spirit is the center point of passion; when it finds the good news of the word *Ever-Merciful*, it remains in revelry on the carpet of hope. All blessings are showered on the body, all favor given to the heart, and vision and contemplation are made the portion of the spirit.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, Your remembrance is in the midst of the heart and the tongue, Your love in the midst of the secret core and the spirit. Finding You is the life of the spirit and a hidden resurrection. O found without being sought and O perceived without being perceived! Finding You is a day that comes forth suddenly by itself. He who finds You busies himself with neither happiness nor grief.”

### **10:2** *Give good news to those with faith that they have a footing of truthfulness with their Lord.*

Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Tirmidhī said, “The *footing of truthfulness* is the leader of the wholesome and the sincerely truthful, the obeyed interceder, the asker who receives response, Muḥammad.”

It has been said that the *footing of truthfulness* is the precedence of solicitude and the bounty of guidance. On the first day during the First Compact, He gave the drink of affection to the spirits of the faithful during the session of intimacy from the bowl of love in the cup of kindness. That wine made them drunk and dizzy. He promised them a straight and truthful promise: “We shall bring you back to this domicile of generosity and We shall caress you again with increase over this excellence: *He will increase them from His bounty* [4:173].” This is why He says,

### **10:4** *To Him is your place of return, all together—God’s promise in truth.*

To return is to go back, and going back must have a beginning. *To God belongs the command, before and after* [30:4].

Concerning the intimations of the verse, “*To Him is your place of return, all together,*” Junayd said, “From Him is the beginning and to Him the end. What is between these are the pastures of His bounty and the uninterruptedness of His blessings. For those to whom felicity preceded at the beginning, this will be displayed in His pastures and in moving about in His blessings by their making manifest the tongue of gratitude, the state of approval, and the contemplation of the Patron of Blessings. As for those who were not permitted the felicity of the beginning, they will nullify the days of training their souls and collect ephemeral chaff so as to be pushed back to the wretchedness that preceded at the beginning.”

Junayd is saying that all things begin with God and all return to God. In other words, everything is brought forth by His power and returned to His decree. He is the First and the Last. The Beginningless is His predetermination, the Endless His decision. Everything arrives newly through His gentleness, and all the newly arrived things are annihilated by His severity. Between this and that are the pastures of His bounty and the marks giving witness to His blessings. All those whom the beginningless command brought into being inscribed with felicity came forth in the pastures of bounty giving gratitude for blessings and approving of the apportionment, their tongues in remembrance, their hearts grateful, and their spirits limpid and believing. All those who received the beginningless decree of wretchedness had ruined lives, indigent days, and bad outcomes. They were tainted by this world, captivated by the forbidden, and attached to diversions and games. He wanted this for them in the end in order to take them back to the beginningless decree and the First Day. This is what the Lord of the Worlds is saying: *“To Him is your place of return, all together—God’s promise in truth.”*

It has been said, “Promised to the obedient are the highest paradises, and promised to the disobedient are mercy and approval. The Garden is the Real’s gentleness, and mercy is the Real’s description. Gentleness is an act that was not, then came to be, but the description is an attribute that always was.”<sup>1</sup>

Abū Bakr al-Wāsiṭī said, “The obedient are porters, and porters have nothing but burdens, and this is the threshold of Him who has no needs. The disobedient are destitute, and the destitute have nothing but destitution, and this is the carpet of the destitute.

“O owners of obedience, I do not say, ‘Do not obey!’, lest you suppose wrongly about the Qur’an. As much as you can and as much as you have the capacity, bring forth acts of obedience! Then, let them go, for they are nonbeing. The obedient person and the obedient act are two, but this is the carpet of oneness.

“O owners of slips! Do not constrict your hearts, for this burden of disobedience is also His burden, just as obedience is His burden. But, obedience is something that is put in place, and disobedience is something that is lifted away. Putting in place is your act, and lifting away is His act.”

**10:5 *He it is who made the sun a radiance and the moon a light.***

In terms of allusion, this sun is the sun of success-giving, which shines from the constellation of solicitude on the servant’s bodily parts so that they will be adorned with service and obedience. The moon alludes to the light of *tawhīd* and the brightness of recognition in the heart of the recognizer, for with this light he takes the road to the Recognized. The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, the recognizer knows You with Your light, not with the ray of worship’s light. He burns in the fire of love and does not turn back from joy.”

**10:7-8 *Surely those who do not hope for Our encounter, are content with the life of this world and at rest with it, and those who are heedless of Our signs, it is they whose refuge will be the Fire for what they were earning.***

The unbelievers do not hope for the vision of the Real, for they deny it. Inescapably they will never reach it. The faithful have faith in the vision of the Real and hope that they will reach it. Inescapably they will reach it. This is the same as what Muṣṭafā said: “When someone hears of the Real’s generosity”—that is, he hears a report that the Real is generous toward the servant and will caress him with the vision of Him—“but does not accept the report and does not have faith in the vision, he will never reach that generosity.”

It has been said that they do not hope to see the Real because they have not yearned, they do not yearn because they have not loved, they do not love because they have not recognized, they do not recognize because they have not sought, and they do not seek because the Real has not brought them into seeking and has shut the door of seeking. So, all is from God and according to His desire and will. God says, *“Surely the final end is unto thy Lord”* [53:42].

Had He desired that they seek Him, they would have sought Him. Had they sought, they

1 Quoted from LI 3:79.

would have recognized. Had they recognized, they would have loved. Had they loved, they would have yearned. Had they yearned for Him, they would have hoped for His encounter. Had they hoped for His encounter, they would have seen Him. God says, “*And had We willed, We would have given every soul its guidance*” [32:13]. As for those who do not hope for His encounter, their home will be chastisement and separation. This declaration shows that the final goal of those who hope for His encounter is union, encounter, and nearness.<sup>2</sup>

**10:9** *Surely those who have faith and do wholesome deeds, their Lord will guide them in their faith.*

In terms of allusion according to the tasting of the folk of recognition, this verse has another intimation. He is saying that in reality the faithful and the good men are those whom the Unity keeps under the domes of jealousy through the blessing of generosity. He nurtures them with the beauty of solicitude, He gives them access to recognition of Him, and He brings them close to companionship with Him so that they will become one for Him and estranged from other than Him.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “*Tawhīd* is not just that you know Him to be one. True *tawhīd* is that you be one for Him and estranged from other than Him.” The beginning of solicitude is that He gives them a goal in the Unseen to take them away from the world. When they become solitary, they are worthy for union with the Solitary.

Your seeker must be solitary like You—  
he must be free of every defect and pain.

Until the diver cuts his heart away from the kingdom of life, it is not permissible for the hand of his seeking to reach the desired pearl. What then do you say about someone who, in seeking His majesty and beauty, aims for the greatest salvation? As long as he does not wash his hands of love for life, how will he reach union with the proximity of the Beloved?

In the session of Moses a poor man let out a cry. In anger Moses shouted at him. At once Gabriel came: “O Moses! God says, ‘In your session, the owner of pain and possessor of heart was that one man. It was he who was present in your session for My sake. You shouted at him. Even though you are My speaking companion and My dear one, you do not see the secret that we have placed under a black blanket. It is yearning for My beauty that brings the friends into ecstasy. It is the demand for My beauty that pulls their hearts into the world of fear and hope, contraction and expansion. *And God contracts and expands* [2:245]. When the eyes are full of this world, they cannot hold the attribute of the afterworld. When the attributes of the afterworld settle down in the eyes, they remain unaware of the majesty of My proximity and the exaltedness of My union.”

Not this world, not the afterworld—rather, union with the Patron! Ah, where is an aspiration not of this world? Where is a desire greater than the afterworld, a yearning to see the Patron? Where is a possessor of good fortune so that we may come out of the status of our mortal nature and grasp the stirrup of that possessor of good fortune—perhaps one day we will reach the Desired.

If you want to come out of the pit of status like a man,  
grab hold of the pearl-encrusted, musk-wafting chain. [DS 719]

*Their Lord will guide them through their faith.* Wait till tomorrow at the Resurrection when the friends go forth by the light of recognition on the steed of obedience to the carpet of expansiveness. They will be delighted in the station of witnessing, group by group and company by company, just as God said: “*We shall muster the godway to the All-Merciful in droves*” [19:85]. In each domicile that appears, a company of angels will come forth by virtue of the command, saying “Peace,” and giving them the good news of everlasting joy and bliss. This is why He says,

**10:10** *And their greeting therein will be “Peace!,” and the last of their supplication will be “Praise belongs to God, the Lord of the Worlds.”*

On that desert of the Mustering and station of the Resurrection, the disobedient of Aḥmad’s com-

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<sup>2</sup> These two paragraphs are translated and quoted from LI 3:81.

munity will be kept back at the place of the exposure of the reckoning. The preceders will have gone on ahead with the light of obedience, and the disobedient will stay there alone with the heavy burden of disobedience. In the end, God's mercy will take them by the hand. He will have pity on their aloneness and helplessness. With the call of generosity, He will say, "My servants!" When this address of exaltedness and call of generosity in the attribute of mercy reaches their ears, it will put their spirits at ease and open up their hearts to *repose and ease* [56:89]. He will say, "My servants, *surely the companions of the Garden are today busy rejoicing* [36:55] and have no leisure time for you. The Companions of the Fire have no tenderness for you because of the intensity of the chastisement. O assemblies of the indigent, peace be upon you! How will you be when your similars and companions have preceded you and none of them will be your guide? I then shall be your guide. If I were to treat you as you deserve, would that be generosity?"<sup>3</sup>

I would be disloyal like them  
were I to leave them as they left Me.

When the Real's clemency and mercy reach them, He washes away their dread and disobedience with the water of mercy, and the sun of kind favor shines from the constellation of solicitude. With the attribute of boasting and the state of brokenness they will weep sweetly and cry happily at the Court of the Possessor of Majesty. The Exalted Lord will accept their weeping and crying and place a balm on their hearts' pain. He will open their mouths with praise of Him, and they will laud and praise God in the measure of the capacity of servanthood. The last of their words will be what the Lord of the Worlds says: "*And the last of their supplication is 'Praise belongs to God, the Lord of the Worlds.'*" The last of their words will be, "*Praise belongs to God, Lord of the Worlds, for the enemies' schadenfreude has not reached us, and God's bounty and mercy have embraced us.*"

Our only goal was God's forgiveness—  
the favor is God's, for we have reached our goal.

**10:22** *He it is who makes you journey on land and sea. Even so, when you are in the ship—it takes them along with a goodly breeze, and they rejoice in it; there comes upon them a raging wind, and waves come from every place and they think that they will be encompassed by them; they supplicate God, purifying the religion for Him: "If Thou savest us from this, we shall surely be among the thankful."*

In the tongue of the folk of allusion, the journey on land is taking the road to the drinking places of the Shariah through inference by means of the message. The journey on the sea is the overwhelming force of the Real which, at the moment of ecstasy, pulls the reins of the servant's steed without intermediaries through the way stations of the Haqiqah to the places of contemplating holiness.

Just as on the sea you make a one-month journey in one day, so also in this field the chevalier traverses the distance of a whole lifetime with one divine attraction. This is why they say, "One attraction of the Real is equivalent to all the deeds of jinn and men."

The journey on land is the journey of the worshipers and renunciants in the desert of struggle on the steed of discipline with the guidance of the Shariah. Their goal is the paradise of approval and everlasting blessings.

The journey on the sea is the journey of the recognizers and the sincerely truthful in the ship of kind favor, which is driven by the wind of solicitude in the sea of contemplation. Their goal is the Kaabah of union and the mystery of the Beneficent.

It has also been said that land and sea are allusions to the contraction and expansion of the recognizers. Sometimes in contraction they weep between confoundedness and bewilderment, and sometimes in expansion they are delighted between witnessing and finding. When the wind of happiness again blows from the horizon of self-disclosure and the rain of generosity pours down from the cloud of gentleness, they see solicitude and kind favor, and the hard cash of their present moment becomes *it takes them along with a goodly breeze, and they rejoice in it*: On the carpet of

3 This paragraph seems to be a loose translation of one of Qushayrī's several explanations of 36:55 (LI 5:221).

witnessing, in the state of intimacy, joy comes over them. They see an expansion and are immersed in joy. In that joy and coquetry they say,

“We are the knights, the knights are we—  
we tread on the eyes of Jupiter.”

As soon as expansion reaches its limit, they enter by way of power into awe and confoundedness. The ocean of tremendousness throws up the waves of awe, and the poor servants fall into the lowland of veiling. They loose the tongue of pleading and say with weeping and lowliness,

“I am bewildered in Thee, take my hand,  
O guide of those bewildered in Thee!”

This is why He says, “*There comes upon them a raging wind, and waves come from every place.*”

That distracted one of the time and leader of the Tariqah, Shibli, gave reports of both sides in his traveling and passed over both stations. In the station of expansion at the time of happiness and joy, he was saying, “Where are the heavens and the earth that I may carry them on a hair of my eyelid!” In the station of contraction at the time of weeping and lowliness, he was saying, “My abasement suspends the abasement of the Jews.”

The witness to this story in the holy Shariah is that Muṣṭafā would sometimes say, “I am the master of the children of Adam, without boasting.” Sometimes he would say, “Do not consider me more excellent than Jonah the son of Mattā.”

**10:25 And God invites to the Abode of Peace, and He guides whomsoever He will to a straight path.**

Invitations are four: First is the invitation to *tawḥīd* and bearing witness. That is His words, “*He invites you so that He may forgive you some of your sins*” [14:10]. Second is the invitation to praise and response. That is His words, “*He will invite you, and you will respond to Him*” [17:52]. Third is the invitation to following and leadership. That is His words, “*We shall invite all the people by their leader*” [17:71]. Fourth is the invitation to generosity and hospitality. That is His words, “*And God invites to the Abode of Peace.*”

When someone wants to invite someone and to make his friends and dear ones his guests, the condition of the entertainment is that first he sends one of those close to him, one of his own special friends, to inform them and give them the good news. Then, when they come, he sends his dear ones to welcome them. He does not invite any of them alone, but rather he invites their friends and relatives as well. He sends steeds and torches in the road, and when they come their place is made up and ready. When they sit, he first gives them rosewater, then fruit is brought. The prepared food is placed, and the serving boys and servants stand by. When that is finished, they listen to music. It is also a condition that the host not hold himself back from being seen by the guests, and finally that he send them back with respect and honor.

The Lord of the Worlds has made all of this ready and set it up for the entertainment of paradise, and He reports of it and explains it in the Qur’an. The first to call them and give them good news is Muṣṭafā, who is, the Real says, “*inviting to God by His leave*” [33:46]. Then the angels and Ridwān will come to welcome them: *and the angels will receive them* [21:103]. He will send them mounts: *We shall muster the godwary to the All-Merciful in droves* [19:85], which is to say that they will be mounted on noble steeds of light. He will send lamps of light for their road: *their light running before them, and on their right hands* [57:12]. He will not call them alone, but He will also call their relatives and near ones: *and those who are wholesome among their fathers, spouses, and offspring* [40:8]. Then He will make their place be paradise and *gardens of bliss* [5:65]—*a garden whose breadth is the heavens and the earth, made ready for the godwary* [3:133]. Their beverage will be *they are poured sealed, fine wine, whose seal is musk* [83:25-26]. Their fruit will be *much fruit, neither cut off nor withheld* [56:32-33]. Their food will be *the flesh of birds as much as they have appetite* [56:21]. Their slave-boys and servants will be with them: *going around them are youths for them, as if they were hidden pearls* [52:24]. Their listening: *they will be made happy in a garden* [30:15]. More exalted than all this is that He will turn them toward the vision of Himself

so that they may see Him and be delighted, as He says: “*Faces that day will be radiant, gazing upon their Lord*” [75:22-23]. Their fresh and delighted faces will gaze on the majesty and beauty of the Real, and their faces will be brighter than the sun at daytime, having won the self-disclosure of the Possessor of Majesty.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The vision of the Friend is the portion of the yearners, the brightness of eyes, the good fortune of the spirit, and the adornment of the world. It is the comfort of the spirit, the delight of the spirit, and the pain of the spirit.”

Both my heart’s pain and my spirit’s comfort are You.

O chevalier, wait until you see happiness and you sit secure once and for all on the carpet of union with the Friend. From the Friend you will see “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what has never passed into the heart of any mortal.”

This is why the Lord of the Worlds says,

**10:26** *Those who do what is beautiful shall have the most beautiful and an increase. Neither dust nor abasement shall overcome their faces. It is they who will be the companions of the Garden, dwelling within it forever.*

The companions of the Garden are one thing, the lords of companionship something else. About the companions of the Garden He says, “*And God invites to the Abode of Peace*” [10:25]. About the lords of companionship He says, “*And He guides whomsoever He will to a straight path*” [10:25]. The most beautiful, blessedness, and nearness belong to the folk of the Garden. Increase, proximity, and companionship belong to the folk of recognition.

I envy your house because of your neighborhood—  
blessed is he who becomes a neighbor of your house!

God’s Messenger said, “When God settles the folk of the Garden in the Garden and the folk of the Fire in the Fire, He will send the Faithful Spirit to the folk of the Garden. He will say, ‘O Folk of the Garden! Your Lord greets you and commands you to visit the courtyard of the Garden.’ It is the bed of the Garden, and its soil is of musk. Its pebbles are pearls and carnelians, its trees are gold and dates, and its leaves emeralds. The folk of the Garden will go out happy and joyful. Then there will be an assembly, and therein God’s generosity will alight upon them, and they will gaze on His face. It is this that was promised by God, and He fulfills it for them.”

He said, “God will give them permission to listen to music, eat, and drink, and wear the clothing of generosity. Then a caller will call out: ‘O friends of God! Does anything of what your Lord promised you remain?’

“They will say, ‘No. He has fulfilled what He promised us, and there remains nothing but gazing at the face of our Lord.’

He said, “So the Lord will disclose Himself to them in veils and say, ‘O Gabriel, lift My veils for My servants so that they may gaze at My face.’ He will lift the first veil, so they will gaze at a light from the Lord and fall prostrate before it. The Lord will call to them, ‘My servants, lift your heads. This is not the abode of deeds, it is the abode of reward.’ Then he will lift the second veil, and they will gaze on something even more tremendous and more majestic. They will fall before God, praising, prostrating themselves, and recognizing. The Lord will call to them, ‘Lift your heads. This is not the abode of deeds, it is the abode of reward and permanent bliss.’ Then he will lift the third veil, and at that they will be gazing on the face of the Lord of the Worlds. They will say as they gaze on His face, ‘Glory be to You! We have not worshiped You with the rightful due of Your worship!’

“He will say, ‘My generosity has given you the ability to gaze at My face and to alight in My abode.’

Then God will give permission to the Garden to speak, and it will say, “Blessedness belongs to Him who has made me everlasting! And blessedness belongs to those for whom I have been made ready!” That is His words, “*Blessedness belongs to them, and a beautiful place of return*” [13:29].

**10:35 Say: Is there any of those whom you associate who guides to the Real?**

*Real* is one of the names of the Lord. The commentary is that in truth He is God; He is worthy of Godhood, and His measure is in place. What was, is, and will be must go, but He subsists. He is found in the hearts of the friends and known to the spirits of the recognizers. He does not accept alteration or change of state, and He is everlasting in worthiness for Godhood.

The name *Real* often comes forth from the tongue of the Folk of the Tariqah. This is because upon witnessing the acts, this group began to witness the attributes, and then, upon witnessing the attributes, they fell to witnessing the Essence. First they gazed on the artisanry, then they passed beyond the artisanry and gazed on the attributes, then again they passed from gazing on the attributes to gazing on the Essence.

About gazing on the artisanry He says, “*Have they not gazed upon the dominion of the heavens and the earth?*” [7:185]. About gazing on the attributes He says, “*Thou art not upon any task, neither dost thou recite any of the Qur’an, nor do you do any deed, unless We are witnesses over you when you go forth into it*” [10:61]. About gazing on the Essence He says, “*Say ‘God,’ then leave them*” [6:91].

About gazing on the acts Muṣṭafā said, “I seek refuge in Thy pardon from Thy punishment.” About gazing on the attributes he said, “I seek refuge in Thy approval from Thy anger.” About gazing on the Essence he said, “I seek refuge in Thee from Thee.” Then he passed beyond his own seeing and became disengaged from his own attributes, and he spoke from the station of annihilation: “I do not number Thy laudations.” Again, he stepped higher to the station of subsistence and gave a mark of the reality of solitariness. He said, “Thou art as Thou hast lauded Thyself.”

First is the station of inference, second the station of poverty, third the station of contemplation, fourth the station of life, and fifth the station of subsistence.

The Pir of the Tariqah alluded to the intimations of these meaning when he said, “O resurrection of the marks bearing witness and destruction of the traces! The recognizer is alive through his own nonbeing. O Splendorous and Self-Standing, everyone hopes for vision, and I am lost in vision. When the flood reaches the ocean, what then is known of the flood? The world is full of day, and the poor blind man is deprived.”

The antagonists say, “These are not suitable words.”

The sun does not sin if someone is blind.

**10:42 Among them are those who listen to thee.**

The listeners are diverse and their degrees disparate. One hears through nature with the ear of the head; he was sleeping and listening wakes him up and relieves him of sorrow. Another hears through the state with the ear of the heart; he was resting and listening brings him into movement until the breeze of intimacy blows. Another hears through the Real with a soul that is dead, a heart that is thirsty, and a burning breath; the beginningless reminder arrives, the spirit takes its ease in loving kindness, and the secret core is filled with love.

Bū Sahl Ṣu<sup>l</sup>ūk said, “In listening the listener is between curtaining and self-disclosure. The curtaining of the Real belongs to the beginners. It is the mark of mercy’s gaze on the work of the Men, for in their weakness and incapacity they are not able to bear the unveiling of the ruling power of the Haqiqah.”

In this meaning it has been recounted from Maṣṣūr Maghribī that he said, “I alighted at a camp of nomads. A young man made me his guest. Suddenly he fell down unconscious, so I asked about his state. I was told that he was in love with the daughter of his uncle, and that she had just come out of her tent. The youth had seen the dust of her garment as she went, so he fell down unconscious. I got up and went to the doorway of that tent and interceded for the youth. I said, ‘A stranger among you has respect and safeguards. I have come to intercede with you in the business of this young man. Be kind to him in his longing.’

“The woman said to me, ‘You have a sound heart. He is not able to put up with witnessing the dust from my dress. How will he put up with my love?’

This is the state of the desirer, for He keeps him covered by the curtain of selfhood so that he will not be totally burnt and melted by the assaults of the Haqiqah. He sees no more than one flash of the lightning of the Haqiqah, and it brings him into movement; he shouts out, tears his clothing, and weeps. Again, when he reaches the place of straightness and achieves stability in the reality of solitariness, the breeze of proximity begins to blow on him from the horizon of self-disclosure. His movement is changed to stillness, for the influxes of awesomeness bring forth courtesy with the Presence. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, “*When they were in [the Qur’an’s] presence, they said, ‘Give ear!’*”[46:29].

**10:58** Say: “*In the bounty of God and His mercy—in that let them rejoice, for it is better than what they gather.*”

“O Muḥammad! Give the faithful good news and tell them that they should be happy in the bounty and mercy of God: ‘I have honored you with faith, the Qur’an, submission, and Muḥammad, so be delighted! Become intimate with remembering Me. Accept My covenant in your spirit. Delight in My love. A happy servant is he who is happy with Me. There is no happiness but happiness with Me. May he who is not happy with Me never be happy! The servant has two happinesses in Me: today he is happy with Me, and tomorrow he will be happy along with Me.’”

My face is happy with Your face when You are present.

May my spirit be happy with remembering You when You are absent!

It has been said that *the bounty of God and His mercy* that you have with Him in the precedent apportioning *is better than* the varieties of obedience and the kinds of service that are your own self-exertion.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of allusion He is saying, “My servant, have confidence in My bounty and mercy, not in your own worship and service, for there is no confidence in anything other than My bounty and no ease in other than My mercy. Everyone has a resource, and the resource of the faithful is My bounty; everyone has a storehouse, and the storehouse of the poor is My mercy; everyone has a leaning place, and the leaning place of the recognizers is My precedence; everyone has a treasure, and the treasure of those who trust is My assurance; everyone has a delight, and the delight of the rememberers is remembering Me; everyone has a hope, and the hope of the friends is seeing Me.”

There was a renunciant among the Children of Israel who sat for seventy years in a monastery worshipping God. After seventy years revelation came to the prophet of the time: “Say to that renunciant, ‘You have completed beautiful days and passed a life in worshipping Me. I promise you that I will forgive you by My bounty and mercy.’”

The renunciant said, “He will take me to paradise by His bounty? Where then will that seventy years of worship be seen? What about that?”

In that very hour, the Exalted Lord placed a tremendous pain in one of his teeth. He began to lament and went before the prophet. He wept and asked for healing. Revelation came to the prophet, “Tell the renunciant that I want the seventy years of worship to heal him.”

The renunciant said, “I approve. I want the healing in hard cash. You know about tomorrow—if You want, send me to hell, if You want, paradise.”

The command came from the Compeller of all engendered beings: “All of your worship fell before that one toothache. What remains now but My bounty and mercy?” So *in that let them rejoice, for it is better than what they gather* and hope for as the reward for their activities.

**10:62** *Surely God’s friends—no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they sorrow.*

God’s friends are those who dive for the pearl of wisdom in the oceans of knowledge, who are the sun of desire and the resting place of the covenant of good fortune in the heaven of the innate disposition, who are accepted by the Divine Presence and the oyster shell of the secrets of Lordhood, who are the title-page of the Shariah and the proof of the Haqiqah. Through them the lineage of

4 LI 3:103.

Mustafā is alive in the World of the Realities, the pathway of truthfulness is filled with the firm fixity of their feet, their outwardness is adorned with the rulings of the Shariah, their inwardness is illumined by the pearl of poverty. When the traces of the gaze of these exalted ones reach the thorn-bed of deprivation, the jasmine of the religion blooms. When the blessings of their breaths shine upon the salt-waste of misery, the ambergris of passion wafts its scent. If they gaze on a disobedient person, he becomes obedient. If they open their eyes on someone wearing a sash of unbelief, he is accepted and protected by the Exalted Threshold.

Thus it is told that once the exalted one of his time and the master of his era, Shibli, became ill. The caliph of the time liked him, and it reached him that Shibli was ill. There was a Christian physician, extremely skillful, so he sent him to Shibli to cure him. The physician came and said to Shibli, "O shaykh! If I have to make your medicine from my own skin and flesh, I will not hold it back and I will heal you."

Shibli said, "My medicine is less than that."

He said, "What is it?"

He said, "Cut off that sash, and you will have cured me."

The physician said, "It is no stipulation of chivalry that I make a claim and not carry it through. If your healing lies in my cutting off the sash, that's an easy job." When the physician cut off his sash, Shibli got up from the illness.

The news of what happened reached the caliph. He became happy and said, "I thought I was sending a physician to someone ill. I did not know I was sending someone ill to a physician."

*Surely God's friends.* It has been said that the mark of the friend is that from head to foot he is nothing but veneration. His eyes have been adorned with reverence so that he does not look at anything unworthy. His tongue has been bound by courtesy so that he does not talk foolishly. His feet have been bound by the Haqiqah so that he does not walk down every street. His gullet has been bound by the Shariah so that he gives nothing access to himself but the permitted. His limbs have been bound by servanthood so that he does not bind his waist with anything but the belt of serving the Real. He is kept like this in this world, and in the next world, *no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they sorrow.* In this world he is adorned with service and reverence; in the afterworld he reaches blessing and vision; in this world he has recognition and love, in the afterworld caresses and contemplation. In this world he sees limpidness and loyalty, in the afterworld he reaches encounter and approval. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says,

**10:64** *For them is good news in the life of this world and the next world.*

They have two sorts of good news, one today and one tomorrow. Today: "*Give good news to those with faith that they have a footing of truthfulness with their Lord*" [10:2]. Tomorrow: "*Their Lord will give them the good news of mercy from Him, approval, and the Gardens*" [9:21]. Here you have boundless caresses, everlasting bliss, the happiness of friends, a satisfied King, and joyful servants: "My servants, whatever you seek, seek for nothing greater than My satisfaction. Whatever you reach, you will reach nothing better than My bounty. Whomever you choose in friendship, you will choose no one like Me. Whomever you see, you will see no one like Me. 'This house is your house, and I am your neighbor.'"

Great are those days whose final outcome is this! Exalted is that servant who is worthy for this! Beautiful is that seed whose fruit is this! Blessed is that night whose morning is this! A house of light, everlasting happiness, and the Forgiving Patron!

Say to Our friends, "Let your eyes be delighted—  
the ruined house has come to Me in safety."

**10:71** *And recite to them the story of Noah when he said to his people, "If my station and my reminding you of God's signs are too much for you, then in God I trust, so gather together your affair and those whom you associate, and let not your affair be obscure for you. Then decide about me, and do not leave me waiting."*

This is a lordly example from the Glorious Presence. He is saying, "Trial from My court is a robe

of honor for the friends, and drinking the draft of tribulation from the cup of love is the job of men. If someone's makeup is not worthy to be a target for the arrow of My trial, his countenance will also not be worthy of My love and beauty."

When people choose someone for friendship, it is their habit to want every ease and comfort for their friend. The divine custom is contrary to this: Whenever He approves of someone for friendship, He sends him the drink of tribulation with the robe of love. "Surely the people most severely tried are the prophets, then the friends, then the next best, then the next best." "When God loves a servant, trial is poured down all over him."

For a moment look at the state of Noah, the elder of the envoys and the leader of the godwary: What suffering he saw from his own community, what tribulation, and what a load of trial and trouble he carried in inviting them! For a thousand years less fifty he was inviting them, and every day they would beat him such that he lost consciousness, and they advised his own children to strike and beat him. With all this tribulation and trial he used to say, "I have so much sorrow that I care nothing for your beating." He said to them, "*In God I trust, so gather together your affair and those whom you associate: Do whatever you want, and prepare whatever deception you can, for I am leaning on my Lord and have accepted Him as my caretaker, for in God I trust.*"

Trust is the bridge to certainty and the pillar of faith. The Exalted Lord says, "*And in God put your trust, if you have faith*" [5:23]. "*Whosoever trusts in God, He will be enough for him*" [65:3]. When someone leans on God, God will be enough for him and he will need no other. On the night of the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj* He said, "O master, O Muḥammad, I wonder how anyone with faith in Me can depend on other than Me." When someone has My remembrance in his heart, how can he busy himself with remembering others? If someone has love for Me in his spirit, he should let his spirit be lost in that.

*In God I trust.* Trust is the courier of the Presence of Approval and the mark of truthfulness in the Covenant and limpidness in the Haqīqah. Trust has a beginning and an end. In the beginning are the sweetness of service, tenderness toward all living things, and self-purification in the invitation. In the end are freedom, happiness, and unsettledness. In the beginning there appears what Moses said to his people: "*Then trust in Him, if you are submitters*" [10:84]. In the end is seen what the Real said to Muṣṭafā: "*And trust in the Living who does not die*" [25:58].

Shaykh Abū'l-Qāsim Naṣrābādī sent a disciple to Shaykh Abū °Alī Siyāh, telling him to ask where he had arrived in trust. Shaykh Abū °Alī sent the reply, "Abū °Alī is an idle man who does not recognize trust. But he has become so busy in his idleness that he has no concern for creation." All the leaders of the Tariqah agree that no wayfarer on the road has spoken words more beautiful and more complete than these. Seeing the perfection of the realization of servanthood in faultiness itself is not the work of just any idle and defiled person. You must yourself become an unbeliever if you want to be a true Muslim.

### **10:105 Set thy face to the religion.**

In other words, "Purify your intention for the religion and disengage your heart from affirming anything touched by the severity of the bestowal of being."<sup>5</sup>

He is saying, "Cleanse your religion from the contamination of eye-service and fix your intention on seeking the alchemy of the Haqīqah—your heart cut off from attachments, your belt tightened, and the ring of service on the ear of loyalty. Let your wants be sacrificed to the beginningless want, your soul to approval, your heart to loyalty, your eyes to subsistence."

My soul wants life only for union with You,  
 my spirit wants ease for joining with You.  
 My ears want hearing for the sake of Your words,  
 my eyes want sight to yearn for Your beauty.

From here the light of the Haqīqah begins, the falcon of love flies in the air of solitariness, and the

5 LI 3:118.

divine attraction arrives. It takes the servant away from the hand of self-determination. None of the intrusive dust of hoping for paradise settles on his present moment, no dread of hell blocks his path. With the tongue of his state he says,

“In the road of passion the passionate  
must remember neither hell nor paradise.”

Up to this point the servant was seeking, but now he is the sought. He was the lover, but now he is the beloved. He was desiring, but now he is the desired. He saw the carpet of oneness and hurried until he found the proximity of the Friend. Reports turned into face-to-face vision. The obscure became clear. The servant arrived at himself when he reached the Friend. He did not see himself, for he saw the Friend.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, when I learned what was to be learned, I burned all the learning. I overthrew the collected and collected the overthrown. I sold nonbeing to illuminate being. O God, when I recognized oneness, I melted in the hope of happiness. When will I be able to say, ‘I threw away the cup, I turned away from attachments, I gambled away all my being’?”

When will I throw off this cage  
and build a nest in the divine garden?!

## Surah 11: Hūd

### 11:1 *Alif Lām Rā'*

*Alif*: He makes them “familiar” [*alf*] with blessings and He commands them to *tawhīd*. *Lām*: He “blames” [*lawm*] them for their failings and commands them to disengagement. *Rā'*: He is “kind” [*rifq*] to them with His bounty and carries them to solitariness.

*Alif*: He makes the creatures familiar with the blessings of the Patron of Blessings, then He calls them to the Patron of Blessings: “Why do you delight in blessings? Desire the mystery of the Patron of Blessings. Why do you take your ease in blessings? Seek the great ease of the heart. How long will you play the dice of perishing love? Seize hold of endless union!”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, sometimes You say, ‘Come close!’ Sometimes You say, ‘Flee!’ Sometimes You command, ‘Come!’ Sometimes You say, ‘Keep back!’ O Lord, is this a mark of proximity? Is this the resurrection itself? I had never seen good news mixed with threats. O clement and lovingly kind, O gentle and good Friend, I have come to Your Threshold. If You want, keep me in joy, if You want, keep me lowly.”

God knows that I’ll find nothing  
if I desire to replace your love.

*Lām*. He blames them: “Watch out! Do not busy yourselves with the picture-house and the scented garden, or you will fall behind the friends and not reach them.” In the report has come, “Travel! The solitary will be the preceders.” God says, “*The preceders, the preceders—they are the proximate*” [56:10-11].

*Rā'*. This is an allusion to the deliverance [*rahā*] of the chevaliers from themselves, like the enraptured in the playing field of euphoria: When will they come to the end of the road? Where will they reach the shore of this drowning ocean? When will the night of their waiting come to an end? When will the dawn of good fortune appear from the horizon of felicity?

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The reality of this work is all need. It is an endless longing, a congenital pain. In it there are both joy and melting, both a hidden resurrection and everlasting life. It is the unsettledness of the hearts of the finders, the trial of the spirits of the proximate, the bewilderment of the knowledge of the realizers, the incinerating passion of the recognizers, the euphoric striving of the friends, and the perplexity of the chevaliers. Their perplexity in this road is like someone who falls into a bottomless well. The more he goes down in the well, the more it becomes bottomless, so his feet will never reach the ground. So also the travelers on this road are always traveling, falling and rising. They will never reach a halt, nor will they have any consolation in their grief, any bottom to this ocean, any end to this talk.”

Be a speedy traveler in this road and beware—  
don’t foolishly think you’ll ever see its end. [DS 705]

**11:12** *Perhaps thou art putting aside some of what is revealed to thee, and thy breast is straitened by it, that they say, “Why has a treasure not been sent down upon him or an angel come with him?”*

A command came from the Threshold of Unity and the Side of Self-Sufficiency to the paragon of the engendered beings, the master of the masters, the sun of guidance, the alchemy of good fortune, the

Canopus of felicity, the ocean of purity: “I sent you to the creatures to be the physician of the hearts of the grief-stricken, the balm of the pain of the burnt, and the ease of the spirits of the faithful. Recite this book of Mine to them and thereby put out the blaze of their passion’s fire and the burning of their hearts in their wish to see Me today. Give them the promise of union and vision tomorrow.

“Know also that a few of those who have been deprived by My justice and suffered the wound of severance from Me do not want to hear it, for they do not know how to taste it and do not have the capacity for it. Then, when they ask you to put it aside, you set it aside, and, hoping for their wholesomeness and faith, you seek what they desire. Do not do this, O Muḥammad! Do not seek what they desire and do not attach your hearts to them, for I drove them away in the Beginningless and placed upon them the brand of deprivation and abandonment. O Master! They are your enemies and they want bad for you. If they say something in criticism or they try to harass you, do not let your heart be tight. If they do not have faith, do not grieve. They are vile, and My Exalted Presence is pure, giving access only to the pure. ‘Surely God is goodly and accepts only the goodly.’ When someone is not Mine, even if he is purity itself, consider him defiled. God says, ‘*The associaters are impure*’ [9:28]. When someone is Mine, even if he is impurity itself, count him as pure, whether he be a man or a dog. God says, ‘*And their dog was stretching its paws at the doorstep*’ [18:18]: A dog took a step in loyalty to the religion and We sent Gabriel to be at his service. We kept it with those chevaliers in this world, We preserved it from blights, and We took its impurity as purity. It was with them in this world, it was with them in the cave, it will be with them at the Resurrection, and it will be with them in paradise.”

So, if a faithful servant has stood on the carpet of submission for seventy years, tasted the flavor of faith, and walked in the footsteps of Muḥammad, while the God of the world has called him pure and placed love for Him in his heart, how can He make him despair at the resurrection?

Drive us not away like beggars at Your door!

Look, O idol—I’m one of the passionate, the poor.

**11:15** *Whoso desires the life of this world and its adornment, We shall pay them in full for their deeds therein, and therein they shall not be defrauded.*

“When someone is satisfied with this world without Me, despite the lowliness of its attributes, I will not hold him back from the enjoyment of some days. But the sweetness of its perfection will be followed by the bitterness of its disappearance. The flavor of its honey will be succeeded by the poison of its colocynth.<sup>1</sup>

“When someone wants this world from Me, this world will not be held back from him, but he will be helpless in the next world, and this world also will not stay with him.”

It is mentioned in the traditions that whoever turns his face towards this world has turned his back on God. Turning one’s back on God is to sleep always with thoughts of this world and to wake with thoughts of this world while one’s moments are drowned in them. A poor wretch like this does not know that this world is the *enjoyment of delusion* [3:185]. It is the carpet of playing and jesting, the toy of the ignorant and the cause of their deception. He who keeps to this world is like a traveler sitting in a ship, this world his traveling supplies. If he takes more supplies than he needs, the ship will sink and cause his destruction.

It is said that Dhu’l-Qarnayn went to the land of the west, and the kingdom of that region was held by a woman. Dhu’l-Qarnayn said, “Surrender this kingdom to me.”

She said, “No! And there is no honor in it.”

He wanted to take the kingdom by severity, but he was ashamed to fight against a woman. The woman said, “I invite you to be my guest. After the invitation is completed, I will surrender the kingdom to you.”

When he came to the table, he saw a table laden with gold. All the cups were gold, and in place of food there were pearls and gems. Dhu’l-Qarnayn said, “What will I eat? I need food.

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<sup>1</sup> Derived from LI 3:128.

None of this is fit for eating.”

The woman said, “Since your portion of this world is no more than bread, where will you take the kingdom of the earth? It is fitting that you have no kingdom, for your portion is no more than two loafs of bread. Everything else is bane and torment.”

Abū Bakr Warrāq said, “The life of this world is one thing, the adornment of this world something else. The adornment of this world is what was said in the verse, ‘*Adorned for the people is the love of appetites*’ and so on [3:14]. The life of this world is the abhorrence of death. Whoever loves this world will have no awareness of God and will never wish for death. He will consider life to be just the life of this world—the perfection of appetite and heedlessness without end. He will have no awareness of the *goodly life* [16:97] with which the friends are busy.”

The Splendorous Qur’an and exalted Speech of the Lord God makes this allusion:

**11:17 *And what of him who is upon a clear sign from his Lord?***

The life of the heedless and the life of the recognizers will never be equal. The life of the heedless is what He says: “*Whoso desires the life of this world and its adornment*” [11:15]. The life of the recognizers is *And what of him who is upon a clear sign from his Lord?* He is saying: The recognizers have the brightness of familiarity based on the light of the religion and the spirit of certainty. They have gone on the road of success and arrived at the goal of realization. Their hearts are filled by disengagement and solitariness.

In the tongue of the folk of allusion, the *clear sign* is the seed of the pain of passion that He scattered on the first day, at the beginningless covenant, in the hearts of His friends. Thus, it has come in the report, “Then He sprinkled them with some of His light.” Their makeup was a sweet clay which, in the era of the creation of Adam, had come from the goodly sort, receptive to the seed of passion’s pain. Then the sun of *And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord* [39:69] shone forth on it and it received a complete nurturing. When the jasmine of the covenant came up, the flower of intimacy bloomed. The breezes of felicity blew over it and it became the place of the gaze of the Divinity, 360 times in a day and night. The servant was asleep all night, and this gaze was flowing over his heart. He slept, and the gaze of God was his protector. If he inclined even once from the avenue of the Haqiqah or took flight in the air of mortal nature, the call came from the World of the Unseen: “*Be penitent toward your Lord*” [39:54].

O falcon taken to the sky, come back, don’t go!

My fingers hold the end of your thread!

**11:23 *Surely those who have faith, do wholesome deeds, and are subservient to their Lord—it is they who will be the companions of the Garden, dwelling within it forever.***

By way of allusion according to the tasting of the chevaliers of the Tariqah, He is saying: “Tomorrow, the residents of the Holy Palisades, the kings of the *seat of truthfulness* [54:55], and the nobles of the degrees of the High Chambers will be those who today have the ring of My command in the ear of servanthood. They are at ease in the house of subservience, their ears toward the command in the highway of approval because of servanthood, and they have left the road of resistance.”

It has been said that the reality of servanthood is two traits: you do what He approves and you approve of what He does. You poor wretch! The rebellious Nimrod in his unbelief fired one arrow of denial at the face of faith. You, while being a Muslim, fire several arrows of denial and protest at the face of the decrees of predetermination every day. How will your attribute of servanthood become sound? What about approval and surrender? Servanthood is that, in the street of the Haqiqah, you bind your waist with the belt of loyalty and you give your hands over to the ties of the Shariah. As long as your hands are tied, they will never be able to undo the belt. You are a servant, but you are walking on the road of the free. You are a servant, but you are seeking what is desired by lords. A servant will never be like a lord, and freedom and servanthood will never come together.

She traveled east and I traveled west—  
how will the east-goer meet the west-goer?

This is why the Lord of the Worlds says,

**11:24** *The likeness of the two groups is that of the blind and deaf and the seeing and hearing. Are they equal in likeness?*

The truly blind are those who do not have the eye of heedfulness to gaze on the signs of the horizons by way of inference, nor the heart of reflection to ponder the signs of the souls, nor the insight of the Haqiqah to see the unveilings of the unseen secrets with the light of perspicacity.

The truly seeing are those who look with the knowledge of certainty at the marks giving witness to the acts, for *Have they not gazed upon the dominion of the heavens and the earth?* [7:185]. Again, with the eye of certainty they see the realities of the attributes, for *Do they not ponder the Qur'an?* [4:82]. Again, with the truth of certainty they see the majesty of the Essence, for *Dost thou not see thy Lord?* [25:45]. The knowledge of certainty relies on demonstration, the eye of certainty derives from clarity, and the truth of certainty is described by face-to-face vision. The knowledge of certainty belongs to the faithful, the eye of certainty belongs to the prophets, and the truth of certainty belongs to Muṣṭafā. This is why the world's folk have reports, and he has face-to-face vision. All the world is the shell, and he is the pearl. All the world is a hanger-on, and he is the goal.

Were it not for you, O lustrous pearl,  
Adam would not have taken a breath in this ruined street.

**11:37** *Make the ship through Our eyes and Our revelation.*

In keeping with the Shariah and by virtue of the outward decree, a command came, “Build a ship from teak and sit in it so as to be delivered from the storm.” In keeping with the Haqiqah and by virtue of special favor and the attribute of proximity, a call came to his secret core, “You have the ocean of the soul before you. It is a drowning, destructive ocean in which are waiting whirlpools full of danger and spirit-stealing sharks. You must cross it in order to reach the shore of security. Build a ship of self-purification in three levels: one fear, the second hope, and the third approval. Then attach to it the sail of truthfulness and set it toward the east wind of awareness of Me.” This is why He said, “*through Our eyes and Our revelation: I Myself will drive it as it should be driven and where it should be driven.*” *He it is who makes your journey on land and sea* [10:22]. *And We carried them on land and sea* [17:70].

By way of allusion He is saying, “My servant, turn over the governance of your work to Me, entrust yourself totally to Me, and keep your self-determination distant. You are being carried by My gentleness, and ‘He who is carried by the generous does not fall. And if he does fall, he will find someone to take his hand.’”

This is just what Muṣṭafā said: “You indeed will be threading a bridge of fire. If one of you treads on a spark, the bridge will say, ‘Your Lord has said to shelter him!’” This is a great generosity and an infinite gentleness that the Exalted Lord will do for the disobedient servant tomorrow when he crosses the Narrow Path. “So, sometimes he will stop, sometime stumble,” falling and getting up. The Exalted Lord knows that the servant has no one to come to his aid but He and no one to take his hand but He.

In the reports it is mentioned that God's mercy toward the servant is more than a mother's mercy toward her child. Supposing that a child's foot gets caught in the mud a thousand times, each time the mother will say, “Rise up, O soul of your mother!” Each time she will be even more tender and lovingly kind toward the child.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, as soon as Your love appeared, all loves became disloyalty. As soon as Your kindness appeared, all disloyalties became loyalty. O God, it was not that we had worth, and then You chose us, nor that we were worthless and then You chose wrongly. Rather, You gave us worth from Yourself when You chose us, and You concealed the defects that You saw.”

**11:90** *And ask forgiveness from your Lord, then repent to Him. Surely my Lord is ever-merciful, loving.*

He says, “Ask forgiveness from your Lord, for He is the forgiver and the servant-caresser—not as is fitting for the servant, but as is fitting for Him. No matter how many offenses the servant may have, in the end the Patron’s bounty is more. It is the gentleness of lordhood that offers its gentleness to the attribute of servanthood: Whatever shortcoming servants may have, My unneededness is equal to it. Whatever may be unapproved from him, My loving kindness is on top of that. Whatever the servant may hope, My bounty is greater than that.”

*Surely my Lord is ever-merciful, loving.* The *loving* is He who shows His love to His servants by His beautiful doing toward them. The *loving* is He who caresses the servant with His loving kindness and pours over him continual blessings so that the servant will become His friend. This is why He said to David, “O David, make Me beloved to My servants. Make My path clear to My servants and throw friendship for Me into their hearts. Teach them about My blessings and make My words sweet in their hearts. Tell them that I am the Lord with munificence and no niggardliness, with knowledge and no ignorance, with patience and no incapacity, with wrath but no annoyance. There is no change in My attributes and no alteration in My words. *With Me the word does not change, and I do not wrong the servants* [50:29].”

So, if the servant should fall short, not recognize what is rightfully due to this generosity, and not show gratitude for blessings, He will rebuke and say, “O son of Adam! You have not been fair to Me! I showed My love for you through blessings, and you showed your hate for Me through acts of disobedience. My good descends upon you, and your evil rises up to Me.” °Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib narrated this hadith from the Prophet, who narrated it from God.

## Surah 12: Yūsuf

### 12:3 *We will tell thee the most beautiful of tales.*

What a beautiful tale is the tale of Joseph! It is the tale of the passionate and the object of passion, the talk of separation and union. It wants the pain-stricken to read the tale of those in pain. It wants the passionate to report about the pain of passion and the burning of the passionate. It wants the burnt so that the burning of the longing may leave a trace. I am the slave of the yearner who lights up the fire of longing at the top of the Friend's street. I envy the eye that rains down tears at separation in love for the Beloved. I scatter spirit and heart before the lost-hearted one who tells the story of the lost-hearted.

In the city my heart inclines, my dear, to him  
who sings your passion's tale, my dear.

On the day when the seed of passion's pain was planted in the hearts of the familiar, the heart of Jacob the prophet was on the highway of this talk. He found flourishing in disengagement and solitariness, he took himself into the crucible of discipline and self-purification, and he became receptive to the seed of passion's pain. When the seed reached the earth of his heart, the water of "He sprinkled them with some of His light" nurtured it until the jasmine of the Covenant grew up. Then, as a pretext, the beauty of Joseph was made his kiblah, and his mortal nature was given access to its own kind. This cry went out: "Jacob's throat has been hung by the noose of desire for Joseph." Within the curtain of jealousy that center point of the Haqiqah said, "Call Me Arsalan so that no one will know who I am."

### 12:4 *When Joseph said to his father, "O my father, surely I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon. I saw them prostrating to me."*

Ibn ʿAbbās said, "The eleven stars allude to the eleven brothers." God is saying, "The stars are bright by themselves and people take to the road by them," which is in His words, "*By the stars they are guided*" [16:16]. "In the same way Joseph's brothers had the brightness of prophecy, and within them was found the guidance of the people."

Their treachery toward their brother and their envy toward him are minor sins of the sort that occur for prophets. The wisdom in this is that the world's folk may come to know that the faultless is God, who is one and unique, and all other things have faults. In this meaning they have sung,

I am the faulty and my Lord is pure—  
my faultiness is evidence of the Pure.

It was said to Ḥasan, "Does the man of faith have envy?"

He said, "What has made you forget the sons of Jacob?"

Someone may say that Joseph was an immature child when he saw this dream, and it is known in the Shariah that no rulings apply to the act of a child. Since his act has no ruling, how can his dream have a ruling? The answer is that if the child's act is achieved by his own intention and aim, it can be attributed to his susceptibility to shortcoming and defect. But a dream is a divine showing, and in that children and adults are the same.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is a translation of LI 3:167-68.

**12:15** *So when they went with him and agreed to put him at the bottom of the well, We revealed to him, “Surely thou shalt inform them of this affair of theirs when they are unaware.”*

Even if the care of his father was cut off from him, he received revelation from his Patron. Such is the custom of God: He never opens up a door of trial to the souls of His friends without opening up the doors of limpidness and the sorts of friendship to their hearts.<sup>2</sup>

If trial blocks a road for the servant, so what? God will open up the top of the road of limpidness with the attribute of friendship. If He takes back one mouthful, what’s the loss? He will wrap up a hundred morsels for you. This is as they say:

If I broke your necklace when drunk,  
I’ll buy you a hundred gold beads to replace it.

Although Joseph was sorrowful at separation from his father, why should he have lamented? He was colored by union with the revelation of the Real. The Real’s revelation to him in that empty well was sweeter to him than union with Jacob in Canaan. Indeed, all caresses are in the midst of suffering, and beneath one disappointment lie a thousand treasures.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “If the marks of familiarity are true, whatever arrives from the Friend is beautiful doing. When there is no suspicion of the Friend in the apportioning, complaint is a fault. If this claim has meaning, happiness and grief will be the same for it.”

I have a spirit inscribed with passion for You  
whether You pull it to happiness or grief.

**12:20** *They sold him for a paltry price.*

It is not surprising that Joseph’s brothers sold him for a small price. What is surprising is the work of those travelers, who acquired someone like Joseph for twenty dirhams! It is not surprising that people should sell subsistent paradise for this small world. What is surprising is that they gain such a magnificent paradise and tremendous kingdom with a loaf of bread given to a poor man! Indeed, good fortune does not have a price, and the Real’s generosity is nothing but a gift.

If what Joseph possessed in himself—the characteristics of sinlessness, the realities of proximity, and the subtleties of knowledge and wisdom—had been unveiled to his brothers, they would not have sold him for that small price, nor would they have called him a slave. A single speck of those characteristics and subtleties was unveiled to the governor of Egypt and Zulaykhā. Look how they bestowed their kingdom on his work and what value they placed on him! So also, when the women of Egypt saw his beauty, they said, “*This is no mortal! This is none but a noble angel!*” [12:31]. Yes, it is showing that does the job, not seeing. Muṣṭafā said, “O God, show us things as they are!”

Ibn ʿAṭāʾ said, “Beauty is of two sorts, outward beauty and inward beauty. Outward beauty is an adorned creation and a lovely form. Inward beauty is perfect character and fine conduct.”

The Lord of the Worlds showed Joseph’s outward beauty to his brothers. They saw nothing more, even though in God’s eyes the outward has no importance. Hence they sold him for a small price. A trace of the inner beauty was shown to the governor of Egypt, so he said to his wife, “*Give him generous lodging!*” [12:21]. This is so that the world’s folk may know that in God’s eyes importance and worth belong to inner beauty, not outward. Muṣṭafā said, “God gazes not on your forms or your possessions, but He gazes on your hearts and your deeds.”

It is said that one day Joseph looked in a mirror and gazed on himself. He saw perfect beauty and said, “If I were a slave, what would my price be!? Who would be able to pay it?” The Lord of the Worlds did not let that pass, not until Joseph had tasted the punishment of gazing on himself. He was made a slave, and his price was twenty dirhams.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Do not look at yourself, for self-seeing has no worth! Do not adorn yourself, for self-adornment has no value! Do not approve of yourself, for self-

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<sup>2</sup> LI 3:79.

approval has no support!”

Quit being the companion of self-nurturing habit-worshippers!

Kiss the dust beneath the feet of those who have disowned self! [DS 972]

“Do not adorn yourself,” and let the Real adorn you: *And He adorned it in your hearts* [49:7]. “Do not approve of yourself,” and let the Real approve of you: *God approves of them* [9:100]. Do not belong to yourself, and let the Real belong to you: *Thou didst not throw when thou threwest* [8:17].

On the night of the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj*, He said to Muṣṭafā, “Be for Me as if you were not, I will be for you as I have always been.”

It has also been said that they sold a soul whose selling was not permitted, so his price, even were it great, would be paltry. Among the things you do that is even more surprising is that you sell your soul for the sake of the lowest appetite after you sold it to your Lord at the highest price; that is in His words, “*Surely God has bought from the faithful their souls*” [9:111].

**12:43** *The king said, “I see seven fat cows that seven lean ones are eating.”*

The beginning of Joseph’s trial was the dream concerning which he said, “*I saw eleven stars*” [12:4]. The cause of his deliverance was also a dream, that seen by the king of Egypt, who said, “*I see seven fat cows.*” This is so that you will know that things are done by the predetermination and governance of God and that He is one in driving things and taking care of things. Even though the causes are apparent, remaining with the causes is an error.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Not seeing the cause is ignorance, but staying with the cause is associationism. Pass beyond the cause and reach the Causer. Do not close the door of causes lest you not reach yourself.

“The recognizer’s eyes are not on the Tablet, nor on the Pen. He is not bound to Eve, nor in prison to Adam. He has a constant thirst, even though he has a cup again and again. O most generous Guardian, O most merciful Fount of Bounty! Take back the cup once so that this poor wretch may breathe!”

It has been said that Joseph was perfect in two things: one was beauty of created nature, the other knowledge and astuteness. The beauty of created nature is the perfection of form, and knowledge and astuteness are the perfection of meaning. The Exalted Lord predetermined that his beauty would be the cause of trial and his knowledge the cause of deliverance. Thus the world’s folk may know that beautiful knowledge is better than beautiful form. As the proverb says, “Knowledge bestows, though it be slow.” Since Joseph’s knowledge of visions was the cause of his kingdom in this world, why is it surprising that knowledge of the Patron’s attributes is the cause of the recognizer’s kingdom in the afterworld? God says, “*When thou seest it, thou wilt see bliss and a great kingdom*” [76:20].

**12:52-53** *That, so that he may know that I did not betray him secretly.... But I do not acquit my own soul. Surely the soul commands to ugliness.*

When [the governor’s wife] said, “*That, so that he may know that I did not betray him secretly,*” she saw the success-giving and protection of the Real. When she said, “*I do not acquit my soul; surely the soul commands to ugliness,*” she saw the shortcoming of her own service. The first clarifies gratitude for God’s success-giving, the second clarifies apology for shortcoming.

The servant must always be passing back and forth between gratitude and apology. Whenever he looks at the Real, he should see blessings, take delight, and increase in gratitude. Whenever he looks at himself, he should see sin. He should burn and come forth in apology. Through the gratitude, he becomes worthy of increase, and through the apology he becomes deserving of forgiveness.

This is why the Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, when I look at myself, I ask who is more miserable than I. When I look at You, I ask who is greater than I.”

When my gaze falls on my own clay,  
I see nothing worse in the world.

When I pass beyond my attributes,  
I look at myself from the Throne.

Fuḍayl ʿIyāḍ was seen retired from the people and sitting in the corner of a mosque, having made the Real’s remembrance his intimate friend. He had brought to hand the chevaliers’ retreat with the Real, on the carpet of expansiveness in the tent of *He is with you* [57:4]. A friend arrived and saw him alone. He took seeing him as a blessing and sat before him. Fuḍayl said, “My brother, what has made you sit with me?” What has made you intrude upon me in this seclusion? Such detachment, that you attend to me!

The dervish said, “Please excuse me. I did not know. I was unaware of your present moment and ecstasy. Now tell me something about your present moment and speak of a fine point about your traveling so that I may not remain without a portion of companionship with you.”

Fuḍayl said, “I will say what is fitting for you. Know that Fuḍayl is not attending to others because he is giving gratitude for the blessings of the Blessing-Giver and asking pardon for his slips. In his heart there is no place for anything. When I look at myself, I ask pardon for slips, and when I look at Him, I show gratitude for blessings.”

Then Fuḍayl turned his face toward heaven and said, “O God, who has the capacity in himself to give gratitude to You? Who is able to serve You as is fitting for You? O God, when someone’s portion of Your friendship is talk, he has been defrauded! When someone’s spirit and heart are of use in this road, what business has he with Your union? O God, for me it is enough of Your blessings that I have never had patience in love for You; with spirit and heart I sniff the dust at the top of Your street and with the hand of hope I bang the knocker on the door of friendship. Wherever in the world I find someone lost, I tell him my story.”

Then he turned his face to the dervish and said, “Fear your place, guard your tongue, and ask God to forgive your sins and those of the faithful, men and women.”

*Surely the soul commands to ugliness.* Know that the soul has four levels: first the commanding soul, then the deceiving soul, third the sorcerous, and fourth the serene.

The commanding soul has not been placed in the crucible of discipline, nor has the skin of its existence been taken to the tanner. In dealing with God’s creatures it rises up with antagonism and keeps the attributes of a predator. It constantly talks ill of people, speaks up only for itself, and always takes steps in its own desires. It grazes in the world of mortal nature and drinks water from the spring of caprice. It knows nothing other than eating, sleeping, and doing what it wants.

Concerning the owners of this soul, the Exalted Lord says, “*Leave them to eat, enjoy, and be diverted by hopes—they will soon know*” [15:3]. Their form has a human color, but their attribute is satanic. This is why He says, “*satans of jinn and men*” [6:112].

This soul is a tremendous veil and the disrupter of the religion, the quarry of every sort of ungodliness and the center of evils. If a person is able to escape from it, he will escape by opposing it, for the Splendorous Qur’an reports like this: “*As for him who fears the standing place before his Lord and prohibits the soul its caprice, surely the Garden shall be the shelter*” [79:40-41]. All the prophets and messengers commanded the people to act with severity and to struggle against this soul. Muṣṭafā said, “We have returned from the lesser struggle to the greater struggle.” “The most arduous struggle is the struggle against the soul.”

*Struggle in God as is the rightful due of His struggle* [22:78]. The rightful due of struggle is that you not nurture the attributes of the commanding soul—like avarice, appetite, greed, rancor, pride, enmity, and hatred—but you hold them in check. Whenever they stick up their heads, you keep them away from yourself with the stone of struggle, just as that chevalier said:

“The serpent-soul is coiled around your heart’s treasure—  
strike it with struggle’s stone for the heart’s covenant!  
If you are ill in spirit and fear the jests of the Turning Wheel,  
pour a draft on your spirit from the cup of striving.”<sup>3</sup>

As for the deceiving soul, it is lower than the commanding soul. It does not have the strength to resist a man, but it always lies in ambush to see how it may gain a hold. For example, it sees a

3 Though the verses are typical of Sanāʿī’s style, they are not found in the printed edition of his divan.

desirer in the station of togetherness on the road of struggle and discipline, so it places one of the journeys of obedience before him, like the hajj, or war, or a pilgrimage. It says, “This is better and higher in the way stations of obedient acts.” In what it says, it speaks the truth, but it is deceiving and scheming, for it wants to throw the desirer out of the station of togetherness and scatter his thoughts and perplex him in this journey. He may reach his goal and he may not. And, if he does reach it, he may never again see this togetherness. Thus Junayd said, “A thousand desirers entered this road along with me, but all of them fell short and I came out on top.”

This is why desirers need a pir in the road of desire, for the pirs have recognized the way stations of this road, and the deceiving soul’s ambushes are not hidden from them. They keep track of the states of the desirers and guide them to what is suited for their steps.

The great ones of the religion have said that as long as a man has not become a possessor of stability, he will not be safe from the deceiving soul. A little bit of water is defiled by a small amount of impurity, but the ocean never becomes defiled. The state of the beginners is delicate: a blameworthy thought arises from the deceiving soul and moves it. But the state of the folk of stability and the lords of the end is a mountain, and the wind cannot move a mountain.

After the deceiving soul is the sorcerous soul. It circles around the folk of the Haqiqah. When it sees them consolidated in acts of obedience and various sorts of discipline, it says, “Be merciful to your own soul—‘Surely your soul has a rightful due against you.’” When the man is not a realizer, it brings him from the station of the Haqiqah to the station of the Shariah and places a concession before him. Whenever a concession comes forth, the ease of the soul appears. The soul gains strength from it and takes him back to the first step—once again the commanding soul comes forth.

Ibrāhīm Khawāṣṣ said, “For forty years I quarreled with my soul, which wanted bread and yoghurt from me. One day I felt merciful toward it. I brought to hand a dirham of lawful silver and was walking in Baghdad to buy bread and yoghurt. I entered a ruins and saw an old man, fallen in the terrible heat. Bees were flying down and taking his flesh. I felt mercy for him and said, ‘Poor indigent!’ The man lifted up his head and said, ‘Khawāṣṣ, what indigence do you see in me? Is the crown of submission not on my head and the pearl of recognition not in my heart? You’re the indigent. After forty years you’re still not able to prevent your soul from its appetite for bread and yoghurt.’”

In brief, know that the sorcerous soul does not command a man to disobedience, rather to obedience. When the man steps into the street of obedience, a color rises up from the obedience itself. It says, “After all, you are better than the wine-drinking, ungodly man.” He comes to believe this in himself and he looks upon himself with the eye of approval, while looking at others with the eye of disdain, until finally he is destroyed.

Abū Bakr gazed on himself with the eye of the Haqiqah and saw the reality of his self. He said, “Dismiss me, for I am not the best of you.” O Abū Bakr, you keep on saying this, but the religion of the submission and the holy Shariah address you with these words: “The best of the people after God’s Messenger is Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq.”

From here begins the serene soul. It is the soul of the prophets and the friends. It has the bond of protection from sin and the curtain of kind favor. The prophets are inside protection’s pavilion and the friends inside the curtain of guarding and kind favor. If for one instant the bond of protection were to be taken away from the prophets, the same thing would appear from them that appeared from Pharaoh and Haman. If for one moment the guarding, preservation, and kind favor were to be cut off from the friends, all of them would put on the sash of unbelief. If the Arab Prophet had gone forth for a thousand years, and if there had not been *Then He drew close, so He came down* [53:8], where would he have gotten to?

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, I am happy that at first I was not but You were. You mixed the fire of finding with the light of recognition. You stirred up the breeze of proximity from the garden of union. You poured down the rain of solitariness on the dust of mortal nature. You burned water and clay with the fire of friendship. Thus You taught the recognizer’s eyes how to see You.”

**12:76 Thus We schemed for Joseph.... We raise in degree whomsoever We will.**

Ibn ʿAṭāʾ said, “We tried him with various sorts of trial until We conveyed him to exaltedness

and eminence.”

In terms of allusion He is saying, “We turned Joseph over to various sorts of trial and kept him for a long time in the station of bewilderment on the carpet of remorse until We conveyed him to the place of generosity and elevation and let him taste the wine of nearness and intimacy. In face of this blessing that tribulation was not heavy, and next to this nearness that remorse was no loss.” The wont of the Lord of the universe is this: The foundation of happiness is all suffering, and beneath one disappointment lie a thousand treasures.

If you want the wisdom of this clearer and an explication fuller, it means, “We ruled and decreed in the beginningless that Joseph would be king of Egypt. First We showed him the abasement of slavery so that he would be informed of the remorse of captives and slaves. Then We tried him with the trial of prison so that he would be aware of the burning and grief of prisoners. We threw him into the gloom of exile so that he would not be heedless of the helplessness of exiles.”

Be a mother to orphans, nurture them with gentleness,  
be noble to askers, fulfill their requests.

The generosity We showed to you in your poverty and orphanhood—  
you show the same, O generous in character, to Our creatures. [DS 36]

*We raise in degree whomsoever We will.* First there is going straight, then unveiling, then contemplation: “We give whomsoever We want a high standing, and We lift up his degrees: first the success of obedience, then the realization of recompense; first the self-purification of deeds, then making states limpid; first the resoluteness of service in the station of the Shariah, then the finding of contemplation in the Haqiqah itself.”

Going straight alludes to the Shariah, unveiling alludes to the Tariqah, and contemplation alludes to the Haqiqah itself. The Shariah is servanthood, the Tariqah is selflessness, and the Haqiqah is freedom in the midst of both.

Become free of everything in the realm of being—  
be that Heart-taker’s “companion of the cave.”

**12:81 Return to your father and say, “O our father! Surely thy son has stolen.”**

When Jacob became distracted and distraught in separation from Joseph, helpless in his pain without remedy, he wanted to make the remembrance of that dear one a balm for his wound and to be passionate with someone linked to Joseph. He made Benjamin his reminder and sympathizer, for he had drunk water from the same drinking place as Joseph and had been nurtured on the same lap. The heart of the passionate man always inclines toward someone who has a link or some sort of similarity with the object of passion. Do you not see that Majnūn of Banī °Āmir went out to the desert hunting for a gazelle? He saw that its eyes and neck were like those of Laylā. He was passing his hands over its neck, kissing its eyes, and saying, “Your eyes are her eyes, your neck is her neck!”

When Jacob fastened his heart to Benjamin and when a part of him came to rest in him, the venomous sickle was once again drawn from the sheath of time and Benjamin was separated from his father. Then the name of thief was thrown on him, and this added trial to his trial—salt was sprinkled on his wound and the burn was once again burned. Just as fire wants to kindle burnt rags, so also the pain of separation wants to settle down with a burnt heart.

Whenever pain steps forth from this heart of mine  
another pain takes its place in the breast.  
I become the companion of every pain  
for fire flares up when it reaches the burnt.

Whenever Jacob saw Benjamin, he was consoled by him, for “He who is prevented from gazing is consoled by a trace.”<sup>4</sup> Then, when he was held back from Benjamin, the burning reached the

4 This is a saying of Abū °Alī Daqqāq, cited by Qushayrī in his explanation of 12:84 (LI 3:200).

utmost limit and he moaned at the pain in his heart. With the tongue of longing he said,

**12:84** *“Oh, my grief for Joseph!” And his eyes turned white because of the sorrow that he was suppressing.*

Revelation came from the Compeller of all engendered beings: “O Jacob! You grieve so much for him, but you do not grieve for what you are missing of Me by being busy with grief for him!” O Jacob, how long this sorrow and regret at separation from Joseph? How long will you suffer grief and coldly sigh? Do you not suffer grief that you are held back from Me while busy with him?

“With two kiblāhs you can’t walk straight on the road of *tawhīd*—  
either the Friend’s approval, or your own caprice. [DS 488]

“O Jacob! Be careful not to pass Joseph’s name over your tongue any more, or I will remove your name from the register of the prophets.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Jacob’s remembrance of Joseph was the seed of heartache, and Joseph’s remembrance of Jacob was the seed of ease. Since Jacob had all that rebuke for remembering Joseph, everything other than remembering God is loss. It is said that remembering the Friend is like the spirit. Look more carefully: remembering the Friend is the spirit itself!”

When Jacob saw the harshness of the Real’s rebuke, he no longer mentioned Joseph’s name. Then the mercy and gentleness of the Exalted Threshold gave this command to Gabriel: “O Gabriel, go to Jacob and remind him of Joseph.” Gabriel came and mentioned Joseph’s name. Jacob sighed. Revelation came from the Real: “O Jacob, I know what is beneath your moaning. By My exaltedness, were he dead, I would resurrect him because of the beauty of your loyalty.”

*And his eyes turned white because of the sorrow that he was suppressing.* Abū °Alī al-Daqqāq said, “Jacob wept because of a created thing, so his eyesight went. David wept more than Jacob, but his eyesight did not go, because his weeping was for the sake of his Lord.”<sup>5</sup>

Weeping for the Real is of two sorts: weeping from the eyes and weeping from the heart. Weeping from the eyes is the weeping of repenters in fear of God; they weep at seeing their own disobedience. Weeping from the heart is the weeping of the recognizers; they weep because of veneration of the Real in seeing tremendousness. Repenters weep because of remorse and need, recognizers weep because of secret whispering and joy.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, I have a long weeping in my head. I do not know if I weep from remorse or from joy. Weeping from remorse is the portion of an orphan, and weeping from joy is the portion of a candle. What is it like to weep from joy? That story is long.”

Muṣṭafā said, “Tomorrow at the resurrection, all eyes will be weeping from the terror of the resurrection and the Greatest Fright, except four: One is the eye of a warrior who was wounded and died in the road of God. Second is the eye turned away from forbidden things so as not to look at the inappropriate. Third is the eye that was always sleepless from standing in prayer at night. Fourth is the eye that weeps in fear of God.”

It has been narrated that David said, “O God, what is the recompense of someone who weeps in fear of You until tears flow down his face?”

He said, “His recompense is that I will make him secure from the Greatest Fright and will make his face forbidden to the scorching of the Fire.”

It has been narrated that God said, “By My exaltedness and majesty, no servant will weep in fear of Me without My pouring for him the nectar of My mercy! By My exaltedness and majesty, no servant will weep in fear of Me without My exchanging that for laughter in the light of My holiness!”

*And his eyes turned white because of the sorrow.* He did not say, “Jacob became blind,” lest that be cruelty, for in reality “blindness” is the heart’s inability to see, as He said: “*Surely it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts in the breasts*” [22:46]. Jacob had perfect seeing and clarity of heart, but his eyes were veiled from witnessing anyone but Joseph. This is because,

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5 LI 3:200.

under the ruling power of passion, during the absence of the object of passion the eyes of the passionate man must be veiled from others, for, in the religion of friendship, seeing another in place of the beloved is nothing but associationism. In this meaning someone sang,

Once I was certain that I would not be seeing you,  
I shut my eyes and gazed on no one.

\*

Eyes are useful to me for seeing the Friend—  
what will I do with eyes without seeing the Friend?

**12:93** *Go with this shirt of mine and cast it upon the face of my father so that he may come to seeing.*

Joseph said, “Take my shirt to Jacob, for his pain has not ceased from the time he saw the shirt stained with the wolf’s blood. The balm will also be my shirt.” When they took the shirt from Egypt, the morning breeze was commanded to take the shirt’s scent to Jacob’s nostrils so that, before Joseph’s messenger could give the good news, he would receive it from the Real’s messenger and recognize the Real’s perfect gentleness and favor toward him. According to the tasting of the recognizers, this is the divine breeze that wanders furtively around the world to the doors of the breasts of the faithful and the *tawḥīd*-voicers to see where there may be a limpid breast and an empty secret core in which to dwell.

Her love came to me before I knew love—  
it came across a carefree heart and took possession.

To this alluded the Prophet: “Surely your Lord has breezes in the days of your time,” and so on. As for Jacob, this generosity was shown to him by means of passion for Joseph. Beneath this lies a magnificent secret. Its explanation is that contemplating Joseph for Jacob was by means of contemplating the Real. Whenever Jacob saw Joseph with the eyes of his head, he was gazing on the Real in contemplation with the eye of his secret core. So, when he was veiled from contemplating Joseph, his heart was also veiled from contemplating the Real. All of Jacob’s anxiety and grieving was because of the loss of the contemplation of the Real, not the loss of companionship with Joseph. His longing and lamenting at separation from Joseph was because he had lost his mirror. He did not weep for the mirror itself, but for his heart’s intimate, which he no longer saw. He burned because of losing that. Hence, on the day when he saw him again, he fell down in prostration, for his heart was contemplating the Real. He was prostrating before the contemplation of the Real, for none other than God is worthy of prostration.

**12:94** *Their father said, “Surely I find Joseph’s scent.”*

The wonder is that the bringer of the shirt found nothing of that scent, but Jacob found it at the distance of eighty farsakhs. For that was the scent of passion, and the scent of passion blows only on the passionate. Moreover, it does not always blow. As long as a man has not been cooked by passion and pounded by the trial of passion, the scent will not blow on him. Do you not see that at the beginning of the work and the outset of the story, when Joseph was taken away from him, the first stage was not reached when they threw him into the well. Jacob had no awareness of this and caught no scent. Finally, at Canaan, he reported about Joseph’s scent: “*Surely I find Joseph’s scent.*”

It is said that in the House of Sorrows, Jacob wept a great deal every dawn. Sometimes he lamented miserably, sometimes he wailed at his abasement, sometimes he opened the journal of passion and began the chapter on passion. Sometimes he put his head on his knees, sometimes he passed his face in the dust, his two hands raised in supplication. Sometimes he recognized Joseph’s scent from the dawn wind and said with the tongue of his state,

“The wind at dawn brings your scent, my dear—  
I am the dawn wind’s slave in the tracks of your scent.”

Thus it is that on the day of relief the morning breeze brought the scent of Joseph to Jacob and

brought him into proximity. This is the custom of the lovers: asking in the lands, conferring with ruined encampments, and sniffing news from the winds. In this meaning someone sang,

“I will let the winds guide me to your scent  
when they blow from your direction  
And ask them to carry my greetings to you.  
Respond to me if they come one day.”<sup>6</sup>

**12:99-100** *So, when they entered in upon Joseph, he embraced his parents.... And he lifted his parents to the throne, and they fell prostrate before him.... “He acted beautifully toward me when He brought me out of prison and brought you from the desert after Satan had sowed dis-sension between me and my brothers. Surely my Lord is gentle toward what He will.”*

In going to Egypt, all were the same. But at the time of proximity and caresses, they were different, for he put his father and maternal aunt on the throne of generosity and singled them out for the companionship, nearness, and embrace, as the Exalted Lord says: “*And he lifted his parents to the throne.*” But he brought his brothers down to the place of service: “*And they fell prostrate before him.*” This is an allusion that tomorrow at the resurrection, all the faithful will be brought into paradise, both the disobedient who have been forgiven and the obedient who have been approved. Then those who were the folk of disobedience, the ones received by the Real’s forgiveness, will be set down in paradise, and the folk of recognition will be singled out for the special favor of proximity and nearness. They will be brought to the Presence of At-ness: *at an Omnipotent King* [54:55].

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The folk of service are one thing, the folk of companionship something else. The folk of service are prisoners of paradise, the folk of companionship commanders of paradise. The prisoners are in joy and bliss, and the commanders dwell in secret whispering with the Beneficent.”

*He acted beautifully toward me when He brought me out of prison.* The beautiful-doer is not he who acts beautifully at the beginning. The beautiful-doer is he who acts beautifully after your disloyalty. Joseph saw the disloyalty of his own soul at first, when he sought refuge with the cup-bearer in prison and said, “*Remember me to your lord*” [12:42]. Then he saw that his deliverance from the prison was through the Real’s bounty and generosity, and he counted that as beautiful doing. He said, “*He acted beautifully toward me when He brought me out of prison.*” Even though he had seen the trial of the well, he did not speak of it again, for he saw this trial as a blessing for him. In the well he had received the revelation of the Real, heard the message of the King, and seen Gabriel, the messenger of the Presence. God says, “*We revealed to him, ‘Surely thou shalt inform them’*” [12:15]. So he counted the tribulation as a blessing and saw that the trial was bestowal itself. This is why he did not mention the trial of the well, but he did talk about the prison. He said, “God acted beautifully toward me, for I was worthy of blame, but He showed generosity toward me. He saw bad from me and had mercy through His own bounty, delivering me from the prison and, after separation, bringing me together with the honored ones. He did all that out of His own gentleness, servant-caressing, and loving kindness. *Surely my Lord is gentle toward what He will.* He is a Lord who through His own gentleness comes back to loyalty toward the hopeful and through His own generosity passes over the hidden things of the servants and sets their work aright in the two worlds.”

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6 The poem and the previous sentence are from LI 3:206-7.

## Surah 13: al-Ra<sup>c</sup>d

### 13:1 *Alif Lām Mīm Rā'*

This is one of the secrets of love, one of the treasures of recognition. In the midst of their spirits, the friends have a deposit, but they do not know what they have. The wonder is that they keep on seeing an ocean and they weep in hope for a drop. This is like the Pir of the Tariqah said: “O God, Your stream is flowing—how long will I be thirsty? What sort of thirst is this that I see one cup after another?”

“Who has ever had a state rarer than this?

I’m thirsty and clear water is flowing before me.

“Exalted of the two worlds! How much will You be hidden, how much apparent? My heart is bewildered, the spirit distracted. How long this curtaining and self-disclosing? When at last will there be the everlasting self-disclosure?”

The allusion is that today the friends have nothing more than the scent of the lights of those secrets and the whiffs of those traces, and that, other than Muḥammad the Arab, no one is worthy of that face-to-face vision.

First He alludes to the road of recognition for the elect, since their gaze is on the Essence and the attributes, which are called “the World of the Command.” Then He uncovers the road of recognizing Himself for the common people. He knows that their gaze does not pass beyond the newly arrived things, the engendered beings, and the World of Creation. He says,

### 13:2 *God is He who lifted up the heavens without pillars that you see.*

Heaven and earth, land and sea, air and space, are the World of Creation, the playing field of the gaze of the creatures, whose end is apparent and which can disappear. But the World of the Command can never have an end, for it is necessarily continuous. As long as a man does not pass beyond the World of Creation, he will not be given access to the World of the Command. The chevaliers whose gaze travels in the World of the Command are the Pegs of the earth. Just as in respect of form the world’s mountains keep the earth in place, so also in respect of meaning the chevaliers keep the world standing. “Through them rain falls and through them provision is given.” This is why the Lord of the Worlds says,

### 13:3 *And He it is who spread out the earth and placed within it unshaking mountains.*

In terms of the allusion and intimation of the Folk of the Haqiqah He is saying, “It is He who spread out the earth and placed within it the Pegs, namely the friends and masters among His servants, to whom recourse is had and from whom assistance comes.”

The sun rises in the east and sets in the west for a hundred years before someone’s eyes are daubed with the collyrium of the Haqiqah by the pencil of solicitude. Perhaps we will be allowed to see those chevaliers and reach endless felicity with one look at them. For thousands of years the moon-faced beauties of Firdaws and the houris of paradise have been standing in wait in that busy bazaar: When will the fortunate procession of those chevaliers be conveyed to the highest of the High Chambers so that they, as hangers-on, may step into the pageant of good fortune *at an Omnipotent King* [54:55].

On the day Junayd's bier was carried, a bird came and sat on the edge of his coffin. People were waving their hands at it but it would not leave. Ruwaym said, "In generosity the bird is telling us with the tongue of its state, 'Leave me alone, for my claws have been fixed to the edge of his coffin with the nails of passion. Today this frame of Junayd is the portion of the cherubim. If not for the intrusion of your tumult, you would fly with me like falcons in this air.'" When they buried him, one of the poor stood above him and recited these verses:

"Oh the grief at separation from a group  
who are lamps and fortresses,  
rain clouds, cities, and unshaking mountains,  
good, security, and stillness.  
The nights will not change for us  
until they are brought forth by fate.  
So every fire belongs to our hearts,  
every water belongs to our eyes."

**13:15** *To God prostrate themselves all in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly.*

In the tongue of commentary, the prostration of the unbeliever is an unwilling prostration, for he prostrates himself and shows humility at the time of tribulation in the state of hardship so as to repel harm from himself. Thus Muṣṭafā said to Ḥaṣīn Khuzā'ī,<sup>1</sup> "How many gods do you worship today?"

He said, "Seven: one in heaven and six in the earth."

He said, "Which one of them do you look to on the day of your hope and fear?"

He said, "The one in heaven."

According to these words, when someone prostrates himself to a god wanting to attract a benefit or repel a harm, that is a prostration of unwillingness, not a prostration of willingness. The willing prostration is the one done for the command alone and to venerate the Real's exaltedness. There is no taint of wanting, no hope for compensation, and no dread of tribulation. The individual is in prostration, the heart in finding, the spirit in witnessing; the individual is with loyalty, the heart with shame, and the spirit with limpidness.

That chieftain of the Tariqah, Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī, was addressed in a dream: "'O Abū Yazīd, Our storehouses are full of worship. Approach Us with brokenness and abasement.' In Our threshold, bowing and prostrating are of no use without brokenness of the heart and limpidness of the spirit, for the storehouses of Our exaltedness are already full of the bowing and prostrating of the lords of the heart. When you come to Our threshold, place the heart's pain in the spirit's cup and send it to the Presence of the Beloved, for the heart's pain has measure with Us."

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "The *tawḥīd* of the hearts of the faithful is in the measure of the heart's pain. The more a heart is burnt and the more complete its pain, the more it is familiar with *tawḥīd* and the closer it is to the Real."

Without the perfection of burning pain, don't mention religion's name.

Without the beauty of yearning for union, don't lean on faith.

**13:17** *He sends down from heaven water, and the wadis flow in their measure, and the flood carries a swelling scum. And from that which they kindle in fire, wanting ornament or ware, arises a scum the like of it. Thus does God strike truth and falsehood. As for the scum, it vanishes as jetsam, and what profits people abides in the earth.*

Abū Bakr Wāsiṭī said that this verse is the pivot of knowledge of the Haqīqah and recognition. "The meaning is that He revealed from on high to the hearts and ears of the prophets and He inspired the intellects and insights of the wise."

The majestic Unity, through the attribute of mercy and clemency, sent down from heaven to

<sup>1</sup> The ḥadīth concerns Ḥaṣīn, the father of 'Imrān, when he was still an unbeliever (see KA 3:706).

the messengers the true message and the pure revelation. They heard it with their ears and they perceived it with their hearts. In the same way He inspired the friends and threw the light of wisdom into their hearts.

*And the wadis flow in their measure*, that is, He made the hearts see in the measure of their capacity, life, and illumination. The hearts of the prophets became clear and bright through the light of revelation and messengerhood, and the hearts of the friends with the lamp of wisdom and recognition.

*In their measure*, that is, each person in his own measure, in degrees and grades—one higher, one middling, one lower—the relative preference and disparity being apparent to everyone. About the messengers He says, “*We made some of the prophets more excellent than others*” [17:55]. About the friends He says, “*They are degrees with God*” [3:163]. One has messengerhood in addition to prophethood, another has prophethood in addition to wisdom, another has recognition in addition to knowledge, another has tasting the Reality in addition to faith and bearing witness, another has the knowledge of certainty along with explication, another has the truth of certainty along with face-to-face vision. He gave to each person what was fitting, and He placed within each heart that for which there was room.

*And the flood carries a swelling scum*, that is, He caused loss to those hearts with erroneous views, lowly lapses, and the wishes that Satan casts, what he steals from memory, his casting of slips. Even if those hearts are bright and lit up, they are not free of disquieting thoughts, insinuations, and minor lapses, since Satan is always sitting in ambush waiting to find a way into hearts so that he may throw forth a doubt or a mistake, make up a lie, or steal away something memorized. Satan even stole a little something from him who was the paragon of the world, the master of the children of Adam, the pearl of the oyster shell of nobility, in spite of the perfection of prophecy and the bravery of messengerhood. God says: “[*We sent never any Messenger or Prophet before thee*], but that Satan cast into his wish when he was wishing” [22:52]. So, he sought refuge in God from Satan’s goading, for he said, “My Lord, I seek refuge in Thee from the goadings of Satan.”

*And from that which they kindle in fire*, that is, and from that upon which they reflect, about which they ponder, and from which they deduce, *wanting* a proof or an unveiling, *arises a scum*, that is, something in addition to the inspiration of God and the suggestion of the angel, *the like of it*, that is, like the error being cast by Satan. He is saying about this possessor of inspiration and this possessor of recognition that one is busy in the sea of reflection with the hand of deduction bringing out the pearls of meanings from Qur’anic verses and hadiths, and the other is seeking for the realities of unveiling by pondering with the attribute of inspiration. They are striving and going forth so much in their reflection, pondering, and deduction that they pass beyond the measure and seek increase over the inspiration of the Real and the suggestion of the angel. This increase is just like what Satan has adorned, so both of them are to be avoided.

*As for the scum, it vanishes as jetsam*, that is, as for the error, the fault, and the excessiveness, these vanish through remembrance, as in His words, “*Surely the godwary, when a visitation from Satan touches them, remember, and then see clearly*” [7:201].

*And what profits people*, such as a deduction for a fatwa or stopping at a meaning, *abides in the earth*, that is, it takes firm root in the heart. He is saying that erroneous opinions, faults of the tongue, and excessiveness because of Satan do not last and do not find a resting place in the heart of the person of faith, for the person of faith has the mention and remembrance of the Real on the tongue and in the heart. Satan’s turmoil cannot last along with the ruling power of remembering the Real. That is why the Lord of the Worlds says, “*when a visitation from Satan touches them, remember, and then see clearly.*” What is useful for people—because the wholesomeness of the heart and religion lie within it, for it is in the measure of the Shariah and the Haqiqah—becomes firmly anchored in the heart. It is a tree whose roots are firmly anchored, its branches luxuriant, its wood fruitful; its roots are in the earth of loyalty, its branches in the air of approval, its fruit vision and encounter.

In sum, this verse alludes to the fact that when the light of recognition shines in the heart, it clears away the traces of the darkness of disobedience. But the lights are diverse, and the acts

of disobedience disparate. The light of certainty takes away the darkness of doubt, the light of knowledge takes away the suspicion of ignorance, the light of recognition effaces the traces of disregard, the light of contemplation takes away the traces of the darkness of mortal nature, the light of togetherness lifts away the traces of dispersion. Then, beyond all of these, stands the light of *tawhīd*.<sup>2</sup> When the sun of oneness lifts its head from the horizon of the Unseen, it says to the night of duality:

“Night went, O Morning, and at once I was You—  
how much longer the attributes of Adamites and Adam?”

**13:28** *Those who have faith and whose hearts are serene in the remembrance of God.*

The hearts of one group are serene in the remembrance of God, and the hearts of another group are serene in God’s remembrance of them: *And surely God’s remembrance is greater* [29:45].<sup>3</sup>

In the tongue of the folk of allusion, this verse reports about two people, one the desirer and the other the desired. One keeps his hours immersed in the remembrance of the tongue, sometimes prayer, sometimes glorification, and sometimes recitation of the Qur’an. The other is joyful with the remembrance of the Real in the midst of the spirit because he is drowned in the ocean of face-to-face vision. He does not attend to the remembrance of the tongue, but keeps on saying, “O God, as long as I remember Your remembrance, my spirit laments at all remembrance. As long as my heart is happy with Your apparentness, the happiness of the two worlds is but wind.”

The first travels on the road of the religion, kept in the bonds of his own remembrance, and it is said to him, “Preserve the remembrance and give ear to the commands and prohibitions.” The other is on the carpet of proximity, snatched away from causes and creation and singled out for the divine attraction, and it is said to the remembrance, “Give ear to him.” This is just like one group hoping for paradise, while paradise itself is hoping for another group. That is in the Prophet’s words, “Surely the Garden yearns for four individuals: the one who fasts Ramadan, the one who recites the Qur’an, the one who protects the tongue, and the one who feeds the hungry.” It has also been narrated that the Garden yearns for Salmān.

The desirer’s eyes have come upon this: “*Remember Me!*” [2:152]. The desired has been shown this: “*I will remember you*” [2:152]. The desired is seeking remembrance, and remembrance is seeking the desired. The desirer is seeking the present moment, and the present moment is seeking the desired. The desirer is seeking the heart, and the heart is seeking the desired. The field of the desirer’s gaze is the world of setting forth in the wrap of createdness, and the field of the desired’s gaze is the air of unity and the space of solitariness.

Luqmān Sarakhsī and Bu’l-Faḍl Sarakhsī were two pirs of their era who were singular at the time and unique at the moment. Once the two were in listening [*samā’*] and Bu’l-Faḍl was freed from his own hands. He spun a few times like a spinning wheel, then went to the top of the wall. He turned to Luqmān and said, “Why not come up and we will fly in the air of setting forth.” Luqmān shouted at him, saying, “Do not be unmanly! Creation is a narrow playing field. It is not fitting for us to fly.” This is a magnificent allusion to the center point of togetherness, which belongs to those with familiarity in the heart and clarity in the spirit.

It has come in a report that faith has seventy-some gates, the least of which is that an aspiration arises from your makeup that throws this world and the afterworld off to one side. When this trash is swept aside from in front of your feet, the beauty of faith will disclose itself to your heart, for *the subsisting things, the wholesome deeds, are better with your Lord in reward, and better in expectation* [18:46]. This is just what that chevalier said:

“The beauty of the Qur’an’s presence will throw off its veil  
when it sees the dominion of faith free of turmoil.” [DS 52]

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is partly derived from LI 3:224-5.

<sup>3</sup> Taken from LI 3:229.

**13:39 He effaces whatsoever He will, and He affirms.**

Know that the highway of the Real's religion is three things: submission, the Sunnah, and self-purification. In submission be fearful, in the Sunnah be hopeful, and in self-purification be a lover. Submission has no escape from fear, the Sunnah must have hope, and self-purification is nothing but the foundation of the lover.

To the fearful it is said, "Be afraid!" To the hopeful it is said, "Keep on seeking!" To the lover it is said, "Keep on burning!"

In the end the address will come to the fearful, "*Fear not!* [41:30]. Do not fear, for the days of fear have come to an end." To the hopeful will be said, "*Grieve not!* [41:30]. Have no sorrow, for your hope has been reached and the tree of joy has grown." To the lovers will be said, "*Rejoice!* [41:30]. Be happy, for the night of separation has ended and the morning of union has come."

Each of these things has its own path of effacement and affirmation in the world. From the hearts of the fearful He erases eye-service and puts certainty, He erases stinginess and puts generosity, He erases avarice and puts contentment, He erases envy and puts tenderness, He erases innovation and puts the Sunnah, He erases fright and puts security.

From the hearts of the hopeful He erases free choice and deposits surrender, He erases dispersion and deposits togetherness, He erases perplexity and deposits the precedent light.

From the hearts of the lovers He erases the customs of human nature and deposits the marks bearing witness to the Haqiqah, He decreases the marks bearing witness to the servant and increases the marks bearing witness to Himself. Then, just as he was at first, so also he will be at last.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, the majesty of Your exaltedness left no room for allusions. Your effacing and affirming took away the path of ascription—I lost all that I had in hand. O God, Yours kept on increasing and mine decreasing until at last there remained only what there was at first."

Tribulation lies only in the makeup of my water and clay.

What was before heart and clay? That is what I will be.

*He effaces whatsoever He will, and He affirms.* It has been said, "He effaces the recognizers by the unveiling of His majesty and He affirms them by the gentleness of His beauty."<sup>4</sup> Through the unveiling of majesty, intellects are eclipsed and swept away, and through the gentleness of beauty, spirits rejoice and are put at ease.

First He drowns the servants with the waves of confoundedness in the ocean of unveiled majesty until, at the domination of intimacy with Him, they are freed from themselves through a state that the body cannot bear, the heart cannot understand, and discernment cannot view. Like drunkards, they turn to the valleys of confoundedness, in thirst and bewilderment, sometimes weeping, sometimes laughing. They have no leisure to search out their frightened heart, no helper to whom to recount their portion.

Isolated from friends in every land—  
the greater the sought, the fewer the helpers.

They keep on saying with the tongue of brokenness in the attribute of poverty, "O God, today this burning of mine is mixed with pain—I have no capacity to bear it, no place to flee. O God, why is this blade so sharp?! There is no place for ease and no way to abstain. O Generous One, my home is so far away. The traveling companions have gone back, saying that this is the work of delusion. If my home is joy, this waiting is celebration, and this tribulation on top of tribulation is *light upon light* [24:35]."

Then, with the gaze of gentleness, He looks into the servants' spirits. The servants come back from intoxication to sobriety, take ease in the gentle favors of solicitude, and light up with the light of contemplation. They are released from self, freed from this world and the next, and live in the breeze of intimacy, seeing the beginningless reminder, having found everlasting happiness. They

4 LI 3:236.

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say, “O God, sometimes I spoke to You and sometimes I listened. In the midst of my offenses I thought of Your gentleness. I suffered what I suffered. All became sweet when I heard the voice of acceptance.”

## Surah 14: Ibrāhīm

**14:2** *God is He to whom belongs everything in the heavens and everything in the earth.*

Wāsiṭī said, “The realm of being all belongs to Him. When someone seeks the realm of being, He is the Being-Bestower. When someone seeks the Real, he will find that He has subjected the realm of being to him along with everything within it.” Whenever someone gives himself over to the Being-Bestower and his heart busies itself with His companionship, the engendered beings and the newly arrived things will busy themselves entirely with serving him.

He is saying, “My servant, the seven heavens, the seven earths, and all that is within them are My property and kingdom. All are My servants and servitors. If you bind your waist in loyalty to My covenant and, like serving-boys, bring your head into the collar of obedience, We will put the ring of serving you in the ear of all things and subject them to you. If you turn your head away from the circle of the command or busy your heart with others, We will set them all on their feet in antagonism toward you and We will make your standing place your prison.

One day Solomon the prophet, with his high level and rank, was sitting on the throne of the kingdom. The carpet of the realm was spread and the jinn, mankind, and birds were lined up in ranks. He placed the crown of messengerhood on the head of his prophethood, and it occurred to his mind that today no one surpassed David’s son in rank and elevation. Immediately the wind was commanded to take away the mantle from his head. Solomon’s face darkened and he said to the wind in his anger, “Return my mantle to me!”

The wind answered, “Return to your heart!” O Solomon, bring your heart back to yourself so that I may bring your mantle back to you.”

**14:5** *And We sent Moses with our signs: “Bring thy people out from the darknesses into the light and remind them of the days of God.”*

“O My Muḥammad! I commanded Moses exactly as I command you. I said to all: ‘Light up the lamp of the invitation, call people from the darknesses of doubt to the light of certainty, bring them from the shadow of ignorance to the brightness of knowledge, leave aside self-governance, see the Real’s predetermination, do not set down or approve of innovation, and follow the path of the Sunnah and the congregation.’”

*Remind them of the days of God.* These are the days when the servants were in the concealment of nonexistence and the Real was saying with beginningless speech, “My servants!” “O Muḥammad, remind them of the days when you were not and I was there for you. Without you I took care of your work. I bound the compact of love and I wrote mercy against myself: *Your Lord has written mercy against Himself* [6:54].”

This is what the Pir of the Tariqah intimated in his whispered prayer: “O God, where will I find again the day when You belonged to me and I was not? Until I reach that day again, I will be in the midst of fire and smoke. If I find that day again in the two worlds, I will profit. If I find Your Being for myself, I will be pleased with my own nonbeing.

“O God, where was I when You called me? I am not I when You remain for me.

“O God, when You call someone, do not make manifest the offenses that You have concealed!

“O God, You lifted us up and no one said, ‘Lift up!’ Now that You have lifted up, don’t put down! Keep us in the shadow of Your gentleness! Entrust us to none but Your bounty and mercy!”

**14:7** *When your Lord proclaimed, “If you give thanks, I will surely increase you.”*

In other words: “If you give thanks for submission, I will increase you in faith. If you give thanks for faith, I will increase you in beautiful doing. If you give thanks for beautiful doing, I will increase you in recognition. If you give thanks for recognition, I will increase you in union. If you give thanks for union, I will increase you in contemplation. If you give thanks for the gifts that I bestow upon you, I will increase you in the encounter I have promised you.”

It has been narrated that David said, “My Lord, how should I give thanks to You, for my giving thanks is a renewal of Your favor toward me.”

He said, “O David, what you said now is giving thanks to Me.”

**14:23** *Those who have faith and do wholesome deeds were given entry into the Garden....Their greeting therein is “Peace!”*

The meaning is that tomorrow the faithful and the friends will be brought into paradise, the house of victory, subsistent bliss, and everlasting kingship.

The outward meaning of the word *were given entry* is that this decree was issued on the first day at the Beginningless Covenant and that the faithful were brought into paradise on the day when the decree was issued. It is not a new want that He puts into effect; it is a beginningless deed that He makes appear. He does not caress them today, for He caressed them in the Beginningless and finished the work.

The worshipper is always looking toward the Endless, fearing what will be done to him tomorrow. The recognizer is always looking toward the Beginningless, burning because of what may have been done to him then.

He who looks toward the Endless sees only bowing and prostrating. He who looks toward the Beginningless sees only ecstasy and finding; absent from seeing himself, he sees neither self nor anything from himself. He sees only the Real and knows only the Real.

He who looks at the Endless accepts what he is given and is content with it. He who looks at the Beginningless accepts nothing and is not content with any robe of honor. If he were adorned with every robe of honor in the two realms of being, he would be more naked with every robe. If the whole realm of being were made into a table placed before his heart, he would find no savor in the feast.

Both realms of being were made a morsel and placed in Abū Yazīd’s maw full of pain, but he gave no mark of surfeit. He kept on shouting out, “I am a captive of face-to-face vision, how can I be content with reports?! I am seeking hard cash, how can hope suffice me?!”

Without You, O repose of my spirit, how can I live?

If You are not in my embrace, how can I be happy?

*And those who have faith and do wholesome deeds were given entry into the Garden.* They will be settled down tomorrow in the paradises. There is not just one paradise, for there are eight, and not just eight degrees but one hundred. Muṣṭafā said, “Surely there are one hundred degrees in the Garden, made ready by God for the struggler in His path.”

A man is wanted who struggles in God’s road with severity toward his own soul, patience with the devil, and a sword against the enemy. Then he can pass through these degrees and reach Firdaws, for “it is the center of the Garden, the highest Garden, and above it is the Throne of the All-Merciful.” But he should not be content with that until the generosity of felicitation increases, for “*Their greeting therein is ‘Peace!’*”

One group will be greeted by the angels [*malak*], and another group will be greeted by the King [*malik*]. The greeting of the angels will be for the folk of obedience and service. He says, “*And the angels will enter unto them from every gate: ‘Peace be upon you!’*” [13:23]. The greeting of the King will be for the folk of limpidness and proximity. He says, “*Peace—a word from an ever-merciful Lord*” [36:58].

The meaning of *peace* is freedom and deliverance. He is saying, “You have been freed from incineration, you have been released from separation. Here there is no rebuke, no veil. Come, for

it is the time of listening, seeing, and wine.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O chevalier! Do not lament so much, for little remains before what has been reported becomes face-to-face vision. The sun of union will shine from the rising place of finding, all hopes will become hard cash, increase will become boundless, the story of water and clay will be concealed, the beginningless Friend will appear face-to-face, and the eyes, heart, and spirit, all three, will gaze upon Him.”

What harm if you suffer for a hundred years  
so long as you see the Friend in vision some day?

**14:24** *Hast thou not seen how God has struck a similitude? A goodly word is like a goodly tree.*

The pure words and true speech of a person of faith are like a pure tree that gives forth good fruit. A pure tree in fine soil and pleasing water gives forth only sweet fruit. This is why He says, “*And the goodly land, its plants come forth by the leave of its Lord*” [7:58].

The pure soil is the soul of the person of faith, the pure tree is the tree of recognition, the pleasing water is the water of regret, and the sweet fruit is the formula of *tawhīd*. Just as a tree sends down roots into the earth, so also recognition and faith send down roots into the heart of the person of faith. Just as the branches bring forth fruit in the air, so also the tree of recognizing *tawhīd* brings speech to the tongue and deeds to the limbs, and both rise up. This is why the Exalted Lord said, “*To Him ascend the goodly words, and He uplifts the wholesome deed*” [35:10].

A tree is sustained by three things: roots sent down into the earth, a trunk standing in place, and branches lifted in the air. The tree of recognition has three things perfectly: attesting in the heart, acting with the limbs, and speaking with the tongue. The Prophet said, “Faith is recognizing with the heart, assenting with the tongue, and acting with the body.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, the water of Your solicitude reached stone and the stone bore fruit. The stone grew a tree, and the tree gave fruit and produce—a tree whose fruit is all happiness, whose flavor is all intimacy, whose scent is all freedom; a tree whose roots are in the earth of loyalty, its branches in the air of approval, its fruit recognition and limpidness, its outcome vision and encounter.”

**14:25** *It gives its fruit every season by the leave of its Lord.*

Ibn ʿAbbās said, “The tree that the Exalted Lord used as a likeness for the faith of the faithful is a tree in paradise whose fruit is neither cut off nor finished: *neither cut off nor withheld* [56:33].”

In the same way the subtleties of the hearts of the recognizers are among the fruits of the tree of faith, *neither cut off nor withheld*, and the hearts of the folk of the realities are not turned away from them or veiled. At every moment and breath the subtleties are freely bestowed and not veiled.<sup>1</sup>

**14:35** *And when Abraham said, “My Lord, make this land secure, and keep me and my sons away from worshiping idols.”*

In this verse Abraham asked two things from the Real: First, Mecca’s security from mastery by enemies, and second, the heart’s security from domination by the ruling power of caprice. He said, “Lord God, make this city of Mecca into a secure sanctuary far from the hand of any tyrant and free of fear for all the people.” The Lord of the Worlds responded to his supplication and made it into a blessed sanctuary and a place of security, as He says, “*[And when We made the House] a place of gathering for the people, and a sanctuary*” [2:125]. Never will the hand of any tyrant reach it; whoever goes into the sanctuary—whether Adamite or non-Adamite, wild prey or bird of the air—will have no fear.

He asked for the heart’s security in terms of allusion with his words, “*Keep me and my sons away from worshiping idols.*” Whenever something holds you back from the Real, that is your idol. Whenever your heart inclines and looks to something other than the Real, that is your caprice. The Exalted Lord says, “*Hast thou seen him who has taken his caprice as his god?*” [25:43]. One

<sup>1</sup> The paragraph is from LI 3:249.

person looks to property and trade, another to wife and children, another to position and respect. One person has remained in the bonds of venerating piety and self-restraint and has not taken a step beyond that. Another has made obedience and worship his kiblah—looking at it and leaning on it have become the veil of his road.

The Lord of the Worlds says, “*And repent all together to God, O you who have faith! Perhaps you will prosper* [24:31]. O you who have faith, if you want Me to make your hearts the sanctuary of My gaze and to keep you secure from the veil of severance, turn your faces totally to Me and turn away from everything else!” Sometimes He calls to His road with the tongue of the artifacts to make people realize familiarity. Sometimes He calls to Himself with the tongue of unveiling to confirm friendship.

He is saying: “Turn away from yourself and totally to Him so as to recognize what is rightfully due to Him. Look beyond your own obedience and see His favor. Be released from your own existence and taste His friendship.” This is what Abraham meant when he said, “*Keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols!*”

In explaining this verse Jaʿfar Ṣādiq said, “Do not push me back to witnessing bosom friendship, and do not push my children back to witnessing prophethood.”<sup>2</sup> Lord God! You have given me bosom friendship. Turn my eyes away from it so that I will not see it from myself. You have given my children prophethood. Do not attach their eyes to seeing their own activities or themselves.

Ibn ʿAṭāʾ said, “He commanded Abraham to build the Kaabah. He built it as commanded, completed it, and then said, ‘*Our Lord, accept it from us!*’ [2:147].

“A rebuke came: ‘I commanded you to build the house, and then you lay a favor on Me for doing so? I gave you the success to do it. Are you not ashamed to lay a favor on Me and say, ‘*Accept it from us!*’? You have forgotten My favor toward you and mentioned your own act and favor.’

“Because of the harshness of this rebuke Abraham supplicated, ‘*Keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols!* Lord God, in the road of my bosom friendship and my children’s prophethood, seeing our own activity and ascribing it to ourselves are idols that lie in ambush for us. By Your gentleness, remove these idols from the road and remove our being from the midst! Keep on bestowing Your favor upon us!’”<sup>3</sup>

It has also been said that Abraham was a traveler to perfection, but he had not yet reached the guise of stability beyond variegation. He was stuck between the gentleness of the Real and the poverty of his own soul. When he looked at the Real’s gentleness he saw a field of vast bounty. With the tongue of expansion in the state of intimacy, he would say, “*And forgive my father, surely he was one of the misguided*” [26:86]. Again he would look at the poverty of his own soul and see a narrow courtyard and a dangerous, steep road. With the tongue of contraction in the state of fear he would say, “*And keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols.*” This is the rule of fear and hope for the folk of the Shariah and of contraction and expansion for the folk of the Haqiqah.

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2 Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq*.

3 The saying of Ibn ʿAṭāʾ is from Sulamī, parts of it the Arabic original and parts translated into Persian.

## Surah 15: al-Hijr

### **15:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

In the name of Him, for tongues become speaking in His name, spirits become distracted in His name, strangers become familiar in His name, ugly things become comely in His name, works become obvious in His name, and roads become apparent in His name! In the name of Him, for the eyes of the yearners weep in His name, the hearts of the recognizers burn in His name, the secret cores of the enraptured shout in His name, the bodies of the passionate twist in His name! In the name of Him, for spirits are captive to His message, the recognizers have fallen into His snare, the yearners are drunk with love from His cup! Blessed is he who has thrown back a draft from this cup or taken up a dwelling in this road! His heart is lit up by the Greatest Light, he lives in the repose of familiarity, and he rejoices in the exaltedness of union. Sometimes majesty is unveiled for him in the bewilderment of witnessing, sometimes he is drowned by gentleness and beauty in the ocean of finding. With the tongue of delight and coquetry he keeps on saying,

“Who am I in my passion for You that a rose should bloom  
in the clay of my house from joining with Your face?  
Is it not enough for me that in passion for You  
my heart is adorned by joining with You?”

### **15:20** *And therein We placed for you livelihoods.*

The cause of each person’s livelihood is different. The livelihood of the desirers is the auspiciousness of turning toward Him, the livelihood of the recognizers is the gentleness of His beauty, and the livelihood of the *tawhīd*-voicers is the unveiling of His majesty. Each is connected to his own state, and each has a portion of His bounteousness. But the Real is incomparable with beautifying Himself through His acts.<sup>1</sup>

### **15:21** *Naught is there but its storehouses are with Us.*

God’s storehouses in the earth are the hearts of the recognizers.<sup>2</sup>

God has storehouses in the earth, and those storehouses are the hearts of the recognizers and the secret cores of the desirers. They have storehouses of night-brightening pearls and precious deposits and are adorned and decorated by them. Some are adorned by the subtleties of knowledge, and these are the hearts of the knowers. Some are decorated with the realities of intelligence, and these are the hearts of the worshipers. Some are polished with the marvels of the secret core, and these are the hearts of the recognizers. Then the seal of lordhood’s love is placed upon them and they are put into the oyster shell of eternity, for “The hearts of the servants are between two fingers of the All-Merciful.”

Someone may ask what the mark of this is. I would reply that its mark is the glitter of the rays of the pearl shining on the servant’s bodily members such that he is always serving God. He stays up at night in worship and fasts during the daytime. His heart always inclines toward obedience, he hurries to the good, and he does not stoop to concessions. He stays pure of doubtful things, far

1 This Arabic paragraph seems to be an expansion of LI 3:266.

2 LI 3:266.

from the forbidden, and renounces the permitted. He is pained about the past, thoughtful in the present moment, trembling about the rest of his life, and fleeing from hell. He is content with a morsel and a tattered cloak. He has put aside the world for the world's folk and busied himself with serving God. His body burns in yearning, his heart reaches for the Friend, and his spirit is laughing with the Friend.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, everyone destitute has a portion of Your munificence, everyone in pain has a physician from Your generosity. Everyone has a portion from the all-embracingness of Your mercy and all the needy have the raindrops of Your kindness. On the head of everyone with faith is a crown from You, in the heart of every lover a lamp from You. Everyone entranced has business with You and everyone waiting will have wine and vision at day's end."

**15:22** *And We sent forth the winds as pollinators.*

At the time of spring when the Real's gaze falls on the earth and the world is joyful, He sends down the pollinating wind. He loosens the fastened bonds, and the veins of the trees open their mouths so that their branches may pull water by way of the veins and bring forth subtle fruit.

In the same way, the Exalted Lord gazes on the heart of the faithful servant with affection and love and sends down the wind of solicitude, opening up the road of hearing and obeying. Then he may become worthy of accepting admonition and turn back to the Real by repentance and penitence: eager in service, occupied with worship, constant in remembering the Real, and persevering in severity toward the soul; the call of kindness always in his ears, the blossom of hope grown up, the fruit of wanting tied to the branch of bounty. Here you have the traces of the wind of solicitude, here you have the pollinators of the breeze of generosity!

God says, "*We sent forth the winds as pollinators.*" When the winds of generosity blow on the secret cores of the recognizers, they are liberated from the fanciful notions of their souls, the frivolities of their natures, and the corruptions of their caprices and desires. The effects of generosity appear in their hearts, so they hold fast to God, depend on Him, and cut off from everything other than Him.

The mark of the servant's felicity is that all at once the wind of solicitude blows from the direction of success-giving and piles up the clouds of practice. Then the clouds go down to the ocean of the eye of certainty and pick up the water of regret. The lightning of remembrance flashes, the thunder of desire laments, the rain of reflective thought falls, and the desert of the heart comes to life through that rain. Such are His words, "*He gives life to the earth after its death*" [30:19]. The servant returns entirely to the Real, with a soul dead in itself, a heart alive through the Real, a tongue let loose in remembrance, and a spirit alive through love.

Neither in the heart nor in the mind  
is any place empty for other than the Beloved.  
"You are my beloved, my want, my desire!"  
In Him I live, my pleasure goodly,  
And when illness descends into my heart,  
none other than He is my physician.

**15:23** *Surely We give life and We make die.*

*We give* the hearts of the recognizers *life* through contemplation, and *We make* their souls *die* through struggle.<sup>3</sup>

We bring the hearts of the recognizers to life with contemplation, and We make their bodies die through struggle. The soul is the veil of the heart. As long as the veil is before the heart, the heart is deprived of contemplation. When the soul is killed by struggle according to the Shariah, the life of the heart begins. Guidance arrives, contemplation joins. *Those who struggle in Us, We will guide them on Our paths* [29:69].

It has also been said, "*We give* the desirers *life* through remembering Us and *We make* the

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3 LI 3:268.

heedless *die* through separation from Us.”<sup>4</sup>

**15:24** *We indeed know those of you who go forward and We indeed know those of you who fall behind.*

It has been said that *those who go forward* are those who hurry to good deeds, and *those who fall behind* are those who are lazy in good deeds.<sup>5</sup> It has also been said that its meaning is “We have recognized those who are eager in Us and those who have turned away from Us.”

**15:26** *Surely We created man of a dried clay of fetid mud.*

It has been narrated that Ibn ʿUmar had taken up the sessions. Kaʿb said to a man among those sitting with him, “Ask Ibn ʿUmar from what God created Adam.”

Ibn ʿUmar said, “He created Adam from five things: clay, water, fire, light, and wind.”

At Ibn ʿUmar’s response, Kaʿb said, “Sit with him, for surely he is a man of knowledge.”

What is understood from this report is that the Exalted Lord created Adam from five things: clay, water, fire, light, and wind. The wisdom in this is that the Exalted Lord created every one of His creatures from one kind. He created the angels from light and He created the jinn from fire. These are the light of exaltedness and the fire of exaltedness, which is why Iblis swore by exaltedness [38:82], for he was created from the fire of exaltedness and the angels from the light of exaltedness.

God created the birds from wind, He created the beasts and the crawling things of the earth from dust, and He created the creatures of the sea from water. He created each from one kind, but He created Adam from all of these kinds so as to honor him and make him eminent. Thus he would be superior to all the creatures of the world. All are subjected to him, and he is given ruling power over all. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, “*We indeed honored the children of Adam, and We carried them on land and sea, and We provided them with goodly things, and We made them much more excellent than many of those We created*” [17:70].

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4 LI 3:268.

5 LI 3:268.

## Surah 16: al-Nahl

**16:1** *The command of God is coming, so do not seek to hurry it.*

God's command is many-colored, and obeying Him is many-hued. The servant's outwardness was commanded one thing, his inwardness something else. The outwardness was commanded to stay with tightened belt on the threshold of worship in the way station of service. The inwardness was commanded to stay quiet on the carpet of recognition with the quality of veneration. The heart was commanded to be constant in watchfulness. The secret core was commanded to seek limpidness in the station of recognition. And the spirit was commanded to cling to the Presence in contemplation itself.

*So do not seek to hurry it.* Do not hurry to find what is desired and do not go beyond the measure of the command, for everyone truthful will one day reach what he desires, and everyone obedient to the Real has the promise of vision.

**16:2** *He sends down the angels with the spirit from His command upon whomsoever He will of His servants: "Give warning that there is no god but I, so be wary of Me."*

The reality of the *spirit* is that within which is the life of the heart and the life of the religion. It is the beauty of the Qur'an's exaltedness, which reached Muṣṭafā from the Divine Presence with the attribute of the message by the emissary Gabriel.

*Give warning that there is no god but I, so be wary of Me:* "Report to My servants that I am the One Lord, I am without peer in attributes, I am separate from anything's resemblance to Me, and I am loyal to My assurances. Whenever someone says these words bearing witness and places the seal of *tawhīd* on his heart, he has entered into the pavilion of the submission's exaltedness."

But you should know that this pavilion of the submission is set up only on the plain of godwariness, for He says, "*There is no god but I, so be wary of Me.*"

The reality of godwariness is the heart's purity of everything other than the Real. Just as submission is obligatory for the world's creatures, so also godwariness is obligatory. When the foundation of the religion was put down, it was put down on godwariness, for everyone who became a possessor of friendship became so through godwariness. "*Surely His friends are only the godwary*" [8:34]. Tomorrow the friendship of the next world will be assigned to those who are called godwary: "*The outcome belongs to the godwary*" [7:128].

The first condition of godwariness is that you be the guardian of your own heart and do three things: You do not give yourself over to wishing, you avoid everything that is not approved, and you not be heedless of the Real for one moment.

On the day when Abū Bakr was buying Bilāl, Bilāl said, "O chief of the sincerely truthful! If you are buying Bilāl for the sake of the business of this world, do not buy him. He can perform no service that you will approve, for Bilāl has dedicated himself to the business of the afterworld."

God's mercy be upon those chevaliers who do not turn away from serving the Real to serving the creatures! Every single part of each of them is busy with service, and all their moments are immersed in observing the rightful dues of the Real. None of their parts is free to serve the creatures, none of their moments is wasted in antagonism toward the creatures.

A great man was asked, "Do you love God?"

He said, "I do."

He was asked, “Do you hate his enemy Iblis?”

He said, “I am too busy with love for the Real to occupy myself with enmity toward someone else.”

**16:6** *And in them is beauty for you when you bring home to rest and drive forth to pasture.*

Some people attach beauty to possessions, some to states. The wealthy find beauty when they *bring home to rest and drive forth to pasture*, and the poor busy themselves with their Patron when they wake in the morning and rest in the evening.<sup>1</sup>

The rich consider the perfection of their beauty to lie in possessions, and possessions are one of two: permitted or forbidden. If they are permitted, they are a tribulation, and if they are forbidden, they are a curse. The poor consider their status and beauty to lie in union with the Patron and see perfect intimacy in companionship with the Patron.

It is said that Rābi‘a ‘Adawiyya was cut off from a caravan and was wandering lost in the desert. She sat down under a thorn tree and put her head on the knees of remorse. She heard a call from the air of exaltedness, “You feel terrified when I am with you?”

On the night of the *mi‘rāj* all the beauty and wealth of jinn and men were offered as ransom for one footstep of the Master of the Children of Adam, but he did not glance at it. His boast was this: “Replete one day, I praise Thee; hungry one day, I thank Thee.”

**16:9** *It is for God to point out the path; and some [paths] deviate.*

The straight road and approved path is that which goes toward the Real and passes over the Real. That road can be traveled with three things: first knowledge, second state, and third eye. Knowledge cannot be put in place without teacher, state cannot be put straight without conformity, and the eye is alone and does not get along with attachment. In knowledge there is fear, in state there is hope, and in eye there is straightness.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “None of His friends traveled this road without first seeing three things together: release from the ruling power of his soul, a heart joined with the Patron, and a secret core adorned with awareness.”

**16:10-13** *He it is who sends down water from heaven.... Surely in that is a sign for a people who reflect... signs for a people who use intellect... a sign for a people who remember.*

*He* is an allusion to the Essence, *who* is an intimation of the attributes, and *sends down* reports about the acts. Thus you will know that God has Essence, attributes, and acts. He is eternal in Essence, noble in attributes, wise in acts; without associate in Essence, without ambiguity in attributes, and without cause in acts. The servants gazes upon His artisanry, then flee from the artisanry to gaze upon the attributes, then flee from the attributes to gaze upon the Essence. These are the stations of the wayfarers’ traveling and the degrees of the recognizers’ recognition.

One must have reflection in gazing upon the artisanry, knowledge in gazing on the attributes, and remembrance in gazing on the Essence. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, “*Surely in that is a sign for a people who reflect.*” Then, after that, He says, “*signs for a people who use intellect.*” Then, after that, He says “*a sign for a people who remember.*” In other words, recognition will be gained in this order: first reflection, then knowledge, then, at that point, he will remember through the continuity of knowledge. First he reflects, putting his gaze in its place. If no defect falls into his gaze, then inevitably he gains knowledge; and in reality there is no difference between intellect and knowledge. Then, after that, the gaze becomes continuous, and the continuity of the gaze is the remembering of which He speaks.

It has been said that He says “*signs for a people who use intellect*” in the plural only because someone gains many knowledges in order to become a recognizer, and every part of knowledge is gained through a different sign and indicator. The knower has signs and indicators before he becomes a recognizer of his Lord, because the indicator for one question is different from the indicator for another question. With one indicator he knows the necessity of gazing on Him, with

<sup>1</sup> This sentence seems to be from LI 3:286, but with textual variants.

many indicators he becomes a recognizer of his Lord, and with one indicator he knows that it is necessary to remember the various sorts of his knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

**16:14** *He it is who subjected the sea so that you may eat from it fresh flesh.*

Outwardly, He subjected the oceans of the earth to the creatures, ships running upon it and benefits appearing from it. Inwardly, He created oceans in the Adamic soul in which the Adamite is drowned: First is the ocean of preoccupation, second the ocean of sorrow, third the ocean of avarice, fourth the ocean of heedlessness, and fifth the ocean of dispersion. These oceans have ships. Whoever sits in the ship of trust on the ocean of preoccupation will reach the shore of detachment. Whoever sits in the ship of approval on the ocean of sorrow will reach the shore of security. Whoever sits in the ship of contentment on the ocean of avarice will reach the shore of renunciation. Whoever sits in the ship of remembrance on the ocean of heedlessness will reach the shore of wakefulness. Whoever sits in the ship of *tawhīd* on the ocean of dispersion will reach the shore of togetherness.<sup>3</sup>

**16:17** *Is He who creates like him who does not create?*

Will the created thing ever be like the Creator? Will the enacted thing ever be similar to the Enactor? In the seven heavens and seven earths, it is God who is one and unique. In Essence He is without similar, in measure without equal, in attributes without peer. Fancying that the Creator is like the created is an error, and the road of declaring similarity is disloyalty. But affirming attributes is not declaring similarity, and to declare holy by negating attributes is nothing but the position of Iblis. Declaring similarity does not come by way of saying that there is, but rather by saying that there is similarity. Whoever declares similarity is an unbeliever, just as whoever says that there is no similarity is an unbeliever. Whenever someone says that God is like himself has said that God has more than a thousand associates. Whoever declares God's attributes ineffectual has abased himself in the two worlds.

**16:41** *Those who emigrate in God after they were wronged—We shall surely build for them something beautiful, and the wage of the next world will be greater.*

Anyone who emigrates from the homelands of heedlessness will be taken by the majesty of Unity to the witnessing places of union.<sup>4</sup>

When someone emigrates from the homelands of heedlessness, the majesty of Unity will convey him to the witnessing places of union. When someone emigrates from companionship with the created, the gentle favors of generosity will give him access to His companionship. When someone emigrates from himself and is displeased with dwelling with himself, his heart will become the place where passion for the Haqīqah puts down its saddlebags. Today he will be delighted in the secluded solace of “I am the sitting companion of him who remembers Me,” and tomorrow he will take his ease on the carpet of the expansiveness of “The patient poor are the sitting companions of God on the Day of Resurrection.”<sup>5</sup>

This emigration has a beginning and an end. Its beginning is that his makeup becomes obedience itself, not from habit and not from wanting the reward, but rather from being drowned in contemplation itself.

Thus it is recounted of the recognizer Sultan Maḥmūd that he never sat in a session of intimacy with any but Ayāz. The boon companions and special friends began to mutter. The sultan became aware of their jealousy, and he commanded that all the boon companions and special friends be present in a session. Then he had a goblet made of ruby—worth the taxes from one of his provinces—brought forth, along with an iron anvil, and put before him. He commanded the vizier to

2 These two paragraphs are taken almost word for word from LI 3:287-88.

3 Translation of LI 3:289 (though the Qushayrī text seems faulty). For a parallel discussion of five oceans and five ships, see under 35:12.

4 LI 3:298.

5 The two hadiths are from LI 3:298, and the rest of the paragraph is largely translated from Qushayrī's discussion.

smash the goblet on the anvil. The vizier, “Protect me, O Sultan! Though the sultan’s command is higher, I do not have the gall to be so bold.” In the same way, he commanded the other boon companions and special friends. All took off their hats, began to tremble, and did not have the gall to break it. Then he pointed at Ayāz. He said, “Slave, strike the goblet on the anvil and break it.” Ayāz struck the goblet on the anvil until it broke into tiny pieces. Then Maḥmūd said, “There are four thousand way stations between obeying the sultan’s command and seclusion with him. When someone still avoids obeying Maḥmūd’s command, how can he have the gall to talk of seclusion and seek companionship?”

As for the end of emigration, it is three things: veneration in seclusion, being ashamed in service, and seeing nothing but shortcoming in oneself despite much obedience.

**16:43** *Ask the folk of remembrance if you do not know.*

This alludes to the fact that knowledge of the Shariah is to be learned and is not correct without an intermediary and teacher. Anyone who fancies that the intermediary is useless in knowledge of the Shariah has no portion of the religion.

In short, know that knowledge is of three sorts: knowledge of the Shariah, knowledge of the Tariqah, and knowledge of the Haqiqah. The Shariah is to be learned, the Tariqah is to be practiced, and the Haqiqah is to be found. Concerning knowledge of the Shariah He says, “*Ask the folk of remembrance.*” Concerning knowledge of the Tariqah He says, “*Seek the means of approach to Him*” [5:35]. Concerning knowledge of the Haqiqah He says, “*We taught him knowledge from Us*” [18:65]. He turned knowledge of the Shariah over to a teacher, He turned knowledge of the Tariqah over to a pir, and He turned knowledge of the Haqiqah over to Himself.

When someone obtains these three knowledges, a light shines in his heart through which he recognizes the essence of prophethood. When he is given this recognition, he finds this eminence and special favor from the threshold of prophethood: “The men of knowledge are the heirs to the prophets.”

**16:51** *And God says, “And take not two gods. Surely He is only one God, so be in awe of Me.”*

This is an affirmation of *tawḥīd*. *Tawḥīd* is the basis of the religion and the great pillar of the submission. Without *tawḥīd* obedience is not accepted, and along with associationism worship is useless.

Know that the reality of *tawḥīd* is of two sorts: saying one and knowing one. Saying one is the beginning of all the sciences, the basis of all the recognitions, the foundation of the religion, and the partition between enemy and friend. It has three descriptions: first, testifying to God’s oneness in Essence and His being pure of spouse, child, and peer.

Next is testifying to God’s oneness in attributes and to the fact that nothing is similar to or like Him. His attributes are not intelligible, nor is their howness understood, encompassed, or defined. They are outside imagination and no one knows how they are.

Third is testifying to God’s oneness in His true, beginningless names and the fact that for Him these names are realities and for others they are loaned and created. The names He has are His names in reality—eternal and beginningless as is fitting for Him. The names of the creatures are created and newly arrived as is fitting for them. “God” and “All-Merciful” are His names by which no one else is called. *Dost thou know any named by His name?* [19:65]

As for knowing one, that is in service, practice, and aspiration. In service it is abandoning eye-service and observing self-purification. In practice it is to make the secret core limpid and to realize remembrance. In aspiration it is to lose everything other than Him and to be released through freedom of the heart from everything other than Him.<sup>6</sup>

Become free of everything in the realm of being—  
be that Heart-taker’s “companion of the cave.”

6 These two paragraphs are based on *Ṣad maydān*, no. 69 (307-9).

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “In all things expression is easy but finding is difficult. In *tawhīd* finding is easy but expression is difficult. The expression of *tawhīd* is outside of intellect, the essence of *tawhīd* is safe against imagination, the newly arrived things are lost in the Beginningless. *Tawhīd* is that there is no more than one. There is the Recognized, but not the recognizer; there is the Intended, but not the intender. The *tawhīd*-voicer is he who has only Him to the point that his self is not; all is indeed He.”

The *tawhīd* of attestation is one thing, the *tawhīd* of practice another thing, and the *tawhīd* of remembrance and vision still another. Concerning the *tawhīd* of attestation He said, “*Whoever disbelieves in idols and has faith in God*” [2:256]. Concerning the *tawhīd* of practice He said, “*In whose hands is the dominion of everything*” [23:88]. Concerning the *tawhīd* of remembrance and vision He said, “*Thou didst not throw when thou threwest*” [8:17].

Abū Ḥafs Ḥaddād said, “*Tawhīd* by discernment is to disown everything other than God. The *tawhīd* of the elect is to reach oneness. The *tawhīd* of the elect of the elect is to be consumed by oneness.”

O One whose *tawhīd* is achieved by none!  
You are the Alone, the One, the Unique.  
Those who aim for His *tawhīd* with their aspiration  
deny His *tawhīd* inasmuch as they aim.  
The *tawhīd* of him who confirms His *tawhīd* by design  
is a design without a path to His *tawhīd*.

**16:66** *And surely in the cattle there is a lesson for you: We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, between feces and blood, pure milk, delicious for the drinkers.*

Two impurities came together, one feces and the other blood. God with His power made pure milk appear between the two. In the same way, two drops came together in the womb. God’s determination and form-giving made a form of such beauty appear from the two! *He formed you, so He made your forms beautiful* [40:64].

He brings together two difficult tasks for the servant, one the burden of disobedience, the other shortcoming in obedience. Then God’s bounty makes mercy and forgiveness appear between the two: *He will make your deeds wholesome for you and forgive you your sins* [33:71].

In what preceded all precedents and began all beginnings, the Pen wrote in the Tablet that the candle of the Shariah and the lamp of faith and certainty would light up in someone’s breast. It does not matter if he falls asleep. When he wakes up he will see the lit candle next to his pillow.<sup>7</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, do You know what has made me happy? I did not fall to You by myself. You wanted—it was not I who wanted. I saw the Friend at my pillow when I woke up from sleep.”

By way of allusion God is saying, “I took milk, which is your nourishment and your share, and passed it over feces and blood, preserving it from both. As for *tawhīd*, it is My rightful due, so it is much more deserving of being preserved by Me. It will pass over this world and the afterworld and not receive any trace. Were the trace of this world or the afterworld to sit on *tawhīd*, it would not be worthy of Me.<sup>8</sup> *Tawhīd* is pure of this world and the afterworld. The light of *tawhīd* is the destruction of water and dust. Turning the eye of the heart away from self is to perceive the finding of *tawhīd*.”

**16:71** *And God has given more bounty in provision to some of you than others.*

The provision of the soul is one thing, the provision of the heart another, and the provision of the spirit still another. For some the provision of the soul is the success of obedience and for some it

<sup>7</sup> The commentary on this verse up to here is derived from RA 486. This is the first verse I have found in which Maybudī borrows from Sam‘ānī’s *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ*. The second is in Stage Two of the commentary on 17:1 (KA 5:482, from RA 316), and the third is in Stage Three of the commentary on the same verse, quoted below.

<sup>8</sup> This paragraph to here is based on RA 417-18.

is abandonment to disobedience. For some the provision of the heart is the heart's presence with constant remembrance and for some it is the attribute of heedlessness with constant hardness. For some the provision of the spirit is the perfection of recognition and the limpness of love and for some it is love for this world and occupation with attachments.

Fuḍayl said, "The greatest thing provided to man is deeds that will lead him to rectitude and recognition that will bequeath on him contemplation of his Lord."

The Prophet said, "I spend the night at my Lord; He gives me to eat and drink."

**16:83** *They recognize God's blessings, then they deny them.*

Some people say that this concerns the Muslims. For a time they occupy themselves with obedience and undertake the path of discipline and struggle according to the Shariah. But in the end, self-admiration comes and ambushes them, destroying their obedience. Their self-admiration is that they consider their obedience and worship as service pleasing to God, and this brings them to exultation and happiness: "This is my attribute and my strength." They remain heedless that it is God's blessings and bounty toward them. Then they do not fear the disappearance of the blessings and they go forth feeling secure.

Muṣṭafā said, "A man's destruction lies in three things: One is niggardliness that he obeys, another is the soul's caprice that he follows, and the third is admiring himself."

One of the great ones of the religion said, "If I sleep all night and in the morning feel broken and fearful, I like that more than spending the night in prayer and admiring myself in the morning."

°Abdallāh ibn Mas'ūd said, "The destruction of a man's religion lies in two things: self-admiration and despair." He said this because anyone who loses hope will stop seeking and be overcome by lassitude, so he will not worship. So also, anyone who admires himself will fancy that he does not need to seek, for his work is right and he has been forgiven.

**16:90** *Surely God commands justice and beautiful doing and giving to kinsmen, and He prohibits indecency, the improper, and rebelliousness. And He admonishes you, that perhaps you may remember.*

In this verse the Creator of the world and the world's folk, the lovingly kind Lord, brings together in succession the foundations of service and the guideposts of interaction. He makes the faithful aware of the pleasing character traits and He honors them by letting them recognize the causes of His approval. He instructs them in beautiful worship of Him and in living with His creatures.

We have already explained some of this in the tongue of unveiling according to the Shariah. In terms of the Haqiqah and the tongue of allusion, it is that God commands the servant to have justice in interaction with the Real, in interaction with people, and in interaction with the soul. Interaction with the Real is through acknowledgment, interaction with people through justice, and interaction with the soul through opposition. One must have conformity with the Real, sincerity with the people, and opposition to the soul.

The meaning of conformity is for the servant to welcome the Real's decree before it appears and to leave aside free choice, such that he recognizes all of it without having perceived it and loves it not having seen it.

The meaning of sincerity is that he walk straight with the people in word, deed, aspiration, and resoluteness. He is fair to them, he does not place his burden on them, he conceals their faults, he does not take back his tenderness no matter what states he sees, he does not hold back his good from them, he lives with character, he respects elders, and he is tender toward young people and merciful toward children. This is the meaning of justice in interaction with people.

As for the reality of justice in interaction with the soul, it is to hold back the soul from that in which its destruction lies. God says, "As for him who fears the standing place before his Lord and prohibits the soul its caprice, surely the Garden shall be the shelter" [79:40-41].

Ibrāhīm Adham said, "In my whole life in this world, my heart was happy three times, and in those three times I was happy because I acted with severity toward my own soul. I was walking in Antioch, barefoot and bare-headed, and various people were insulting me. In the end one of them

said, ‘He’s a runaway slave.’ Those words were pleasing to me, for in reality that is what I was. I said to myself, ‘O you who have escaped and fled, when will you come back to the path of peace?’

“The second happiness was when I was sitting in a ship. There was a buffoon among the passengers who would come by every hour and slap the back of my head, for he saw that I was the lowliest of all the people.

“Third was in the city of Malatya. I was in a mosque, my head placed on the knees of remorse, and I had fallen into the valley of my own insignificance. A shameless man came, undid the belt of his pants, and said, ‘Old man, take this rose water!’ My soul ceased to be in that lowliness, and my heart became happy at that. I found that happiness to be a gift of felicity for me from the Exalted Threshold.”

The great ones of the religion were like this—always acting with severity toward their own souls and striving in the abasement of their own persons. They concealed the faults of the people and saw their own faulty attributes. The people were always at ease and in comfort from them, but their souls were always in suffering and tribulation.

*Surely God commands justice and beautiful doing.* It has been said that justice is the heart’s equilibrium with the Real and beautiful doing is interacting with things while seeing the Real. Muṣṭafā said, “Beautiful doing is that you worship God as if you see Him.” This hadith alludes to the heart’s encounter with the Real, the secret core’s convergence with the Unseen, and the spirit’s contemplation and everlasting happiness while the servant is drowned in the light of contemplation and the call of gentleness flows in his spirit.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “When an eye has seen Him, how can it busy itself with seeing other than Him? When a spirit has found companionship with Him, how long will it make do with water and dust? When someone has become accustomed to the Presence of Union, how long will he put up with the abasement of the veil? How will the ruler of his own city spend his life in exile?”

When You are the soul’s food, then You leave it,  
the soul whose food You are does not linger.  
It remains like a lizard thrown into water or  
a fish living in the open desert.

How can a lizard live in water or a fish in the desert? Do not take away our spirit’s food, O God!

*Surely God commands justice and beautiful doing.* In this verse God commands the servant to three things that save, and He prohibits him from three things that destroy. When he keeps back from the three things that destroy, he will escape from hell, and when he carries out the three that save, he will reach paradise and have listening, drinking, and seeing with the Real.

Then, after listing the commands and prohibitions, He says at the end of the verse, *And He admonishes you, that perhaps you may remember.* God gives you advice so that perhaps you will fear and accept the advice. He calls and offers His generosity so that perhaps you will respond. He shows His gentleness so that perhaps you will place your love in Him. He conceals faults so that perhaps you will incline toward Him. From the clouds of the gentleness of His artisanries He rains down kindness so that perhaps you will stay at His threshold. He brightens hearts so that you may see His gentleness. He shakes with the marks of rebuke so that you will keep on remembering Him. He reduces burdens and increases the fruit so that you may perceive His good Godhood.

**16:96** *What is with you runs out, but what is with God subsists.*

*What is with you runs out* is the attribute of this world, its annihilation; and *what is with God subsists* is the attribute of the afterworld and everlasting subsistence.

Jesus was asked, “Why don’t you make a house for yourself?”

He said, “I have no stomach for busying myself with something that will not be my companion forever.”

The Commander of the Faithful °Alī put a dinar in his hand and said, “‘O yellow thing, make my face yellow. O white thing, make me white and delude other than me.’ O world and O bliss of this world! Go, for you are an adorned bride, and you cannot break the claws of a

lion with a bride's fingers. Go, delude someone else, for the son of Abū Ṭālib has no stomach for falling into the snare of your delusion." *The life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion* [3:185].

*What is with you runs out, but what is with God subsists.* In other words, "What is with you, namely the yearning you have to encounter Me, is susceptible to disappearance and accepts cessation. But My description of Myself subsists, namely in the tradition, 'Surely the yearning of the pious to encounter Me has become protracted, but My yearning to encounter them is more intense.'"

Whatever comes from the servant—obedience, service, affection, love—even if it is continuous, is susceptible to disappearance, for it is an attribute of newly arrived things, and annihilation has access to them. It is only the welcoming of the divine majesty and exaltation and the Lord's caressing of the servant that never finish and remain untouched by annihilation. Whatever comes from us is suited to us, infected by our own shares and described by dispersion. Whatever comes from God comes with the attribute of infinite exaltedness and majesty, for the reality of togetherness is that it is necessarily subsistent and permanent.

These generous, gentle favors, infinite caresses, and lordly welcoming that set forth from the side of All-compellingness lodge only at the core of the friends' hearts. It is they whose life in this world is the *goodly life* and whose conduct and path are *wholesome deeds* along with faith; this is their attribute, for the Exalted Lord says,

**16:97** *Whoever does a wholesome deed, male or female, while having faith, We shall surely give him to live a goodly life.*

The *wholesome deed* is that which is worthy of acceptance, for it accords with the command. Then He says, *while having faith*, that is, assenting to the truth that his salvation is by God's bounty, not by his own deeds. He is saying that the *goodly life* is appropriate for him whose deeds are beautiful, whose conduct is pure, who has the togetherness of aspiration, and who believes that his salvation is by the divine bounty, not by the activity of servanthood.<sup>9</sup>

*We shall surely give him to live a goodly life.* Today there are the sweetness of obedience, the breeze of proximity, and the reminder of the Endless, and tomorrow there will be the Palisades of Holiness in the Presence of At-ness with blessedness, nearness, and the most beautiful.

**16:110** *Then surely thy Lord—toward those who emigrated after they were tormented, then struggled and were patient—surely thy Lord after that is forgiving, ever-merciful.*

The reality of emigration is that you emigrate from your own makeup, you abandon yourself and your desires, and you place the foot of nonbeing on top of your own attributes. Beginningless love may then lift the curtain and endless passion may show its beauty. How beautifully that chevalier spoke!

Endless passion has nothing to do with a heart  
that stays firm in its own attributes. [DS 209]

The paragon of the world and master of Adam's children, who was the goal of existent things and the center point in the circle of newly arrived things, always used to recite this supplication: "'O God, do not entrust us to our own souls for the blink of an eye, or less than that!' Lord God! Remove from before us this makeup stamped by createdness and the relationships of opposition! Lift the burden of our souls away from us so that we may travel in the world of *tawḥīd*!"

The command came, "O master, before you wanted, My want took care of your work and put aside the burden of you-ness from you. [*Did We not* lift from thee thy burden? [94:2]. O Muḥammad! If anyone came by his own selfhood, you did not come by yourself, because I brought you: *Who took His servant by night* [17:1]. Nor did you come for yourself, because you came as a mercy for the world's folk: *We sent thee only as a mercy to the worlds* [21:107].

The state of Abraham was the same. Adam was still in the concealment of nonexistence when

9 This paragraph is a translation with some quotation of LI 3:319.

the Exalted Lord inscribed the stamp of bosom friendship on that paragon. He placed the fire of yearning for Him in his inwardness, and the beauty of beginningless passion toward him. He alludes to this with His words, “*We gave Abraham his rectitude from before*” [21:51]. Then, when he came into existence, on the day when he stood in the desert of bewilderment, his heart was lit up with love for the Eternal and his spirit was drunk with the wine of nonbeing. At the moment of the morning draft of the passionate, the shouting of the drunkards, and the uproar of the heart-lost, he was driven by craving the wine of nonbeing to say with the tongue of helplessness concerning whatever he looked upon, “*This is my Lord*” [6:76]. He saw himself consumed in witnessing the Real’s majesty and beauty and was unaware of creation’s being and his own being. Hence the Exalted Lord increased His caressing of him and counted him as one community:

**16:120-21** *Surely Abraham was a community, devoted to God and unswerving, not among the associaters, grateful for His blessings. He chose him and guided him to a straight path.*

Abraham said, “O Lord, You were all [that I saw], and You are all.”

So God said, “The community is you yourself. You are the togetherness of all, and that’s it.” Indeed, “When someone belongs to God, God belongs to him.”

Then He says, “*grateful for His blessings.*” Abraham discharged gratitude for blessings, for he recognized the Patron of Blessings. He accepted the decree without protest and he approved of whatever came forth without unwillingness. *He chose him and guided him to a straight path.* He saw the road of servanthood and he went straight in servanthood. He knew that he did not see that road by himself, for it was shown to him, nor did he reach it by the effort of servanthood, for he was made to reach it.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, do You know what has made me happy? I did not fall to You by myself. O God, You wanted—it was not I who wanted. I saw the Friend at my pillow when I woke up from sleep.”

Her love came to me before I knew love—  
it came across a carefree heart and took possession.

**16:123** *Then We revealed to thee, “Follow the creed of Abraham, an unswerving man.”*

“O Muḥammad, go in the tracks of Abraham’s creed.” Abraham’s creed was upright character, generosity, largesse, and loyalty. So the Prophet followed him and surpassed him to the point that he gave away the two worlds in exchange for the Real.<sup>10</sup> God says, “*Surely thou hast a tremendous character*” [68:4].

**16:125** *Invite to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful admonition.*

In another place He says, “*Say: ‘This is my path. I invite to God upon insight, I and whosoever follows me’*” [12:108]. Inviting to God’s road is one thing, and inviting to God is something else. The former has an intermediary in the midst, and the latter has the Real as spokesman. The result of what He said with intermediary is obedience and abandoning opposition. The fruit of what He said without intermediary is solitariness and abandoning self-governance. Solitariness is to make the aspiration one-pointed in both remembrance and gazing. In remembrance it is that you want only Him in remembering Him and you fear none but Him in remembering Him. In gazing it is that at whatever you gaze you see Him and you put down your head before no one but Him.

The secret of these words is that whenever He brings an intermediary on the path into the midst, of all His names He mentions *Lord*, for it is the portion of the common people, and its meaning is nurturing. Whenever the path has no intermediary, He says *God*—of Him the creatures have no portion, and in His beginningless majesty He is without need.

O chevalier! Were it not for His intimacy with the spirits of the passionate, why did He disclose the beauty of the name *God* in the unneediness of His majesty and exaltation to the spirits and hearts of the passionate? If not that it would be a salve for the pain of the burnt and a mercy on

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<sup>10</sup> Based on LI 3:328.

the weakness of the helpless, why did He say, “*Invite to the path of thy Lord*”? Yes, He calls and invites to see who is worthy to accept and answer the Real’s call with heart and spirit.

The world’s folk are two groups: One group came forth and placed their own spirits and hearts like incense on the fire of love in the censer of recognition, and they burned. They are the ones who heard the Real’s call, accepted and responded to the Messenger’s invitation with spirit and heart, and came back to the loyalty of the day of *Yes indeed* [7:172]: *They are loyal to God’s covenant and do not break the compact* [13:20].

The spirits of the other group were inscribed by the Beginningless Threshold with the sigil of severity and stamped with the brand of abandonment, so they made their hearts the kingdom of satans. The Real’s call did not reach their hearts’ ears, nor were they worthy to respond to the Messenger’s invitation. About the two groups the Lord of the Worlds says, “*Surely thy Lord knows better who is misguided from His path and He knows better who are the guided*” [6:117]. He says, “I am aware of the states of both groups and I have given to everyone what is fitting for him. I see the pearl of the recognizer’s makeup, and I know the disposition of the denier’s attributes. Tomorrow I will convey everyone to the fitting recompense and settle each of them down in their own places and dwellings. I am the Lord who is vast in ability, without guidebook and helper, able to do any work before that work. Nothing is far from Me, nor is any work difficult for Me.”

**16:128** *Surely God is with those who are godwary and those who are beautiful-doers.*

This is one of the all-comprehensive verses of the Qur’an. All of God’s caresses of His servant in the two worlds, the rewards and the generous gifts, are included in what He says: “*Surely God is with.*” Every sort of service, every type of obedience, and all the roots of worship that the servant performs for God come under *godwary*. All that is rightfully due to people from each other in the various sorts of interactions come under *beautiful-doers*.

In reality the godwary and the beautiful-doers are such that the scent of love’s breeze comes from the dust beneath their feet. If the tears of their eyes were to fall on the ground, the narcissus of desire would bloom. If the disclosure of their present moment were to fall on a stone, it would turn into a carnelian. If it fell on water, it would become wine. If the fire of their yearning were to flame up, the world would burn. If the light of their recognition were to shine, the universe would be radiant. They have no station in the cities, no ease with the people.

The common people have two festivals in the year, but they have a festival with every breath. The common people have festivals because of seeing the moon, but they have their festival because of contemplating God. The common people have festivals because of the turning of the year, but they have their festival because of the bounteousness of the Possessor of Majesty. For thousands of years the moon-faced beauties of Firdaws and the houris of paradise have been standing in wait in that busy bazaar: When will they convey the fortunate procession of the godwary and beautiful-doers to High Chambers so that they, as hangers-on, may step into the pageant of good fortune *in a seat of truthfulness, at an Omnipotent King* [54:55].

## Surah 17: Banī Isrāʿīl

**17:1** *Glory be to Him who took His servant by night from the Holy Mosque to the Farthest Mosque.*

At the beginning of this surah He praised Himself, then He disclosed the nobility of Muṣṭafā and uncovered his eminence over the creatures. First He testified to His own faultlessness and mentioned His own purity. He Himself praised Himself and showed the creatures His perfect power. He turned over the Messenger's *miʿrāj* to His own act, not the Messenger's act, so that the faithful will not fall into uncertainty and there would be an argument against the deniers. Thus the faithful will know that the marvels of power have no limit and that this state is not strange given the perfect power of the Powerful.

Another meaning is to display the nobility of Muṣṭafā and his eminence over the creatures of the world. Then the world's folk will know that his station is that of those snatched away on the carpet of companionship, not that of the travelers in the way stations of service. He who is snatched away is being pulled by the Real, but the traveler is traveling by himself. When someone is being pulled by the Real, he is in the way station of whispered secrets and joy and is fitting for generous bestowal and exaltation. But when someone is himself traveling, he keeps on wanting to gain access to the threshold of service and seeking for a rank to appear for himself. The former is the station of Muḥammad, the Real's beloved, and the latter is the station of Moses, the Real's speaking-companion.

Do you not see that He said about Moses, "*Moses came to Our appointed time*" [7:143], but He said about Muṣṭafā, "*who took His servant by night.*" Moses was a comer, traveling by himself. Muḥammad was taken, snatched away from himself. He who walks with His feet is not like him who walks toward Him, and he to whose secret core revelation comes is not like him who is called to Him. The one who was traveling was absent through distance, so after separation he found union. The one who was taken was in the elevation of union at the outset, and he received the robe of bounty at the end.

Then He says, "*His servant by night.*" When He takes His servant to the presence of whispered secrets and joy, He takes him by night, because night is the meeting place of the recognizers, the moment of the seclusion of the friends, the resting place of the yearners, and the time of caressing the servants. When night comes, the friends find the moment of seclusion, for the watchers are asleep and the enemies far away: the house is empty and the friend waiting:

It's night, there's wine, and your servant's alone—  
get up and come, my dear, for tonight is our night.

Among the reports about David is this: "O David, he who claims to love Me is a liar if night comes, and he goes to sleep on Me."

"O Muḥammad! Everyone who puts up with suffering will afterwards find a treasure. I commanded you, '*And of the night, keep vigil therein as a supererogatory act for thee!*' [17:79]. Get up at night and pray.' It was I Myself who commanded you to get up at night, to come, and to whisper in secret with Me. Thus you came to know that I do not neglect anyone's suffering and I convey everyone to what is fitting for him."

Another subtle point has also been made: The Lord of the Worlds affirmed for Muṣṭafā an act appropriate to his servanthood, and He spoke of His own act as fitting for His lordhood. The act

of Muṣṭafā was ascending: *who took His servant by night from the Holy Mosque to the Farthest Mosque*. The act of God was descending: “He descends every night to the lowest heaven.” The ascent of Muḥammad was fitting for his mortal nature, and God’s descent was fitting for His divinity and appropriate for His Essence and attributes. Then He made the time of His descent be night, and He willed that Muḥammad’s ascent also be at night, for He called Muḥammad His “beloved,” and the meaning of love is nothing other than conformity.

*From the Holy Mosque to the Farthest Mosque*. He was taken from the Holy Mosque to the Farthest Mosque and from the Farthest Mosque to the Lote Tree of the Final End and the highest way station so that he would see the states and terrors of the Resurrection face-to-face. Thereby the foundations of intercession would be laid down. Tomorrow when the resurrection takes place, the harshness and tremendous of the Compeller will surround the creatures. In fear and fright at the resurrection, the terror, and the harshness of the Exalted Threshold, the creatures will all fall into themselves, bewildered, terrified, and having tasted the horror, for they will be seeing what they had never before seen. They will not turn away from their own business and work to anyone else’s work. Everyone will be saying, “My soul! My soul!” But Muṣṭafā had already been shown the Dominion, the Greatest Signs, and the wonders of the Unseen. He will have no fear, and the awesomeness and harshness of that day will have no effect on him. He will give his heart over to intercession for the community. He will be saying, “My community! My community!”

If you want an example of this state, consider the work of Moses. It had been predetermined that Moses and the army of the enemy would one day come together, the sorcerers would work a tremendous sorcery, and Moses’ staff would become a serpent to swallow down that sorcery. But before that day, in the presence of whispered prayer with the Lord of the Worlds, it was said to him, “*Cast thy staff!* [7:117]. O Moses! Throw down your staff!” Moses threw the staff and it became a serpent. Moses was afraid of that, and the Exalted Lord said, “*Take it and fear not!* [20:21]. O Moses, pick it up and do not fear!” Hence on the day when he was face-to-face with Pharaoh and the staff became a serpent, all who saw it were afraid, for they had never seen it before, but Moses was not afraid, because he had seen it once.

It has also been said, “The Real sent him so that the folk of the earth would learn worship from him. Then He raised him to heaven so that the angels would learn the courteous acts of worship from him. God says, ‘*The eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass*’ [53:17]. He did not turn to the right nor to the left. He did not desire any station or any bestowal of honor. He was free of every wish and every joy.”<sup>1</sup>

Listen to a wonderful subtlety: It was said to Adam, “*Fall down!*” [2:36]. It was said to Muṣṭafā, “Ascend!”: “O Adam! Go to the earth so that the world of dust may settle down because of the majestic guise of your sultanate. O Muḥammad! Come up to heaven so that the summit of the spheres may be adorned by the beauty of your contemplation. O Muḥammad! My secret in saying to your father, ‘*Fall down!*,’ was so that I could say to you, ‘Ascend!’ Sit on the steed of aspiration and make the top of the spheres the carpet dust for the soles of your blessed feet. Travel away from the corporeal and the spiritual and then gaze upon Me. Bring to the Presence the pure gift of ‘The salutations, the blessed things, the prayers, and the goodly things belong to God!’ Then the overflowing goblet of the good fortune of ‘The peace be upon thee, O Prophet, and God’s mercy!’ will be sent to you on the hand of the cupbearer of the Covenant. Take it with the fingers of acceptance and drink it down! And, like the noble, pour a draft on the earth of the hearts of the community, for, as the noble have said,

We drank, and we poured on the earth its share,  
for the earth has a portion from the cup of the noble.

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Make everyone’s cup the like of his spirit,  
make everyone’s reports equal to his intellect.<sup>2</sup>

1 LI 4:6.

2 The two lines of poetry and the previous paragraph are derived from RA 206.

Ja'far Ṣādiq said, "When the beloved approached in utmost nearness, the utmost awe overcame him, so his Lord treated him with the utmost gentleness, for the utmost awe is endured only by the utmost gentleness." On the night of the *mi'raj* when the Master reached the Presence, he found the utmost proximity and saw the utmost awe from that utmost proximity. When the Exalted Lord prepared his heart, He brought him near Himself with the utmost gentleness and infinite generosity. The gentle favors of honor surrounded him and he reached the way station of *Then He drew close* [53:8] and found the seclusion of *Or closer* [53:9]. He heard the mystery, he tasted the wine, he saw the vision of the Real, he fled from the two worlds, he took his ease with the Friend. What happened happened, what he heard he heard, what he saw he saw, and no one is aware of these secrets, for intellects and imaginations are dismissed from perceiving them. A mystery went behind the curtain of jealousy and was conveyed to the prophetic hearing without the intrusion of others—light within light, joy within joy, delight within delight. God reported the story to us so as to honor him, and He concealed the secrets to magnify him.

I have a secret with the night, a wonderful secret—  
the night knows and I know; I know and the night.<sup>3</sup>

**17:2 *And We gave Moses the Book, and We made it a guidance for the Children of Israel.***

God's many mentions of Moses in the Qur'an are among the signs of His honoring him and the marks of His love for him. When someone loves someone, he often mentions him. Muṣṭafā said, "When someone loves something, he mentions it much": When someone loves something he is always mentioning its name and remembering it. Do you not see that the Lord of the world, the lovingly kind Enactor, said to Moses, "*I cast upon thee love from Me*" [20:39]. Hence you should look at how many times He mentioned Moses in the Qur'an: the promised time of Moses, the Mount of Moses, the promise to Moses, the exile of Moses, the whispered prayer of Moses, the brother of Moses, the sister of Moses, the mother of Moses, the traveling companion of Moses, the sea of Moses, the Pharaoh of Moses, the suffering of Moses, the caressing of Moses. He did not leave anything of the states and character traits of Moses without mentioning it in the Qur'an and making the faithful happy by hearing about it. Thus you will know that much mention is the fruit of the tree of friendship and the mark of the road of friendship.

**17:4 *And We decreed for the Children of Israel in the Book: "You will surely work corruption in the earth twice and you will become high with great height."***

"We ruled and decreed, bringing the work out from the Unseen, so as to show the creatures that all of that was We, and all are We. In the Beginningless were We, in the Endless are We. Good and bad are by Our desire, profit and loss are by Our predetermination, the engendered beings and the newly arrived things are ruled over by Our prescribing and subjugated by Our determining. From the beginningless to the everlasting Our knowledge goes everywhere and We rule and command everything. The existence and nonexistence of you, who are creatures, are the same for the threshold of Our Majesty. We do not benefit from your existence nor are We harmed by your nonexistence. The perfection of Our exaltedness has no need for your obedience."

**17:7 *If you do the beautiful, you will have done the beautiful for your own souls, and if you do the ugly, it will be against them.***

If you do the beautiful, you will earn your reward, and if you do the ugly, you will attract your punishment. The Real is more exalted than that ornament or stain should go back to Him from the acts of the servant.<sup>4</sup>

The exalted majesty of the Unity and the perfection of the Self-Sufficiency is more exalted and purer than that it should be adorned by the obedience of the obedient or stained by the disobedience of the disobedient. If you come as a good man, you yourself will profit, and if you come as a bad

<sup>3</sup> The paragraph and poem are derived from RA 212-13.

<sup>4</sup> LI 4:9.

man, you will bring harm upon yourself. He is saying, “For the majesty of Our Unity, the beauty of Our Self-Sufficiency is enough.”

Her own face had itself as a moon,  
her own eye had itself as collyrium.

*If you do the beautiful, you will have done the beautiful for your own souls.* This is the degree of the generality of the faithful in their deeds. As for the degree of the elect in their deeds and states, it is as was said by Abū Yazīd concerning the allusion of this verse: “He who acts for his own soul does not act for God, and he who acts for God does not act for his own soul, nor does he see it.”

Abū Sulaymān Dārānī said, “In this world the doers act in various ways, each of them seeking his own share in his deeds. Thus an ignorant person acts in heedlessness, a doer acts out of habit, a fearful man acts in fear, a trusting person acts while detached, a renunciant acts in seclusion, and a sincerely truthful man acts with love. Those who act in God are fewer than the few.”

**17:8** *Perhaps your Lord will have mercy upon you. And if you return, We will return.*

This verse is a strong handhold and a beautiful caress for the hopeful. In other words, “Perhaps He who nurtures you and feeds you with His bounty will have mercy upon you. There is hope that the Lord who created you gratis out of His bounty, who nourished you with His blessings, who kept you in His guarding and solicitude with His gentleness, and who preserved you from blights and disliked things will have mercy on you in the end and finish the work that He Himself began with bounty.”

*And if you return, We will return.* Sahl ibn ʿAbdallāh said, “*If you return* to fleeing from Us, *We will return* to taking the path against you so that you will return to Us.” This is just like what Muṣṭafā said, recounting from God: “When I know that occupation with Me has overpowered My servant’s heart, I put My servant’s appetite into asking from Me and whispering to Me. When My servant is like that and he desires to be negligent of Me, I come between him and his negligence of Me.”

**17:11** *Man supplicates for evil just as he supplicates for good.*

Sahl said, “The safest of supplications is remembrance and the abandonment of choice in supplication and asking, for in remembrance there is sufficiency, and perchance man will supplicate and ask for that within which is his destruction, while he is not aware. Do you not see that God says, ‘*Man supplicates for evil just as he supplicates for good.*’”

When someone remembers constantly and abandons choice in supplicating and asking, the best of his wishes will be freely given to him and the blights of asking and choice will fall away from him. The Prophet said, recounting from his Lord, “When someone’s remembrance of Me keeps him too busy to ask from Me, I will give him the best of what I give to the askers.”

**17:13** *And every man, We have fastened his omen to his neck. And We shall bring forth for him, on the Day of Resurrection, a book he will meet wide open.*

What is appropriate for each person was fastened to his neck and written out for him in the Beginningless. One had the crown of felicity placed on his head, the tree of his hope filled with fruit, the bounties brought out, the night of separation taken away, the day of union brought forth. By the decree of wretchedness another had the blanket of ill fortune pulled over his head and he was wounded by the sword of deprivation and fastened down with the spikes of rejection. Yes, this apportioning happened in the Beginningless; nothing will be increased and nothing decreased. What can be done, for the Greatest Judge wanted it this way. The poor Adamite who has no awareness of his own Beginningless, and who sits heedless of his own Endless! Between what was and what will be, he has been taken by the sleep of heedlessness. He will awake from the sleep of heedlessness on the day when he is handed the book of his deeds.

*And We shall bring forth for him, on the Day of Resurrection, a book he will meet wide open,* a book whose pen is his tongue, whose ink is his saliva, whose paper is his bodily parts and joints, and which he himself has dictated from beginning to end. The angels are the scribes and the wit-

nesses against him, and not one letter will be added or subtracted. It will be said to him,

**17:14** *Read thy book! Thy soul suffices thee today as a reckoner against thee.*

“Read your book and see your own deeds.” If you deny one letter of it, that very bodily member from which that deed went forth will testify against you, as God says: “*On the day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet bear witness against them concerning what they were doing*” [24:24]. This is why He says, “*Thy soul suffices thee today as a reckoner against thee,*” that is, as a witness of what came from you against you.

It has been said that the books are two: One is written by the angel against the servant, and that is his words and deeds; the other is written by the Real against Himself, and that is His pardon and mercy toward the servant. If the beginningless solicitude takes the servant by the hand, His reckoning with him will be from the book of His own mercy, not the book of the servant’s deeds.

This is just like what has come in the traditions: When the servant’s book is placed in his hands, it is said, “*Read thy book!*” The servant looks into the book and sees written on the first page, “In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.” He says, “Lord God, first discharge for me the account for this one line and issue its decree for me.”

God says, “My servant! I have taken account of it and I have forgiven you through My bounty and mercy. In the Beginningless, I wrote mercy for you and said about Myself, ‘*Forgiver of sins and Acceptor of repentance*’ [40:3].”

*Thy soul suffices thee today as a reckoner against thee.* ʿUmar Khaṭṭāb said, “Take an accounting of yourselves before you are brought to account, weigh your deeds before they are weighed, and prepare for the Greatest Exposure.” Anyone who is aware of the Tribunal of Wrongdoing and the calling to account at the resurrection, who has found a whiff of the recognition of the states and terrors of that day, should know that whatever was his companion during his days—little and much, spots and specks—its talk will be asked from him tomorrow and he will be called to account for it. Hence today he should lift the veil of heedlessness away from his road and keep his deeds and words straight in keeping with the yardstick of the Shariah. From his days he should ask for truthfulness in interaction before he is made present at the tribunal of the King of Kings and his activities and moments of rest are compared with the scale of justice; if there are any deficiencies or losses, one hundred thousand proximate holy ones will open the truthful tongue of bearing witness against him. In shame he will seek the road of flight, but there will be no place to flee.

The story is told that a father said to his son, “Whatever you say to people today and whatever you let pass over your tongue, tell it all to me at the time of the night prayer, and expose to me your activities and moments of rest.”

That night at prayer, with great effort and suffering and complete self-exertion, the boy told his father about that one day of words and deeds. The next day he asked him to do the same thing. The boy said, “Protect me father! Lay upon me any suffering and toil you want, but do not ask me this one thing, for I am unable to bear it.”

His father said, “You poor boy! My goal is for you be awake and aware and for you to fear the standing place of calling to account and the exposure of the resurrection. Today you cannot bear taking account of one day with your own gentle father. How will you be able to bear being called to account for a whole lifetime tomorrow—with severity and contention that do not leave aside even the spots and specks?”

**17:23** *And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and beautiful doing toward your parents.*

In this verse the wise Lord, the eternal Enactor, the lovingly kind and generous Beautiful-Doer commands the servants to servanthood. Servanthood is three things: seeing favor, striving in service, and fear of the end. Seeing favor belongs to Abraham the bosom friend, who said, “*Who created me, so He is guiding me*” [26:78]. Striving in service belongs to Muḥammad the beloved, to whom it was said, “*We did not send down the Qur’an upon thee for thee to be wretched*” [20:2]. Fear of the end belongs to Joseph the sincerely truthful, who said, “*Receive me as a submitter*”

[12:101]. When someone stands in the field of servanthood in the row of service and sets his feet in the clay of what he desires, making the Exalted Presence the Kaabah of his wishes, God will put the folk of the empire into his service and will take care of his work in the two worlds without him. This is why Muṣṭafā said, “When someone belongs to God, God belongs to him.” Whenever someone has no watchfulness in servanthood, he will have no contemplation on the carpet of proximity.

Know also that the wayfarers in the road of servanthood are three men: One is the worshiper, whose soul is subjugated by the fear of punishment. One is the recognizer, whose heart is subjugated by the forcefulness of proximity. One is the lover, whose spirit is subjugated by the unveiling of the Haqiqah.

Whenever the worshiper wants to lift away the bond of struggle from his days, at once he looks at the title-page of the Real’s rebuke and throws down his head in the station of shame.

Whenever the recognizer wants to make manifest the banner of happiness and expansiveness by virtue of proximity, at once the ruling power of the Real’s awesomeness appears and he falls into the lowland of confoundedness.

Whenever the lover gazes at majesty, at once he melts in awe, seeing only bewilderment in bewilderment. Whenever he gazes at beauty, he delights in happiness and revelry, seeing only light and joy. In the tongue of his state he says,

“Your beauty is my pleasure, Your approval my delight,  
and among all the religions Your love is my religion.

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Along with Your face the world has no night,  
along with Your good fortune the universe has no grief!  
When an eye sees You, it is relieved of pain.  
When a spirit finds You, it is exempt from death.”

This is the state of the Adamite: sometimes in the garden of yearning, sometimes in the pit of separation, sometimes imprisoned by himself in the claws of contraction, sometimes caressed by the Real’s gentleness in the grasp of expansion.

One of the pirs of the Tariqah said, “I was traveling with Khawāṣṣ and we stopped in a way station. A lion came near us and slept. Out of fear I got up and climbed a tree. I was on the tree’s branch until dawn. Khawāṣṣ slept without thinking about the lion. The next day we stopped at another way station. A gnat sat on him and until morning he complained about the gnat’s torment. I said, ‘O shaykh! Last night you had no fear of a lion with all that tremendousness and thought nothing of it. Why are you complaining tonight about such a frail gnat?’

“He answered, ‘Last night I was taken away from myself. I was snatched from myself, the inscription of nonbeing written over me. I was selfless of self and standing through the Real. Today I have been given back to myself, so this frail gnat has made me captive to its days.’”

*That you worship none but Him, and beautiful doing toward your parents.* The Real commands the servant to observe all that is rightfully due to his parents, and they are of the same kind as he. If the servant is incapable before what is rightfully due to his own kind, how will he undertake what is rightfully due to his Lord?<sup>5</sup>

Abū ʿUthmān was asked about kindness toward parents. He said, “You should not raise your voice toward them and you should not look at them angrily. They should not see any opposition from you outwardly or inwardly. You must respect them as long as they live and pray for them after they die. You should stand in service of their friends after them, for the Prophet said, ‘One of the kindest of kind deeds is that a man take care of those his father loved.’ When the Prophet slaughtered a sheep, he would take some of it to the friends of Khadija.”

Concerning what is rightfully due to father and mother, it has been said that this is nine things, five during their lives and four after their death. The five things during their lives are loving them

5 LI 4:16.

with the whole heart, speaking beautifully to them with the tongue, serving them extensively with the body, helping them with property, and obeying them in that of which God approves. The four that are after death are satisfying their plaintiffs, appointing for them a portion of your own good works, making supplications for them, and avoiding everything that would torment their spirits.

**17:53** *And say to My servants that they should say what is more beautiful.*

“O Muḥammad, say to My servants that the words they speak should be more beautiful, more true, and more pleasing. That is remembering and lauding God, mentioning Him on the tongue, and keeping His remembrance in the heart.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O You who open the tongues of those who whisper in prayer, who increase the intimacy of the seclusions of the rememberers, and who are present in the souls of the keepers of the mystery! I have no traveling companion but the mention of You, no supplies but keeping Your remembrance, no guidepost and no one to show the road to You but You. O God, look upon the need of someone who has nothing other than one need!”

It has also been said, “The most beautiful word of sinners is attesting to offenses, and the most beautiful word of recognizers is attesting to the incapacity to recognize. The Prophet said, ‘I do not number Thy laudations: Thou art as Thou hast lauded Thyself.’”<sup>6</sup>

The most beautiful words that a sinful man may say is to attest to his own offense and acknowledge his own sin so that the Exalted Lord may bestow on him the success of repentance and complete the work of his repentance for him by forgiving his sins, for that is the promise He has given: “*And others who have acknowledged their sins. They mixed a wholesome deed with another, an ugly deed. Perhaps God will turn toward them*” [9:102]. And the most beautiful word that a recognizing man may say is to attest to his own incapacity to recognize the Real. He knows that no one recognizes Him, nor can anyone do so, as is worthy of Him in the reality of His rightful due and the limits of His exaltedness. This is why Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq said, “Glory be to Him who made no path for the creatures to recognize Him save the incapacity to recognize Him!” Pure and faultless is the Lord, who considers the servant’s incapacity to recognize Him as recognition!

Abū °Alī Daqqāq said, “O God, he who recognizes You has not recognized You. What then about the state of him who in fact has not recognized You?!”

Naṣrābādī and Shāh [Kirmānī] disagreed with each other. One said that He can be recognized and the other said that He cannot be recognized. Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, “Both spoke the truth. When the one said that He cannot be recognized, that is the reality of the Real, which no one reaches but He, for He knows Himself and recognizes Himself in His reality. When the other said that He can be recognized, that is the general recognition that there is no god other than He, that He has no associate or partner, that He has no equal or need, and that there is no assertion of similarity or ineffectuality.”

This is the same as was said by Abu’l-°Abbās °Aṭā’: “There are two recognitions, the recognition of the Real, and the recognition of the reality of the Real. The recognition of the Real is the recognition of His oneness and uniqueness, which people recognize from His names and attributes. The recognition of the reality of the Real is not within the capacity of creatures. No one perceives the bounds of His magnificence and qualities, and there is no access to encompassing Him. He says, ‘*They encompass Him not in knowledge*’ [20:110]. ‘*They measured not God with the rightful due of His measure*’ [22:74].”

**17:55** *And We made some of the prophets more excellent than others.*

The prophets have the generous gifts of states and the specific characteristics of proximity. One of them has chosenness [Adam], another bosom friendship [Abraham], another speaking with God [Moses], and still another the *mi’rāj*, intercession, and vision. Then He made some of them superior to others in specific characteristics. He made the prophets superior to the world’s folk, He made the messengers superior to the prophets, He made the Possessors of Resoluteness superior

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6 LI 4:24.

to the messengers, and He made Muṣṭafā superior to the Possessors of Resoluteness. The furthest limits of the stations of all of them are the beginning of the station of Muṣṭafā; the furthest limits of their stations is apparent, but the end of his station is not apparent. He is aware of the secret core of all of them, but no one other than the Real is aware of his secret core. That is why he said, “I am the master of the children of Adam, without boasting.’ How should I boast of that? For I am separate from them in my state and I stand with the Real in beautiful courtesy. Were I to boast, I would boast of the Real, proximity, and closeness, for He says, ‘*Then He drew close, so He came down*’ [53:8]. If I do not boast about the place of closeness and proximity, how could I boast about being the master of all the races?”

That paragon of the world was a sun whose eastern horizon was Mecca and whose western horizon was Yathrib. Its eclipse was in the cave, but that was an eclipse within which a hundred thousand deposits of gentle favor were unveiled. On his forehead was the splendor of *By thy life* [15:72], on the sleeve of his covenant the exalted embroidery of *Muḥammad is God’s messenger* [48:29], on the door of the pavilion of his secret core this flag of rulership: *Surely We have opened up for thee a clear opening* [48:1]. The rug of that paragon’s messengerhood was thrown from the east of the world to the west of the world, the carpet of his prophethood was spread from Qāf to Qāf, the shadowy banners of unbelief were overthrown with his appearance, the seat of his secret core’s joy was set up higher than the throne of Ursa Major. The long and short of it is that first of all was his aspiration, in the middle his honor, and at the end his burning for his community.

Adam was exalted and ennobled, but the devil instilled him with disquiet until he slipped. But the luster and greatness of Muḥammad the Arab leapt at the devil and brought him into the work. Thus he said, “There is no one who has not been entrusted a comrade from among the jinn.”

They said, “Not even you, O Messenger of God?”

He said, “Not even I, but God has helped me against him, so he has submitted.”

Adam was brought in by the door of severity. The shadow of His severity fell on an angel, who became a heretic. Muḥammad the Arab was brought in by the door of gentleness. The shadow of His gentleness fell on a devil, who became one of the sincerely truthful.<sup>7</sup>

**17:70** *We indeed honored the children of Adam, and We carried them on land and sea, and We provided them with goodly things, and We made them much more excellent than many of those We created.*

It was a great felicitation, a complete bestowal of eminence, and a tremendous honor that God gave to the faithful children of Adam. On the Day of the Compact, at the outset of the work and the commencement of existence, He gave them a place in the grasp of His attributes and addressed them with the quality of gentleness, binding them to the covenant and compact of friendship.

Then, when they came into this world, He gave them a beautiful form, a lovely shape, and a complete robe of honor, adorning them with knowledge, intellect, speech, understanding, and excellence. He did not hold them back from the outward success of struggle or the inner realization of contemplation and recognition. He opened the door of His mercy and generosity to them, and He kept them on the carpet of whispered prayer. Whenever they want, they call upon Him, ask from Him, and tell Him their secrets. It has been transmitted in one of the traditions that God said, “My servants, confide your secrets in Me. If you will not, then whisper and speak to Me. If you will not, then listen to Me. If you will not, then gaze upon Me. If you will not, then be at My door and lift up your needs before Me, for I am the most generous of the generous.”

Part of the honor is that He bestowed before they asked and He forgave before they begged forgiveness, as has come in the report: “I bestowed upon you before you asked from Me, and I forgave you before you asked Me to forgive you.”

Part of the honor is that among all the created things, He specified them for affection and love. That which He did not bestow on the angels and did not say about the cherubim and the spirituals

7 A few sentences of the commentary, the hadith about the jinn becoming a Muslim, and the general tenor of the discussion are drawn from RA 248-50.

of heaven, He said about them: “*He loves them, and they love Him* [5:54]. *God approves of them and they approve of Him* [9:100]. *Those who have faith are more intense in love for God* [2:165]. *So remember Me; I will remember you* [2:152].”

*Remember Me* is the rivulet of your remembrance, and *I will remember you* is the ocean of the Real’s remembrance. When the rivulet of the servant’s remembrance reaches the ocean of the Real’s remembrance, the water of the ocean of *I will remember you* enters the rivulet of *Remember Me* and all of it becomes the ocean’s water. Nothing remains of the rivulet. This is exactly what the Pir of the Tariqah said: “When someone falls into the Real’s grasp, he burns, and then the Real is his successor.”

O God, You are the meaning of the call of the truthful, You light up the souls of the friends, You are the repose of the hearts of the exiles! You are present in the midst of the spirit, so it is with my lost heart that I say, “Where are You?” You are the life of the spirit and the mirror of the tongue. You Yourself are the spokesman for Yourself. By Your rightful due against Yourself, do not seat us in the shadow of delusion! Convey us to union with You!

He said, “*We indeed honored the children of Adam.*” He did not say “the faithful,” or “the worshipers,” or “the strugglers.” Thus He declared this honoring pure of being the counterpart of activity, or being caused by a conformity with something, or being the result of a worthiness in some respect.<sup>8</sup>

The reason He did not tie His generosity and gentleness toward the servants to their deeds or struggle is so that you would know that His caressing has no cause and His honoring is not a compensation. He caresses because He wants to, not because of the servants’ obedience. He bestows because of His bounty, not because of their effort. The servant who finds the Real’s generosity does not find it because of his obedience. Rather, he has obedience because he has found the Real’s generosity. It is not the servant’s supplication that led to the response of the Real; rather, it is the Real’s response that has led the servant to supplicate. The servant who finds the Real does not find from seeking; rather, he finds seeking from finding. Being carried is the act of him who was not; carrying is the bounty of Him who always was.

*And We carried them on land and sea.* The mounts of the common people on land and sea are one thing, and the mounts of the elect something else. Concerning the mounts of the common people He says, “*He appointed for you, from ships and cattle, what you mount upon so that you may sit on their backs*” [43:12-13]. In these friend and enemy, familiar and stranger, are all the same. Concerning the mounts of the elect on the sea He says, “*And the wind was Solomon’s, its morning course a month and its evening course a month*” [34:12]. About Muṣṭafā He said, “*Who took His servant by night*” [17:1]. Solomon had the wind and Muṣṭafā had Burāq.

In the afterworld, the mounts of the friends and the near ones will be what He says: “*We shall muster the godwary to the All-Merciful in droves*” [19:85]. Concerning this verse God’s Messenger said, “By Him in whose hand is my soul! When they emerge from their graves, they will be welcomed by white she-camels with wings, upon which are saddles of gold and each of whose strides is the length of eyesight. They will take them as far as the gate of the Garden.”

He also said, “Make your sacrificial animals large and fat, for they will be your mounts on the Narrow Path.”

Among them is he who says, “Everyone will mount upon the deeds he did in this world and upon which he died.” And among them is he who says, “No one will pass over the Narrow Path except with the light of recognition.”

*And We provided them with goodly things.* Goodly provision is that which is in remembrance of the Provider. When someone is not absent in his heart or heedless of his Lord, his every provision is goodly,<sup>9</sup> for when encountering the Beloved colocynth is honey, and when the Beloved is absent honey is colocynth.

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8 LI 4:32.

9 LI 4:33.

Yahyā ibn Muʿādh said, “Goodly provision is what is opened to a man without his asking or looking for it.”

*And We made them much more excellent than many of those We created:* With knowledge of God and His rulings We made the knowers more excellent than the ignorant, and with recognition We made the friends more excellent than all creatures.

**17:84 Say: “Each acts according to his own manner.”**

What comes from the Adamite other than disloyalty? What comes from water and clay other than error? What will be seen from the Lord’s generosity other than loyalty?

In the whole Qur’an, no verse offers more hope than this. He is saying, “Everyone does what comes from him, and from everyone comes what is worthy of him. The servant returns to sin and the Lord returns to forgiveness.”

One of revealed books tells us that God said, “O child of Adam! You keep on returning to sins, and I keep on returning to forgiveness.”

It was said to the abandoned one of the empire, the despairing Iblis, “Prostrate yourself before Adam!”

He said, “I will not, for Adam is from dust, and I am from fire.”

It was said to him, “O unlucky one! No doubt everyone does what is worthy of him, and from everyone comes what is inside him. When fire dies down, it becomes ashes, which can never be renewed. Dust, even if it is old, is renewed by sprinkling water on it. O Iblis, O you who are of fire, you left aside one command, so you will die and never come to life! O Adam, O you who are of dust, you let one tear of remorse fall from your eyes, so I have forgiven your sins and will caress you. O Iblis, what you did comes from fire. O Adam, what you saw is born of dust. Say: ‘Each acts according to his own manner.’”

**17:85 They ask thee about the spirit.**

Man is body, heart, and spirit. The body is the place of the Trust, the heart is the threshold of being addressed, and the spirit is the center point of contemplation. All blessings are largesse for the body; its nourishment is food and drink. All favors are gifts for the heart; its nutriment is remembering and mentioning the Friend. All vision and contemplation are the portion of the spirit; its nourishment is seeing the Friend. The body is under the severity of power, the heart in the grasp of the attributes, and the spirit in the embrace of exaltedness—the carpet of intimacy spread, the candle of compassion lit, the beginningless Friend having lifted the veil.

**17:107 Say: “Have faith in it, or do not have faith.” Surely those who were given knowledge before it, when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in prostration.**

The side of Unity, the exalted Majesty, is alluding to the fact that He has never had and will never have any need for an obedience that was not and then came into being. He is saying, “You have no worth, for nothing is worthy of Me. If you want, have faith, and if you do not want, do not. I have no need for your faith. Beginningless majesty and beauty gain no adornment from the obedience of newly arrived things. I had still not written out existence for any existent thing when My majesty was contemplating My beauty and I was pleased with Myself in Myself. Today that I have created the creatures, I am what I was. I have no need in Myself for any causes and no need in My perfection for any seeking.”

**17:109 They fall down on their faces weeping.**

Weeping is the state of the beginners and the attribute of the travelers—everyone according to his own state and every traveler in the measure of his own deeds. The repentor looks upon his own sin and weeps in fear of punishment. The obedient person looks upon his own lax obedience and weeps in fear of shortcoming. The worshiper weeps in fear of the outcome: “What will be done with me tomorrow?” The recognizer looks at the beginningless precedent and weeps: “What was done to me and decreed for me in the Beginningless?”

All this happens to travelers on the path and is a mark of the weakness of their state. As for those who have been snatched away from themselves, the folk of stability, for them weeping is an imperfection and defect in their road. Thus it is related that Junayd was sitting with his wife and Shiblī entered. The wife wanted to cover herself, but Junayd said to her, “Shiblī is not aware of you, so sit.” Junayd kept speaking to her, and then Shiblī wept. When Shiblī began to weep, Junayd said to his wife, “Cover yourself, for Shiblī has come back from absence to awareness.”

## Surah 18: al-Kahf

### **18:0 *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.***

*In the name of God*, whose name is the shelter of everyone fearful; *in the name of God*, whose name is the refuge from Satan; *in the name of God*, whose remembrance is the hidden wealth of every lover's heart.

In the name of Him whose name is the foundation of all good things, in the name of Him in whose name the heart is freed from sorrows, in the name of Him in whose name alone the recognizer's heart becomes happy, in the name of Him in the wine of union with whom the yearner's heart remembers.

In the name of Him who gave names to both loyalty and generosity in order to complete the blessing of familiarity with water and clay; in the name of Him who made His love a snare for the yearner and poured union in the servant's cup in place of wine; in the name of Him who made sleep unlawful for the lover's eyes in order to set up the compact of his friendship with Him; in the name of Him who said "Peace!" to the spirit of the anticipator in order to put his heart in *repose and ease* [56:89], then bewildered his outwardness at the hand of the enemy and made his inwardness the quarry of grief.

O chevalier! If He turns the millstone of trial on your head, take care not to step back from the doorstep of His service. If He makes the stages of hell's descending levels the bodkin of your eyes, be careful not to take a breath without His approval. For the exaltedness is His exaltedness, and the exaltedness of others is all abasement and incapacity, annihilation and nonexistence. The decree is His decree, and the decree of others is all bias, caprice, and injustice.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, if You act with bounty, what does it matter if others are just or unjust? If You act with justice, the bounty of others is like the wind. O God, what I have seen from You adorns the two worlds. The wonder is that my spirit has no ease because of fearing Your justice."

### **18:1 *Praise belongs to God who sent down the Book to His servant and placed no crookedness therein.***

*Praise belongs to God.* He praised Himself by Himself since He knew the incapacity of creatures to reach His praise. The majestic Lord, the perfectly powerful, the fount of bounteous bestowal, the one worthy of His own laudation, the one who gives thanks for His own giving—He Himself praises Himself and He Himself lauds Himself, for He Himself recognizes His exaltedness and He Himself knows His tremendousness and all-compellingness. He is exalted through His own majesty, holy through His own perfection, magnificent through His own magnificence. How will water and dust ever reach His description? How can that which was not, then came to be, know His measure? How can the attributes of newly arrived things match His attributes? That which was not, then came to be, is not. How can the recognition of that which is come from that which is not?

The Exalted Lord brought the creatures into existence with His bounty and generosity. He clothed them in the garment of creation, nurtured them and preserved them from trials, accepted their obedience with all its shortcoming, and concealed their iniquity and disloyalty in the curtain of bounty. He gave them the success of obedience and adorned their hearts with faith and recognition. Since He knew that the servants were incapable of discharging gratitude for these blessings,

He uncovered His bounty and generosity, made the tongue of gentleness a deputy for the indigent and incapable, and praised Himself. He said “*Praise belongs to God.*” In the road of love it is a stipulation of friendship to act as deputy for friends. He said, “All those blessings that I gave I gave without you and I apportioned without you. Just as I apportioned without you, so also I praised without you. By virtue of friendship I acted as your deputy so as to complete My beautiful doing and beneficence toward you.”<sup>1</sup>

*Who sent down the Book to His servant.* *Who* is an allusion. *Sent down the Book to His servant* is an expression. Allusions are the portion of the spirits, and expressions are the portion of the [bodily] semblances. The spirits, on hearing *who*, were elated and came into revelry. The semblances, on hearing *sent down the Book to His servant*, began to struggle and took to the road of seeking.

This verse is both a singling out of Muṣṭafā, the Seal of the Prophets, and a declaration of the greatness of the Qur’an, the speech of the All-Merciful. As for Muṣṭafā, he is the security of the earth and the adornment of heaven; as for the Qur’an, it is a reminder for the hearts of the faithful and an intimacy for the spirits of the recognizers. Muṣṭafā is the guard of the Shariah’s road and the title-page of the Haqīqah. The Qur’an is provision for the hearts and clarification for the spirits. Muṣṭafā is the whole of perfection and the totality of beauty. The Qur’an is a book from the Majestic Presence to the servants, a book in which there are both good news and warning. It gives this good news to the friends:

**18:2-3** *They shall have a beautiful wage, remaining therein endlessly.*

It gives this warning to the strangers:

**18:5** *They say nothing but a lie.*

**18:6** *Perhaps thou art consuming thyself with grief in their tracks that they do not have faith in this talk.*

“O Muḥammad! Do not busy your secret core with their opposition. It is only for you to deliver the message; guidance comes from Us to whomsoever We will.”

**18:7** *Surely We have made all that is on the earth an adornment for it.*

The folk who recognize God, love Him, and yearn for Him are the adornment of the earth: its stars, moons, and suns. When the lights of *tawḥīd* shine in the secret cores of the *tawḥīd*-voicers, all of the horizons become radiant with their brightness.<sup>2</sup>

The adornment of the earth is the friends of God. The cosmos is decorated with them and the world painted with them. Their hearts are lit by the light of recognition, their secret cores are given access to the presence of proximity by the mediation of wisdom, their faces are turned toward the presence of proximity by the well-trodden path of rectitude, and the avenue of the Tariqah and the Sunnah has been placed before them. They are the signposts of the religion and the Pegs of the earth, the lamps of the world and the keys to the Gardens. They lay down the foundations of friendship and prop up the portico of truthfulness. God’s gentleness toward the creatures comes through them and the goal in the creation of the realm of being is they. In name and mark they are the poor, and in reality they are the kings of the earth—kings in tatters. Anyone who wants to know their conduct and adornment should recite the story of the Companions of the Cave, for God displays them in the Qur’an:

**18:10** *When the chevaliers took refuge in the cave and said, “Our Lord, give us mercy from Thee and furnish us with right conduct in our affair.”*

It was said to them, “Go into this cave and sleep sweetly. Put down your heads on the pillow of security, for We will take sleep from you in place of the worship of the world’s folk.”

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<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is derived from RA 467.

<sup>2</sup> Derived partly from LI 4:50.

Listen to a beautiful, subtle point: The Exalted Lord made a cave appear to them in that mountain, and when the faithful servants leave this world He makes the four walls of the grave their cave. Just as He gave them security from enemies in that cave, so also He will give the faithful servants security from Satan in the grave, saying, “*Fear not and grieve not*” [41:30]. In that cave He showed mercy to them: *Your Lord will unfold for you of His mercy* [18:16]. In the same way, He will show mercy to the faithful in this cave of the grave: *Repose and ease and a garden of bliss* [56:89]. Just as He made that cave vast for them, for He says, “*while they were in a broad space in it*” [18:17], so also He will make this grave vast for the faithful servant with wholesome deeds. He says, “*Whoever does wholesome deeds—for their own souls they are making provision*” [30:44]. And a sound report has come, “His grave will be made spacious for him.” Just as He opened up the top of the cave for them so that fresh air and the breeze of the morning wind would not be cut off from them, so also He will open up a door from paradise to the faithful servants’ garden-plots so that a sweet-smelling breeze will pass over them from the direction of the Gardens of Eden and keep their beds sweet.

**18:13** *We recount to thee their story in truth. Surely they were chevaliers who had faith in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance.*

Here we have great eminence, complete honor, and infinite caresses placed on these Companions of the Cave by the Lord of the Worlds, for He called them “chevaliers.” He said, “*Surely they were chevaliers.*” He bestowed on them the same honor that He gave to His bosom friend Abraham, whom He called a chevalier: “*They said, ‘We heard a chevalier mention them; he is called Abraham’*” [21:60]. And concerning Yūsha° ibn Nūn He said, “*When Moses said to his chevalier*” [18:60]. About Joseph the sincerely truthful He said, “*The governor’s wife has been trying to seduce her chevalier*” [12:30].

The conduct and Tariqah of the chevaliers is what Muṣṭafā said to °Alī: “O °Alī, the chevalier is straight-speaking, loyal, discharger of trusts, ever-merciful in the heart, protector of the poor, full of bestowal, caresser of guests, beautiful-doer, and possessor of shame.”

It has been said that the chief of all the chevaliers was Joseph the sincerely truthful, who saw from his brothers the various trials that he saw, but, when he had them in his own hand, he said to them, “*No reproof is upon you today*” [12:92].

It has been reported that the Messenger was seated when someone got up and asked for help. The Messenger turned toward his companions and said, “Be a chevalier toward him.” °Alī got up and went. When he returned, he had one dinar, five dirhams, and a loaf of bread. The Messenger said, “O °Alī, what is this state?”

He said, “O Messenger of God! When the questioner asked, it occurred to my heart to give him a loaf. Then it came into my heart that I should give him five dirhams. Then it passed through my mind that I should give him one dinar. Now I do not consider it permissible not to do what has come into my mind and passed into my heart.”

The Messenger said, “There is no chevalier but °Alī!”

*And We increased them in guidance.* When there is a robe of honor built on the perfect good fortune of love, within which is the explication of beginningless solicitude, it should not be less than what was said about those chevaliers: “*And We increased them in guidance.*”

**18:14** *And We placed a tie on their hearts when they stood up and said, “Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth.”*

“We bound them with the tie of sinlessness, kept them on the carpet of recognition, and firmed them up with the cord of love. We lit the candle of kind favor for them in the streambed of solicitude. We taught them the courtesy of companionship in the grammar school of the Beginningless and they set forth in holiness itself, busying themselves in the cave with the mystery of the Haqiqah.”

Whenever something has an exaltedness, it is masked by the veils of exaltedness so that not just any non-privy may gaze upon it and not just any drudge may reach it. Those chevaliers were precious in the Threshold of Unity, for they were lit up by the light of faith and the limpidness of

*tawhīd*, but the eyes of the folk of those days were tainted with the ooze of unbelief and associationism. The jealousy of the religion took them into the veil of the cave so that those eyes tainted by ooze would not see them. The command came from the side of all-compellingness,

**18:16** *Take refuge in the cave. Your Lord will unfold for you of His mercy and furnish you with kindness in your affair.*

“Go into this cave of jealousy in the shade of solicitude, the embrace of friendship, and the world of protection. *Your Lord will unfold for you of His mercy* and keep you in the curtain of sinlessness, clothing you in the garment of mercy, giving you a place in the embrace of exaltedness.”

What a lovely day when someone is walking on a road and all at once the one entrusted with this talk comes down and throws the lasso of seeking around his neck and pulls!<sup>3</sup> *He fastened to them the word of godwariness* [48:26]. “You are Mine and I am yours: ‘Be for Me as you always were, and I will be for you as I always have been.’”

**18:17** *Thou wouldst have seen the sun, when it rose, turning aside from their cave to the right.*

When the lights of the beginningless secrets show their faces to someone’s inwardness, how can the light of the sun of form have the gall to throw its rays upon him or exercise its ruling authority over him? The sun of form is for brightening creation, and the lights of the secret cores are for recognizing the Real. The former is the light of form and the latter is the light of the secret core. The former is the world-brightening sun and the latter the heart-brightening light. The former keeps the world bright so that the creatures may gaze upon it, and the latter keeps the hearts of the friends bright so that the Real may gaze upon them. The lights of the secret cores of those chevaliers in the cave gave out the glittering rays of the lights of the secrets, and the shining sun rolled up its skirt, for it was *turning aside from their cave to the right* [18:17]. When someone’s breast is made the place of the lights of the unseen secrets, his attribute is what the Exalted Lord said concerning these chevaliers:

**18:18** *Thou wouldst have thought them awake, but they were sleeping. And We turned them now to the right, now to the left. And their dog was stretching its paws at the doorstep. Hadst thou looked down upon them, surely thou wouldst have turned away from them fleeing, and thou wouldst have been filled with terror from them.*

When you look at their outwardness, you see them busy in the playing field of deeds. When you look at their secret cores, you see them detached in the garden of the gentleness of the Possessor of Majesty. Outwardly active, inwardly they gaze on the gentleness of the Beginningless. With *Thee alone we worship* [1:5] they have bound the belt of struggle, and with *And Thee alone we ask for help* [1:5] they have placed the crown of contemplation on their heads. On the inside they wear the undershirt of surrender, and on the outside they have covered themselves with the caftan of deeds. Their activity conforms to the command, and their vision conforms to the decree.<sup>4</sup>

A pir was asked, “Faith without deeds is incomplete, but the Companions of the Cave had no deeds, for when they began to travel, they immediately slept.”

The pir answered, “Which deed is greater than what the Exalted Lord said about them—*when they stood up* [18:14]?”

In the tongue of the folk of allusion the meaning is that they stood back from themselves. The outcome of the servants from their deeds comes down to their standing back from themselves. When they stand back from themselves, they reach the Real. The intermediary disappears and He exercises His determination over them, doing their work Himself, as He said concerning the chevaliers, “*And We turned them now to the right, now to the left.*” In other words, “We turned them between the states of annihilation and subsistence, unveiling and veiling, disclosure and curtaining.”

The Pir of the Tariqah spoke a few words alluding to the levels of these states and the intima-

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<sup>3</sup> This sentence is from RA 400.

<sup>4</sup> Much of these two paragraphs is derived from RA 446-47.

tions of these realities: “O God, how much will You be hidden, how much apparent? For my heart is bewildered, the spirit distracted. How long this curtaining and self-disclosing? When at last will there be the everlasting self-disclosure? O God, how long will You call and drive away? I have melted in wanting the day in which You stay. How long will You throw down and pick up? What is this promise so drawn out and late? Glory be to God! At this threshold, I have nothing but need. What a day it will be when You pour a drop of happiness on my heart! How long will You mix water and fire in me? Oh, my good fortune from the Friend is a resurrection!”

*And their dog was stretching its paws at the doorstep.* When they set out on the road, that little dog began to follow them: “You are exalted guests, and exalted guests put up with hangers-on.” The little dog lifted a few steps in conformity, and until the resurrection the faithful will be reading its story in the Qur’an and displaying it: “*And their dog was stretching its paws at the doorstep.*” What then do you say about someone who spends his whole life in the company of God’s friends and, in conformity with them, takes no step backwards? Do you say that at the resurrection, God will separate him from them? No, of course not!

He called Balaam, who knew the greatest name and saw from the Throne to the bottom of the earth, a “dog” and drove him from His threshold. And He showed the same generosity to the dog of the Companions of the Cave that He showed to His friends, keeping it in His road. Thus He shows the world’s folk that proximity is because of His caressing, not because of service. Distance is because of His degrading, not because of disobedience.<sup>5</sup>

*Hadst thou looked down upon them, surely thou wouldst have turned away from them fleeing.* “Looking down” is said for someone who looks from above and has a higher station. He is saying, “O Muḥammad, if you had looked at them, you would have fled from them and your heart would have been upset.” Here there is room for obscurity. What do you say? Was the state of the Companions of the Cave such that the Seal of the Prophets, the title-page of whose glory and majesty was “I was aided by their terror,” should fear them? No, never. These words are addressed to Muṣṭafā, but others are meant. There are many similar instances, such as, “*O Prophet, be wary of God!*” [33:1], “*If thou associatest [others with God], thy deeds shall surely fail!*” [39:65], and so on.<sup>6</sup>

You can also say that what is desired by these words is not instilling fear into Muṣṭafā, but declaring the greatness of their state. It is common usage to say, “So-and-so underwent such a trial that, had you seen it, you would have fainted.” By saying this, one wants to declare the greatness of that work, not the verification of the words. An example of this is that Muṣṭafā said: “Do not consider me more excellent than my brother Jonah.” He also said, “Anyone who says that I am better than he has uttered a lie.” But there is no disagreement in the community that Muṣṭafā was more excellent than Jonah. Nonetheless, the prophetic wisdom in these words is that the Real mentioned certain things in the story of Jonah in the Glorious Scripture such that there is fear that the servants would have a bad opinion of him. For example, He says, “*And Dhu’l-Nūn, when he went forth wrathful!*” [21:87]. The Messenger said, “When my community hears this verse, they must not have a bad opinion of him and look upon him with the eyes of contempt.” That bad opinion would harm their religion. Even though Muṣṭafā was more excellent than he and all the prophets, he said, “Do not consider me more excellent.” His desire was not to declare a truth but rather to declare the greatness of Jonah, so that everyone would look upon him with the eyes of reverence and not the eyes of contempt.

In the same way, when the Real wanted to declare His friends great so that people would look upon them with the eyes of reverence, He addressed His prophet with the words, “*Hadst thou looked down upon them, surely thou wouldst have turned away from them fleeing.*” Thus the people will look upon them with the eyes of reverence and not harm their own religion.<sup>7</sup>

The ulama of the Tariqah and the lords of recognition have said that the work of Sufism is

5 These two paragraphs are derived from RA 447-48.

6 Taken from RA 448.

7 These two paragraphs are taken from RA 449-50.

founded on the traveling and conduct of the Companions of the Cave and that the acts of courtesy and the ornament of the Tariqah are very similar to their states and conduct. These include realization of intention, disengagement of desire, aspiration, retirement from people, dropping attachments, self-purification in the invitation, penitence, disowning self, freedom from the world, happiness with the Real, release from taking control of oneself and approving of oneself, lifting the hands of need to God's kindness, at times burning and melting from the onslaught of awe, and at times happy and joyful in the breeze of intimacy.

It has also been said the Lord of the Worlds did with the Companions of the Cave what a lovingly kind mother does with her child: First she makes him a cradle, then she puts him to sleep, then she rocks him, then she chases away flies, then she gives him milk so that he will be at ease. God did the same for them. First He took care of their work and made the cave like a cradle for them: *He will furnish you with kindness in your affair* [18:16]. Then He put them to sleep: *He sealed their ears in the cave* [18:11]. Then He rocked them: *And We turned them now to the right, now to the left* [18:18]. Then He kept the torment of the sun away from them: *Thou wouldst have seen the sun, when it rose, turning aside from their cave to the right* [18:17]. Then He sent them the drink of mercy so that they would be at ease: *Your Lord will unfold for you of His mercy* [18:16].

**18:19** *Now send one of you forth with this silver of yours to the city, and let him see which of them has the purest food.*

Here there are two allusions: One is that every faithful servant, though he may have reached the furthest limit in the Haqiqah, will be held to guarding the rulings of the Shariah, for any reality in which the outward Shariah is not witnessed is the deception and delusion of Satan. The root in this is that the chevaliers sent one of themselves to buy some food for them, and they commanded him to investigate and scrutinize its situation so that heedlessness would not make him fall into something forbidden.

The second is what was said by Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn to one of his companions when he took something to the poor or to the folk of recognition, or when he bought food for them: "Let it be the most goodly and the most subtle of things, for when someone reaches recognition, only subtle things conform with him and only delicate things become his intimate. The root here is His words, '*and let him see which of them has the purest food.*'" Then he said, "When you buy for the renunciants and the worshipers, buy whatever you find, for they are still busy with abasing their own souls and holding them back from appetites."

**18:23-24** *Say not of anything, "I will do it tomorrow," but only, "If God wills." And remember thy Lord when thou forgettest.*

When someone recognizes God, his free choice drops away before His will, and his decrees are enveloped by the witnessing of his Lord's decree.<sup>8</sup>

When someone sets foot in the street of recognizing God and comes to know that the creatures are all captive to His power in the prison of the Will on the passageway of the decree and the measuring out, he will no longer choose and will not prepare his own work, nor will he make his own rulings. He will throw his own work entirely over to God's will and not mix his own self-exertion with what God has taken care of. With the tongue of the state he will say, "O God, O He who was, is, and will be! I know not Your measure and am incapable of what is worthy of You. I wander in my misery, day by day in loss. How then is someone like me?! But such am I. I lament at gazing into the darkness—will anything remain of me? I do not know. My eyes look to a day when You remain and I am not. Who will be like me if I see that day? And if I see it, I will sacrifice my spirit to it."<sup>9</sup>

*And remember thy Lord when thou forgettest.* It has been said, "When you forget yourself, remember your Lord, and when you forget the creatures, remember the Creator."

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<sup>8</sup> LI 4:61.

<sup>9</sup> Words of the Pir of the Tariqah (see under 34:14, 78:0).

He is saying, “Once you have brought your soul’s caprice underfoot and removed your status with people from your heart, remember Me and make your spirit happy with this pure remembrance.” The caprice of the soul is an idol and status with people is a sash of unbelief. As long as you have not disowned the idol, you will not become a *tawhīd*-voicer, and as long as you have not undone the sash, you will not be a Muslim.

There was a worshiper by the name of Abū Bakr Ishtanjī who had a great status. He feared that he would destroy the status. He got up and set off on a journey during the month of Ramadan and broke the fast in keeping with the ruling of the Shariah. Then he returned from the journey not fasting, and the people were unaware of his excuse. He kept on eating food in the middle of the city until the people gathered around him and began slapping him, saying “He has no religion!” One of the realizers of the road said, “At the time when they were slapping him, I went near to see what he would say. To himself he kept on saying, ‘O soul, you are not a people-worshiper, and you must not be deluded by status with the people! Look how I have brought you back to worshipping God, not the people!’”

*And remember thy Lord when thou forgettest.* Junayd said, “The reality of remembrance is to be annihilated from remembrance in the Remembered. That is why God says, ‘*And remember thy Lord when thou forgettest.*’ In other words, when you forget the remembrance, the Remembered will be your attribute.”

Remembrance is not only that you take it upon yourself to move your lips by your own volition. That in fact is recollection, and recollection is an affectation. True remembrance is that the tongue becomes all heart, the heart becomes all secret core, and the secret core becomes nothing but contemplation. Then the roots of dispersion are cut off. It is from this station that the perfection of togetherness appears in the World of With-ness. “When self-disclosure is sound, the tongue, the heart, and the secret core are one.” The remembrance is lost in the Remembered, and the spirit is lost in the Light. Reports become face-to-face vision, and face-to-face vision is far from explication.

O You whose remembrance is the argument and whose intimacy is the reminder! You are present—of what use to me is this remembrance? O Gentle One! Give permission that I come out of Your remembrance for a moment! Those who call You friends are a crowd, but the most ancient is to be preferred. O You who bring pure milk out from the midst of *feces and blood* [16:66], by Thy bounty take my hand! Leave me not with the mark of Eve and Adam!

**18:60** *When Moses said to his chevalier, “I will continue on until I reach the meeting place of the two seas.”*

Moses had four journeys: One was the journey of flight, as God says recounting from Moses, “*So I fled from you when I was afraid of you*” [26:21]. The second was the journey of seeking on the night of the fire. That is His words, “*He was called from the right bank of the watercourse*” [28:30]. Third was the journey of revelry: “*When Moses came to Our appointed time*” [7:143]. Fourth was the journey of toil: “*We have certainly met with weariness on this journey of ours*” [18:62].

His journey of flight was at the beginning of the work. He fled from the enemy and turned his face toward Midian, having killed the Egyptian man, as the Exalted Lord says: “*So Moses struck him and gave him the decree*” [28:15]. When there is solicitude, how can prosperity and victory be ended? Since God had solicitude toward Moses’ work, He excused him for that killing. He said, “Moses struck him and My decree reached him.” Then He said, “Moses had no sin in that. The sin belonged to the devil and the act was from the devil: *He said, ‘This is the work of Satan’* [28:15].” In the same way, He will excuse the faithful servant with His bounty and convey His pardon to him. He says, “*Satan made them slip for something they had earned, but God has surely pardoned them*” [3:155]. God overlooked their sin. It was Satanic disquiet and the devil’s work.

The second was the journey of seeking on the night of the fire. Moses set out seeking fire. What sort of fire was it, for it placed the whole world on fire! Wherever talk of Moses’ fire goes, the whole world takes on the scent of passion because of its turmoil. Moses set off in search of fire

and found light. These chevaliers set off in search of light and find fire. If the sweetness of listening to the Real's speech without intermediary reached Moses, what wonder is it that His friends catch a scent of that? If the fire of Moses was apparent, the fire of these chevaliers is hidden. If the fire of Moses was in a tree, the fire of these chevaliers is in the spirit. He who has it knows that this is so: All fires burn the body, but the fire of friendship burns the spirit. There is no patience with the spirit-burning fire.

The journey of revelry was mentioned [in the commentary] under His words, "*When Moses came to Our appointed time*" [7:143].

The fourth journey of Moses was the journey of toil. This is an allusion to the journey of the desirers at the beginning of desire, the journey of discipline and of tolerating the hardship of the rectification of three things: the soul, the disposition, and the heart.

The rectification of the soul is three things: bringing it from complaint to gratitude, from heedlessness to wakefulness, and from foolishness to awareness. The rectification of the disposition is three things: You come forth from annoyance to patience, from niggardliness to free giving, and from retribution to pardon. The rectification of the heart is three things: You come forth from the ruins of feeling secure to fear, from the calamity of despair to the blessing of hope, and from the tribulation of the heart's scatteredness to the heart's freedom.<sup>10</sup>

The material of this rectification is three things: following knowledge, permitted food, and constant devotions. Its fruit is three things: a secret core adorned with awareness of the Patron, a spirit lit up with the love of eternity, and knowledge from God found without intermediary. This is why the Lord of the Worlds honors Khiḍr and says about him,

**18:65** *And We taught him knowledge from Us.*

"When someone is able to sacrifice his attributes to the holy Shariah, We will engrave the secrets of the knowledges of the Haqiqah on his heart: *And We taught him knowledge from Us.*" The one who speaks of this knowledge is the realizer, who speaks from finding. Light is apparent from his words, familiarity on his face, and servanthood in his conduct. A lightning flash of the Greatest Light has shone in his heart, the lamp of his recognition has been lit, and the unseen secrets have been unveiled to him. Such was Khiḍr in the work of the ship, the boy, and the wall.

Take care not to have the opinion that Khiḍr was greater than Moses the Speaking Companion, even if Moses was sent to Khiḍr's grammar school. No, of course not, for in the Court of Inaccessibility, after Muṣṭafā no prophet has the same joyful expansiveness and proximity as Moses. Nonetheless, He made Khiḍr the furnace of Moses' discipline. Thus, when someone wants to take silver to pureness, he puts it in a fiery furnace. This is because of the superiority of silver over the fiery furnace, not because of the superiority of fire and furnace over silver.

Then there are Khiḍr's words,

**18:67** *"Surely thou wilt not be able to bear patiently with me."*

The meaning according to true understanding is this allusion: "O Moses, the secret core of your disposition has so much expansiveness from the marks giving witness to the Divinity that you say, '*Show me, that I may gaze upon Thee!*'" [7:143]. I who am Khiḍr do not have the power and strength to pass these words over my heart or to busy my thoughts with them. Your ruling authority will not be able to put up with the grief of my deprivation. *Surely thou wilt not be able to bear patiently with me.*"

As for the breaking the ship in the sea, killing the boy, and repairing the wall, each of these, in keeping with the understanding of the Folk of Findings, alludes to a great principle. It is said that the sea is the sea of recognition. Each of the one hundred twenty-some thousand center points of sinlessness dove into that sea with his community and people in the hope that from that sea they would gather the pearls of *tawḥīd* in the skirt of seeking, for "He who recognizes himself has recognized his Lord."

<sup>10</sup> The discussion of rectification (*tahdhīb*) is taken from *Ṣad maydān*, no. 10 (265).

The ship is the ship of human nature. Khiḍr wanted to ruin and break that ship with the hand of tenderness, for the owners of the ship were “indigent” [*miskīn*], and their attribute was “tranquility” [*sakīna*]. The Court of Eternity had addressed them with these words: “*He it is who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the faithful*” [48:4]. When Muṣṭafā saw the Real’s self-disclosure of Majesty to the hearts of the indigent, he said, “O God, give me life as an indigent, give me death as an indigent, and muster me among the indigent!” When Khiḍr ruined the ship of mortal nature with the hand of tenderness, Moses saw that outwardly it was adorned and flourishing with the ornament of the Shariah and the Tariqah. He said, “*Have you made a hole in it to drown its folk?*” [18:71]. Khiḍr responded, “*And behind them was a king* [18:79]: Behind its flourishing was a king, a Satan who had prepared the ambush of severity in the neighborhood of the ship so that he might take the ship with his severity and deception and travel in it by night and day, for ‘Satan runs in the children of Adam like blood.’ We took away this adornment and flourishing with the hand of tenderness so that, when Satan comes like a king, he will see it ruined outwardly, and he will not come near it.”

As for the boy whom Khiḍr killed and Moses’ disavowal of the act, this is an allusion to the wishes and fancies that stick up their heads from a man’s makeup in the playing field of discipline and the crucible of struggle. He said, “I have been commanded to strike off the head of everything not related to faith with the sword of jealousy. Once fancies mature, the result is that a man becomes a disbeliever in the Tariqah. In the world I ambush them at the beginning of the road of disbelief so that they will return to their own measure.”

As for the wall that he repaired, that is an allusion to the serene soul. When he saw that it had become pure and cleansed in the crucible of struggle and was about to become nothing, he said, “O Moses, do not let it become nothing, for it is the rightful due of that Threshold to receive its service. Repairing its outwardness and taking into consideration its inwardness are obligatory for everyone. ‘Surely your soul has a rightful due against you.’ Beneath it have been placed the treasuries of the secrets of Eternity. If this wall of the soul is laid low, the lordly secrets will fall onto the plain, and every worthless nobody will crave to have them.”

The secret in these words is that the treasure of the Haqiqah has been placed in the attributes of mortal nature, and the stages of the clay of the poor were made its curtain. This is exactly what that chevalier said:

“Seek the religion from the poor, for reigning kings  
have the custom of keeping treasures in ruined places.” [DS 466]

It has also been said that when Khiḍr said about the ship, “*I desired to damage it*” [18:79], he was reporting that he alone desired that; he said, “*I desired to damage it,*” observing courtesy by ascribing to himself the desire for damage. When he reached the talk of the slain boy, he said, “*We desired*” [18:81], because within it was killing, and killing is something earned by the created thing, whereas creation is God’s bounty. When he reached the talk of the two orphans, he said, “*So thy Lord desired that they should reach their maturity*” [18:82], for there was none of his own acquisition in that.

Ibn ʿAṭāʾ said, “When Khiḍr said, ‘*I desired,*’ it was revealed to him in his secret core, ‘Who are you that you should have desire?’ So the second time he said, ‘*We desired,*’ and it was revealed to him in his secret core, ‘Who are you and Moses that you two should have desires?’ So he returned and said, ‘*Your Lord desired.*’”

### **18:110** *Whoever hopes for the encounter with his Lord, let him do wholesome deeds.*

Sahl said, “The wholesome deed is a deed delimited by the Sunnah.”

It has also been said, “The wholesome deed is the one toward which the soul has no regard and within which there is no seeking of reward or recompense.”

It has also been said, “Here the wholesome deed is believing in the permissibility of vision and waiting for its time.”

Whenever someone hopes for the vision of God, let him believe in his heart that God is seeable in face-to-face vision as a hidden mystery and an everlasting love. Whenever someone seeks the

vision of God, he is promised that one day he will reach it: *Whoever hopes for the encounter with his Lord, God's term is coming* [29:5]. He is expecting a great thing and has a tremendous hope. His aspiration has reached such a high place that he hopes for the vision of God. Were there not this hope, what would be the worth of paradise with all its sweetness? Were there not this promise of vision, why would service rise up from the servant's heart?

Everyone has a desire after which he runs, and the recognizer is waiting for the time of vision. People are all passionate for life, so death for them is difficult. The recognizer hurries to death in hope of vision.

What harm if you suffer for a year  
so long as you see the Friend one day in vision.

## Surah 19: Maryam

### 19:1 *Kāf Hā' Yā' 'Ayn Šād*

Hearing these letters is a wine that the Real pours into the hearts of His friends. When they drink it, they seek; when they seek, they rejoice; when they rejoice, they fly; when they fly, they arrive; when they arrive, they depart; when they depart, they join; when they join, they acquire. Then their intellects are drowned in His gentleness, and their hearts absorbed by His unveiling.

Listening to the disconnected letters at the beginning of the surahs and verses is a wine poured into the cup of joy and placed in the goblet of intimacy that is given by the majesty of the unity with the attribute of self-sufficiency to His friends. When the friends of the Real drink this wine of intimacy from the cup of holiness in the garden of gentleness, they rejoice. When they rejoice, they seek. They break the cage of being and fly on the wings of passion to the horizon of the Unseen, reaching the Kaabah of union. When they reach it, they reach themselves, their intellects drowned in gentleness, their hearts consumed by unveiling. The breeze of the Beginningless blows from the side of proximity. They lose themselves and find Him.<sup>1</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "For a long time I was seeking Him and finding myself. Now I seek myself and find Him. O Remembered in the proofs, O Reminder of intimacy! Since You are present, of what use is this seeking? O God, I seek the Found. I say to the Seen, 'What do I have, what should I seek, when will I see, what should I say?' I am entranced by this seeking, I am seized by this speaking. O You who are before each day and separate from everyone! In this celebration a thousand minstrels are not enough for me."

*Kāf Hā' Yā' 'Ayn Šād.* This is the Real's laudation of Himself. With these letters He reminds His creatures of His names and attributes and He praises Himself.

*Kāf:* He is saying, "I am the Great [*kabīr*], I am the Generous [*karīm*]." The Great is an allusion to the majesty and greatness of the Unity, the Generous is an allusion to the beauty and generosity of self-sufficiency. The recognizers are in the unveiling of majesty, the lovers in the contemplation of beauty. When you look at His majesty, you see livers in the midst of blood. When you look at His beauty, you see the comfort of sorrowful hearts. The first is a universe-burning fire, the second a world-brightening light. The first plunders the hearts, the second comforts the spirits.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "His name is my provision, speech the adornment of the tongue, reports the plundering of the heart, face-to-face vision the repose of the spirit. When the foundation of love was laid, it was laid on this basis: at first the spirit's peril, at last everlasting joy. At first wailing, lament, and weeping, at last solace, seclusion, and happiness."

Wait, O chevalier, until this flood reaches the ocean and the goods reach the buyer. The cloud of kindness will begin to weep, and the rose will start to smile. The call of generosity will come from the exalted presence of the Possessor of Majesty: "My servants, My bondsmen, My travelers, My friends, 'I pay attention to the burdens carried for My sake': I saw the suffering that reached you, I heard those laments of yours." The Prophet said, "Eyes will be filled with gazing on His face, and He will speak to them as a man speaks with his sitting companion."

*Hā':* "I am God, the Guide [*hādī*]: I am God, the road-shower, the heart-opener, the truth-adorned. It is I who made the tree of guidance and recognition grow in the garden of your heart, it is I who made the breeze of purity and limpidness blow in the meadow of your breast, it is I who

<sup>1</sup> These two paragraphs are derived from RA 10-11.

made the sun of felicity shine from the sphere of your desire, it is I who made the long road simple and easy for you, it is I who caressed you in the Beginningless before the rushing and running of deeds, it is I who took care of your work without you, it is I who released your heart from the two realms of being for Me.” *We would not have been guided had God not guided us* [7:43].

Kharaqānī said, “He clings to you—you do not cling to Him.”

He has set up the pavilion of generosity, spread the carpet of blessings, and given the call: “*Respond to God’s caller!* [46:31]. O beggars, come to Me! I have no need of you; rather, I have secrets to whisper with you.”

That great man said, “I was walking in the desert and saw someone with one leg, hopping because of the overpowering force of his ecstasy. I said, ‘Where to?’ He said, ‘*The people’s duty to God is to visit the House*’ [3:97]. I said, ‘That fervor will bring suffering.’

“When I reached Mecca, I saw that he had reached it before me. I said, ‘How did you arrive before me?’ He said, ‘Don’t you know that you came with the self-exertion of acquisition, and I came by the attractions of the Unseen? How can what comes by acquisition ever reach what comes from the Unseen?’<sup>2</sup>

*Yā’*. According to Rabī° Anas, the meaning is “O [yā] He *who protects and is not protected against* [23:88].” O Lord, You protect all, but none protects You! You have proof against all, but none has proof against You. All are under Your security, but You are under no one’s security. All are subjugated and You are the subjugator. All are compelled and You are the compeller. All are acted upon and You are the enactor. Exalted is the one You protect, majestic is Your laudation, and there is no god other than You!

°*Ayn*: He is saying, “‘I am the Exalted [°*azīz*], I am the High [°*alī*].’ It is I who am potent against every contender, not resembling any being, standing through My own attributes. I am great beyond all that intelligence shows, I am pure beyond all on which fancy falls.” He is solitary, and thoughts are misguided in describing Him; He is unique, and eyesights are dulled by His Essence. All things have traces bearing witness that He is the exalted, the compeller. He is enduring without disappearance, solitary without companion, knower of all that is in minds and secret cores, turner of the turning wheel, creator of night and day, subjugator, strong, exalted, and compeller.

°*Sād*: He is saying, “I am the Truthful [°*ṣādiq*], I am the Form-giver [*muṣawwir*]. I am the Lord who is true in speech, true in decree, true in work. I am the painter of faces, the adorer of beauties.” God says, “*And He formed you, so He made your forms beautiful*” [40:64]. He brought the one hundred thousand marvels, wonders, and artifacts into the realm of being—from the concealment of nonexistence into the world of existence—but He did not deliver this address to any existent thing or bestow this eminence on any created thing, only this handful of dust: “*So He made your forms beautiful*.” This is so you may know that the dust-dwellers are those caressed by gentleness and pulled up by compassion. They are the narcissus of the meadow of munificence, the cypress of the garden of existence, the jewel-box of the pearls of wisdom, the light in the pupil of the world of power, the blossoms of the garden of creativity. They are the peerless creation, and He is the peerless Creator. About Himself He said, “*the most beautiful of creators*” [23:14], and concerning them He said, “*in the most beautiful stature*” [95:4].

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, Your beginningless solicitude planted the seed of guidance, You watered it with the messages of the prophets, You cultivated it with help and success-giving, and You brought it to fruit with Your own gaze. O Lord, now it would be fitting if You keep the poisons of severity away from it and You help with endless kind favor what You planted with beginningless solicitude.”<sup>3</sup>

2 The explanation of the letter *hā’* is from RA 594-95.

3 A good deal of the previous paragraph is drawn from RA 82, and the prayer that makes up this paragraph is apparently derived from RA 84. Maybudī again attributes the prayer to the Pir of the Tariqah under 52:2, and he uses it without attribution under 44:32. About it, Sam°ānī simply says, “They say,” so it is conceivable that it does go back to Anṣārī. Given the fact that Maybudī takes material from the passage leading up to the prayer from RA, however, it is more likely that he is using “Pir of the Tariqah” in a generic sense.

**19:2 The mention of thy Lord's mercy to His servant Zachariah.**

Here you have the largesse of the Lord's mercy toward His servant. You have the utmost gentleness, perfection, and generosity that He shows through His loving kindness—a mercy that doubt does not reach, a gentleness that thought does not touch. This mercy is bestowed because of the divine bounty and lordly solicitude, not because of worship and the acquisitions of servanthood.

As much as the servant strives in disobedience, God conceals it with His covering. As much as he strives for disgrace, He pours down His blessings upon him. This is why that pir of the Tariqah said, "I reached the point where I do not count God's blessings upon me when I have so many acts of disobedience. I do not know for what I should thank Him: for the beauty of that to which He eases me or the ugliness of what He conceals."

It has been reported that the followed verse was recited before the Messenger: "*Say, 'O My servants who have been immoderate against yourselves, despair not of God's mercy. Surely God forgives the sins altogether'*" [39:53]. The Messenger said, "Indeed He does, and He does not care." Then he said three times, "May God curse those who make people flee," that is, those who make people despair of God's mercy.

It is told that in former times a renunciant worshiped in a monastery for one hundred years, but then caprice overcame him and he acted with disobedience. He regretted that, and he wanted to go back to his devotions in the niche of worship. When he stepped into the niche, Satan came and said to him, "Are you not ashamed that you did something like that and you now come before the Majestic Presence of the Real?" He wanted to make him despair of the Real, so that his despair would add to his sins. In that state he heard a call, "My servant, you have Me, and I have you. Say to this meddler, 'What do you have?'"<sup>4</sup>

**19:3 When he supplicated his Lord secretly.**

The mark of response to supplication is firm fixity in the supplication. If you are firmly fixed in supplication and you remain deprived of the response that is your portion, you will be given the eminence of the worship that is God's rightful due, and the latter step is beyond the former step. This station is greater than that station. The Prophet said, "Supplication is worship."

Know also that in supplication there must be distress, for the Real says, "*He who responds to the distressed when he supplicates Him*" [27:62]. There must be seeking aid, for He says, "*When you sought the aid of your Lord*" [8:9]. There must be pleading, for He says, "*Supplicate your Lord in pleading and secret*" [7:55]. There must be eagerness and dread, for He says "*They were supplicating Us in eagerness and dread*" [21:90]. It must be continuous, not cut off, for He says, "*Those who supplicate their Lord morning and evening*" [18:28]. There must be self-purification, for He says, "*And supplicate Him, purifying the religion for Him*" [7:29]. In a report has come, "God does not respond to the supplication of an inattentive heart." There must be permitted morsels, for the Prophet said, "And his clothing is forbidden, his food is forbidden—so how should he receive a response?"

The servant who has put the preconditions of supplication in place is like a caged bird whose voice is loved by the Lord of the Worlds. People have the custom of catching birds, making cages for them, and keeping them supplied with water and food so that in the morning they will sing. In the same way the Lord of the Worlds brought the worshipers and recognizers into existence, made this world their cage, and prepared benefits and wholesome things for them in this world. He set up their work and then said in the firm text of the Book, "*And in the dawns they would ask for forgiveness*" [51:18]. The servants lament and wail at their own incapacity at the time of dawn, and in His gentleness the Real hears and listens.<sup>5</sup>

**19:39 Warn them of the day of remorse.**

The Day of Remorse is the Day of Resurrection. Wretchedness preceded for one group without their having committing disobedience, and felicity for another group without their having done beautiful deeds.

<sup>4</sup> This story is from RA 339.

<sup>5</sup> The commentary on this verse is derived from RA 381, 383.

The Day of Remorse is the first day in the era of the Beginningless, when it was ruled and decreed that everyone would be given what was suited for him: One would be driven away without any offense, and the other caressed but not because of obedience. For one a robe of elevation was woven without bias, and the other was burned in the fire of severance without iniquity. One was full of joy on the carpet of gentleness and heard the address, “*So rejoice in your sale!*” [9:111]. The other was in the pit of abandonment with the attribute of deprivation and tasted the venom of “*Die in your rage!*” [3:119]. Yes, He put into effect the precedent as He knew it, and He laid down the outcome as He wanted it. He brought into existence a frail arrow compounded of mortal nature and put that arrow into the bow of the beginningless knowledge, firing it at the target of the decree. If it goes straight, the laudation and bravo belong to the shooter; if it goes crooked, the criticism and curse belong to the arrow.

Bewilderment upon bewilderment, thirst upon thirst—  
sometimes supposition becomes certainty, sometimes certainty supposition.  
His presence is exaltation and majesty, His carpet unneediness—  
a hundred thousand caravans have been waylaid in this road.<sup>6</sup>

**19:65** *The Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between the two. So worship Him, and be patient in His worship.*

The keeper of heaven and earth, of Throne and Carpet, of land and sea, is He. His command dominates over all, His will penetrates all. The world and the world’s folk are all His servants and servitors. The seven heavens and the seven earths and everything within them are all His possession and kingdom.

This is a king whose kingship has no removal, whose exaltedness has no abasement, whose seriousness has no levity, whose decree has no rejection, and from whom there is no escape. He revealed to Moses, “‘I am the remedy that clings to you, so cling to the remedy.’ O Moses, I am unavoidable to you. Everything can be avoided, but there is no avoiding Me. Everything can be escaped, but there is no escaping Me. Be a servant, for a servant has no artifice better than servanthood.”<sup>7</sup>

This is why the Lord of the Worlds says in this verse, “*So worship Him, and be patient in His worship.*” The burden of servanthood is a heavy burden, and the road of the Law’s prescription is difficult. Since you know who placed this burden and how to take care of the burden in this road, be patient and do not complain. Whenever someone recognizes the Real’s majesty and knows the destination of this road, the hands of his self-determination will fall short of the two realms of being and the feet of his passion will always be in the road. For him the bottom of a well will be like chieftainship and status.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, sometimes I say I’m in the devil’s grasp, so much covering do I see. Then at times a light shines next to which all mortal nature disappears.

“O God, since the eyes are still waiting for face-to-face vision, what is this trial of the heart? Since this path is all trial, why is there so much pleasure?

“O God, sometimes I spoke to You and sometimes I listened. In the midst of my offenses I thought of Your gentleness. I suffered what I suffered. All became sweet when I heard the voice of acceptance.”

**19:85** *The day We shall muster the godwary to the All-Merciful in droves.*

He did not say, “to the Gardens in droves,” so as to mollify the hearts of the elect among the lovers, for they do not worship Him in hope of the Garden or fear of the Fire. Rather, they worship Him for His sake, for He has promised them that He will muster them to Him.

The paradise-seekers are one thing, the God-seekers something else. He ascribed the paradise-

6 Most of the preceding paragraph is taken from or inspired by RA 183, which also has the first line of the poetry; both lines are found in RA 167.

7 Except for the last sentence, this is from RA 13.

seekers to paradise: “Surely the companions of the Garden today are in an occupation, rejoicing” [36:55]. Concerning the God-seekers He said, “The day We shall muster the godwary to the All-Merciful in droves.”

Mamshād Dīnawārī was in the throes of death. A dervish was standing before him and supplicating: “Lord God, have mercy on him and grant him paradise.” Mamshād looked at him and shouted out, “O heedless man! It has been thirty years that paradise with its marvels and chambers, its houris and palaces, has been disclosing itself, but I have never glanced at it. Now that I am arriving at the drinking place of the Haqiqah, you intrude and want paradise and mercy for me!”<sup>8</sup>

O chevalier, this talk will not fit into just anyone’s craw. It happens that in the pavilions of observation and the stations of generosity these chevaliers become seeking itself—sometimes in the robe of struggle, sometimes in the shirt of contemplation; sometimes in the intoxication of gratitude, sometimes in the sobriety of effacement; they both are and are not, they are both sober and drunk; their hearts are burnt by the fire of jealousy, their spirits drowned in the ocean of bewilderment. They are runners standing still, silent speakers.<sup>9</sup> When tomorrow people are mustered to the Presence of the Possessor of Majesty, everyone will have a mount. One will have the noble horse of obedience, another the Burāq of aspiration, but they will be in the grasp of Unity’s exaltedness.

According to a report, “The spirits of the martyrs are in the craws of green birds.” When the spirits of the martyrs are commanded to depart from this world, they will be put into the craws of green birds and in lamps of light; or, it is said, in the meadows of paradise. As for these chevaliers, the craw of their love is vaster than that they could enter into the craw of a bird.

What is their station? “The spirits of the lovers are in the grasp of Exaltedness. He unveils His Essence to them and is gentle toward them with His attributes.”<sup>10</sup>

What is their conduct? They keep themselves totally occupied with the Beloved; they expend their spirits, hearts, and bodies in His path; they seek conformity with Him silently and aloud, openly and secretly; and they give priority to His portion over their portion. They also recognize themselves as thrown down by incapacity and broken by shortcomings.

What caress do they receive from the Presence of the Possessor of Majesty? *Surely those who have faith and do wholesome deeds, to them the All-Merciful will assign love [19:96]. We are your friends in this world’s life and in the next world [41:31]. He loves them, and they love Him [5:54].*

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “This love is not attached to dust. His love is attached to His own beginningless gaze. If the cause of love were dust, there is plenty of dust in the world.”<sup>11</sup> It is not everywhere that there is love. Rather, He drew lots from His power, and we came out. He took an omen from wisdom, and there we were. When He looks at you, He looks at the property of the Beginningless, not the property of the present moment.

Abū Sulaymān Dārānī wrote to Abū Yazīd, “If someone is heedless of Him and sleeps at night, is it possible that he may reach the way station?”

Abū Yazīd wrote in response, “When the wind of solicitude blows, he will reach the way station without trouble.” If the wind of the beginningless gentleness should blow into his heart from the air of solitariness, he will reach the way station without trouble.

He sees His servants in disobedience and knows that they will repent. His decree for them derives from this repentance, not from that disobedience. He sees that the servant is sinning right now, but he knows that he will become good. He counts him among the wholesome, not the corrupt. In wrath Moses threw the tablets of the Torah on the ground, but God did not rebuke him. Solomon hamstringed the innocent horses, but God said nothing to him about that, for He did not look at the outward act; He looked at the beginningless precedent.

Sometimes He takes to task for a straw, sometimes He pardons for a mountain. He takes to

8 This paragraph is from RA 171.

9 To this point the paragraph is derived from RA 273.

10 These two paragraphs are from RA 348-49.

11 In fact this quote is taken from RA 425, where Sam‘ānī ascribes it to his father (Abu’l-Muẓaffar Maṣṣūr ibn Muḥammad Sam‘ānī, d. 1096).

task for a straw because of power; He pardons for a mountain because of mercy: “When I affirmed friendship for you in the Beginningless, I drew a line around you. If you had had to be without sin, I would have created you without sin. I created you as you had to be. Have no confidence in the friendship of someone who loves you only as sinless. If I had given you sinlessness and there had been nothing but purity from you, you would have been a partner with the majesty of Unity. But I am a Lord without partner, without peer, without equal, and without need. Whenever I have written out friendship for someone, I indeed take care of his work and I suffice for his adversaries. Whenever anyone comes forth as an adversary to one of My friends, I am his adversary. ‘When someone torments a friend of Mine, he is competing with Me in a battle.’ You saw that Iblis said one word about you and became accursed forever.<sup>12</sup> Nimrod, with all his height and breadth, I destroyed with half a gnat as retribution for the pain in Abraham’s heart. In the era of Noah I drowned a world of creatures as recompense for the pain in Noah’s heart because of the cruelties that had reached him from them. Yes, whenever someone is chosen by Me as the locus of My secrets and the springhead of My lights, his heart is adorned with My remembrance, and My work is to make his work wholesome.”

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<sup>12</sup> Up to here these five paragraphs are derived from RA 425-26.

## Surah 20: Ṭāhā

### 20:5 *The All-Merciful sat on the Throne.*

In the Qur'an He mentioned seven times that He is sitting on the Throne.

Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, “The sitting of the Lord on the Throne is in the Qur'an, and I have faith in it. I do not seek interpretation, for interpretation in such topics is rebellion. I accept the outward meaning and surrender to the inner meaning. This is the belief of the Sunnis, whose path is to accept with the spirit what is not perceived.

“My faith comes by hearing, my Shariah comes by reports, my recognition comes by finding. I assent to the reports, I realize the found, and I follow the heard with the tool of intellect, the witnessing of His artisanry, the evidence of light, the allusions of the revelation, the message of the Messenger, and the condition of surrender.

“Nonetheless, I know for sure that He is not one who takes up place out of need, for He shows places for argument. The Throne does not elevate God, for God elevates and preserves the Throne. He made the Throne for seekers of God, not recognizers of God. The God-seeker is one thing, the God-recognizer something else. He says to the God-seekers, ‘*The All-Merciful sat on the Throne.*’ He says to the God recognizers, ‘*And He is with you*’ [57:4] on the Throne by Essence, in knowledge everywhere, through companionship with the spirit, and through nearness with the soul.”

O chevalier, do not put down your bags in the seclusion of *He is with you*, for *High indeed is God, the King, the Real* [20:114] applies to Him. Do not relax on the carpet of *We are nearer* [50:16], for beneath it is *They measured not God with the rightful due of His measure* [22:74]. Do not be bold because of *Faces that day will be radiant, gazing upon their Lord* [75:22-23], for above it is *Eyesights perceive Him not* [6:103]. Whatever *He is the First* gives, He is *the Last* snatches away; whatever He is *the Outward* shows, He is *the Inward* [57:3] effaces.

What is all this? This is so that the person of faith will circle around between fear and hope, and the recognizer between contraction and expansion. You cannot say that you cannot find, for the Shariah disputes that. Nor can you say that you can find, for the Exaltedness does not approve.<sup>1</sup>

He is exalted and tremendous, one whose measure is not recognized and whose rightful due is not perceived. He is gentle and loving, one who *loves them, and they love Him* [5:54].

### 20:7 *Even if thou speakest aloud, yet surely He knows the secret and the most hidden.*

The soul is not informed of what is in the heart, the heart is not informed of the secrets of the spirit, and the spirit has no access to the realities of the *secret*. As for that which is *most hidden*, no one is aware of it but the Real.<sup>2</sup>

What does the soul know of what is placed in the treasure-house of the heart? What does the heart know of the subtleties inside the sanctuary of the spirit? What does the spirit know of the deposits in the pavilion of the secret core? What does the secret core know of the realities in the most hidden?

The soul is the locus of the Trust, the heart the house of recognition, the spirit the target of contemplation, and the secret core the place where passion puts down its saddlebags. As for the most hidden, the Real knows what it is—people's imaginations and understandings are

<sup>1</sup> These two paragraphs are derived largely from RA 430-31.

<sup>2</sup> LI 4:118.

empty of knowing it.

**20:8 *God, there is no god but He. To Him belong the most beautiful names.***

Whenever a sultan is about to dismount at a house, a chamberlain must go beforehand and sweep the house. He cleans it of rubbish and refuse and puts down the sultan's royal seat. Then, when the sultan enters, the work will be finished and the house ready. When the exalted sultan of *but God* descends into the breast of the servant, the chamberlain of *no god* comes beforehand. It sweeps the courtyard of the breast with the broom of disengagement and solitariness and destroys the rubbish and refuse of mortal nature and sataninity and throws them out. It sprinkles the water of approval and spreads the carpet of loyalty. It lights up the sandalwood of limpidness in the incense-burner of friendship. It puts down the royal seat of felicity and the cushion of mastery. When the sultan of *but God* arrives, it leans on the sofa of the secret core in the cradle of the Covenant.

Depend upon My spirit—may it be your sacrifice!—

Why do you depend on your corner of the world's house?<sup>3</sup>

**20:9-10 *Hast thou received the story of Moses when he saw a fire?***

Fire is a mark of munificence and a proof of generosity. The Arabs would light up a fire to bring guests. But no one has ever found a banquet through a fire like Moses, and no one has seen a host from a fire like God. Moses was seeking a fire to light up a tent. He found a fire that burns spirit and heart. All fires burn the body, but the fire of friendship burns the spirit. No one can be patient with a spirit-burning fire.

Fires are of different sorts: the fire of shame, the fire of yearning, the fire of love. The fire of shame burns away dispersion, the fire of yearning burns away patience, and the fire of love burns away the two worlds such that nothing remains but the Real. The evidence of having found friendship is that the two worlds are burned away. The mark of the realizer is that he does not attend to anything other than the Real. The mark of nonbeing is to reach oneself. When rain reaches the ocean, it has reached it. He who reaches the Patron reaches himself.<sup>4</sup>

**20:12 *Surely I am thy Lord. Take off thy shoes!***

Moses had reached the head of *tawhīd*'s drinking place when he heard the words, "*Surely I am thy Lord.*" He was commanded to step into the world of solitariness. He placed his feet on the two worlds and made his aspiration one for the Patron. *Take off thy shoes!* That is, empty your heart of talk of the two worlds and become disengaged for the Real with the attribute of solitariness. O Moses, be one for the One, first in the disengagement of the intention, and second in the breeze of intimacy. Disown the two worlds so that the breeze of intimacy may begin to blow from the desert of the Endless. The veil of division has been lifted, and the call of gentleness has reached the spirit.

**20:17 *What is that in thy right hand, O Moses?***

When Moses heard the address, "*Surely I am thy Lord,*" the ruling power of awe began to attack and he fell into bewilderment and confoundedness. Because of the force of that awe, ease did not remain in its place. His body was not able to bear it with patience, and his heart was not able to busy itself with intellect. The Lord of the Worlds attended to his heart with the call of gentleness; He began speaking about his staff. He said, "*What is that in thy right hand, O Moses?*"

He said, "*It is my staff*" [20:18].

The command came, "*Throw it down, O Moses!*" [20:19]. Throw down this staff concerning which you say that it is your staff."

Moses threw it down and it became a snake. When he saw that the snake aimed to come after

<sup>3</sup> The paragraph and line are from RA 7-8.

<sup>4</sup> These two sentences, often quoted by Maybudī, are from the discussion of annihilation in Anṣārī's *Ṣad maydān* 333; usually Maybudī quotes them without ascription, but under 47:19 he attributes them to the Pir of the Tariqah, one of the few instances in which he acknowledges using one of his treatises other than the unknown "commentary" (cf. the introduction).

him, he was frightened and fled. The call came, “*Take it, and fear not!* [20:21]. O Moses, pick up the snake and do not fear. This is that very staff of which you spoke, claiming it was your staff. O Moses, what do you have to do with making claims? The men of the road make no claims and ascribe nothing to themselves.”

It was the attribute of Moses’ own being and the traces of his claim that turned toward him in that Presence, for the claims of mortal nature were still staining his innate disposition. The stain appeared with the claim *my staff*, so it was said to him, “O Moses, there is still something of egoism in you.” It was a mercy from the Real to Moses that He said, “*What is that in thy right hand, O Moses?*,” for the claim appeared from his makeup, and when he was made aware of it, he left the claim behind and shook the dust from the cloak of his sinlessness.

**20:22** *Clasp thy hand to thy side. It will come forth white without ugliness, as another sign.*

Moses had two miracles. One was outside of himself, namely the staff, and the other was within himself, namely the white hand. The staff was a sample of the signs of the horizons, and the white hand was a sample of the signs of the souls. The Lord of the Worlds built the road of *tawhīd* on the recognition of these two. He says, “*We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in their souls until it is clear to them that He is the Real!*” [41:53].

**20:23** *That We may show thee some of Our greatest signs.*

The greatest sign was the witnessing and finding that came to him, the varieties of states perceived by the servant’s tasting that do not derive from self-exertion and self-determination.<sup>5</sup>

In reality the greatest sign is that which is hidden from the eyes of the creatures and free of the servant’s self-exertion and self-determination. Unasked for, a wine comes from the Unseen and reaches the servant’s secret core, so he finds its taste in his spirit—a spiritual delight with a hundred thousand hidden drums, an everlasting resurrection. The soul is mixed with companionship, the spirit clinging to its desire, the heart drowned in the light of finding. Because of the drowning the servant does not discern the seeking from the finding. Because of the radiance of finding, it cannot be expressed. He burns in the fire of love and does not turn back from joy.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, when that which cannot be asked for comes to be found, who asked for it? When something is beyond reward, what is asking next to it? Everything that comes from the rain of favor is the springtime of that very moment, and everything that comes from undertaking and asking is aid sought by the servant. O God, knowledge and striving are the Adamite’s tribulation, but everyone’s portion from You is worthy of Your beginningless deed.”

**20:40** *And We tried thee with trials.*

In other words, “We cooked you well with trial until you became limpid and immaculate, then We took you totally to Ourselves, so that you would not belong to any other.”<sup>6</sup>

“O Moses, We took you to the oven of trial and put you into self-purification so that nothing would remain in your heart but My love and nothing on your tongue but My remembrance.”

What were those trials and troubles that sat on his head? When he was first born he was born in secrecy, in a house without lamp, poor, without pleasures. His mother could not have a son because of fear of Pharaoh, who was killing sons. She put him into the casket and threw it in the river. His first home was the river. His second home was the sword, the execution ground, and seeing the enemy. His third home was fear of the Egyptians, because he had killed one of them. Then he fled looking back at them, his heart upset, his spirit bewildered, his feet bare, and his stomach hungry. He did not know where to go, and then he reached Midian and became a wage-earner and a shepherd with Shu<sup>‘</sup>ayb. In burning and remorse because of constant tribulation he said,

“How long will You drive me to every street?

How long will You make me taste every poison?

5 LI 4:125.

6 The second half of this sentence is from LI 4:129.

First You toss me in the river,  
then You show me to the enemy.  
Then You throw me into exile  
working for Shu<sup>c</sup>ayb as a shepherd.  
How could a shepherd have the worth  
for You to call him without intermediary?  
Then You bring him to Mount Sinai,  
You speak with him countless words.  
And if he says, 'I want vision from You,'  
You say to him, 'Moses, *thou shalt not see Me*' [7:143]."

Thus He threw him into trial mixed with gentleness, He adorned him with wounds mixed with tenderness, and He washed him with many sorts of trial. What was all this for? It was so that he would belong to Him, just as He says:

**20:41** *"I chose thee for Myself."*

"O Moses! You were not worthy—you had little worthiness—for Me to choose you. That was not for you, but rather for Me." This is why, when he seized his brother by the head and pulled him severely, He did not say, "Why did you do that?" When he punched out the eye of Azrael with his fist, He did not say, "Why did you do that?" When he threw the tablets of the Torah on the ground, He did not say, "Why did you throw them?" Yes, within the curtain of friendship things go on that outside the curtain of friendship would all be faults, but inside the curtain of friendship are tolerated.

When the beloved comes with one sin,  
his beautiful traits come with a thousand interceders.<sup>7</sup>

**20:55** *From it We created you and to it We shall return you.*

Know that the Adamite is two things: spirit and body. The spirit is from light, and light is celestial. The body is from dust, and dust is terrestrial. The spirit wants to go up because it is celestial. The body wants to go down because it is terrestrial. In the perfection of His power, the King bound the two together. The spirit was bound to the body, and the body was bound to the spirit, so both are in bonds. The spirit and the body settled down together.

On the day of death, when the life of the servant comes to an end and the moment of death arrives, the bonds are loosened, as when a bird comes out of its cage. The spirit rises up from the body and goes skyward to its nest. The body takes the road of the earth to its center. The spirit is put into a lantern of light, which is hung from the tree of blessedness. The body is wrapped in a shroud and entrusted to the earth. This is why the Lord of the worlds says, "*From it We created you and to it We shall return you.*" After a few days pass, the spirit comes to gaze on the body. It sees the state of the body changed and it laments. It says, "O heed-taking eyesight, O narcissus-like eyes, where is your seeing? O wisdom-speaking tongue, where is your sweet talking? O painted, lovely face, where is your adornment and beauty? O you who came from dust, were supported by dust, were provided for by dust, were put back into dust, and became nothing in dust!"

O father of dust, is not our creation  
from dust, and our return to dust?  
So what is the meaning of regret when we bury  
dust in dust, O father of dust!

It is as if the King is saying, "Once I make dust the cause of being, and then again I make it the cause of nonbeing. Thus the world's folk will know that I am perfectly powerful, and I give being to all that is."

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<sup>7</sup> The line of poetry and the last sentence of the preceding paragraph are from RA 169.

O chevalier! If you ever pass through a graveyard, be careful to look at that encampment with an eye to taking heed. It is not dust that you see, it is the bodies of the dear ones, the flesh and skin of the young, the elegant stature of those nurtured in joy, the hair and beards of the old folk.

We have decayed, but the rising stars have not.

The mountains remain after us, and the artifacts.

Thābit Bunānī said, “I went to the graveyard with the intention a making a visit. A caller called out, ‘O Thābit! Do not be deluded by the silence of its folk, for there is many a grief-stricken soul within!’”

Mujāhid said, “When the servant is put into the dust, the dust speaks to him, saying, ‘I am the house of worms, the house of loneliness, the house of exile, and the house of darkness. This is what I have prepared for you. What then have you prepared for me?’

“If the servant had been a rememberer in this world, the Exalted Lord will say, ‘My angels! There is an exile whose folk have turned away from him, a lonely man whose relatives have become disloyal toward him. He was remembering Me in the world. O helpless and hapless servant! O you whose hope’s army has taken the road of flight! O you whose life’s furnishings have been plundered! O you whose means and work have been disabled! O you whose spirit reached the edge in the agonies of death! O you whose talking tongue has been silenced! O you whose knowing heart has turned to blood in terror of the Hour! All have gone, and I remain. All have turned back, and I am still loyal. All have left you, and I have picked you up. My servant, they have abandoned you. By My exaltedness and majesty, I will cover you with My mercy!’”

*From it We created you and to it We shall return you.* The Adamites are frames and deposits. The bodies are the frames, and the spirits are the deposits. The frames are related to dust, and the deposits are described by proximity. He nurtures the frames with His bounteousness, and He nurtures the deposits with the unveiling of His majesty and the gentleness of His beauty.

Today the frames cling to the carpet of worshipping Him, and the deposits are qualified by constantly recognizing Him. The deeds of the frames are fasting and prayer, and the gifts of the deposits are whispered secrets and delight. He says to the frames, “*When thou art idle, labor*” [94:7]. He says to the deposits, “*And be eager for thy Lord*” [94:8].

He gives the caressing of the frames on credit, for He says, “*As for him who fears the standing place before his Lord and prohibits the soul its caprice, surely the Garden shall be the shelter*” [79:40-41]. The deposits give themselves over only to the hard cash of the present moment, for He says, “I am the sitting companion of him who remembers Me,” “I am with My servant’s opinion of Me,” and “*He is with you wherever you are*” [57:4].

In the beginningless Covenant, He said to the frames in the manner of the powerful, “I am God.” He said to the deposits in the manner of friends, “I am the friend.” The former was to make manifest lordhood and power, the latter was to make manifest love and affection. To the frames He said, “You belong to Me.” To the deposits He said, “I belong to you.”<sup>8</sup>

**20:74-75** *Whoever comes to his Lord as an offender will have Gehenna, wherein he will neither die nor live, and whoever comes to Him faithful, having done wholesome deeds—they will have the highest degrees.*

In the tasting of the lords of recognition and the chevaliers of the Tariqah, these two verses allude to two groups: The exalted threshold of the Possessor of Majesty will show its face to one group in the attribute of vengeance. It will lift away the curtain of splendor from their work by the decree of severity, pull back the mask of respect from the face of their status, write the inscription of abandonment on the hem of their present moment, and make them the kiblāh of the whole world’s rejection. Sometimes they will be bewildered in the claws of contraction, and sometimes they will be terrified by the fear of severity. There will be no caressing of the heart and no poison with which to kill the soul: *wherein he will neither die nor live*. He will not be bold enough to return,

8 The discussion of frames and deposits is partly quoted from and certainly inspired by Sam‘ānī’s discussion of frames and hearts, RA 154-55.

nor will he have the gall to go forward. With the tongue of misery he will say in his helplessness,

“I am not drunk from the cup of my existence, neither am I not.  
I am not low beneath the kicks of the spheres, neither am I not.  
Neither the spirit’s ease nor the heart’s pain—woe is me!  
O Lord, who am I that I am not in being, neither am I not?”

The self-disclosure of the beautiful gaze of the Real’s gentleness will join with the other group. They receive one caress today, another tomorrow. Today they are on the carpet of expansiveness, taking their ease in the garden of intimacy and delight. At every moment and instant, overflowing cups are poured for them from the wine-house of love. Tomorrow in the Gardens of Refuge and the highest degrees, they will be wearing the waistcoat of endless subsistence and the robe of the everlasting kingdom, seated on the couch of prosperity in contemplation of the King, the Possessor of Majesty, the cups of union continuous, the robes of bounteousness successive, at each moment a caress and an acceptance, at each instant an opening and an arrival, for the Lord of the Worlds says,

**20:76** *Therein dwelling forever; that is the recompense of those who purify themselves.*

As for the marks of the coming of this good fortune and the traces of finding this rank and way station, these are that the servant lifts the veil of heedlessness from his road and pulls back his cloak from the legs of seriousness. He disciplines his soul with the courteous acts of the Shariah and takes the rightful due of the religion from the days of intelligence. He strives to straighten out his deeds and words according to the yardstick of the Shariah and the requisites of the Haqiqah. He makes the decree of the following verse requisite on himself. He knows that the Exalted Lord says,

**20:82** *Surely I am all-forgiving toward the one who repents and has faith and does wholesome deeds, and then is guided.*

*All-forgiving* is an intensive form and requires manyness. In other words, God is vast in forgiveness. *Toward the one who repents* is the act of the servant, and the act does not require manyness. The allusion of the verse is that if the servant should turn back to the Real once in regret, the Exalted Lord will turn to him many times in gentleness and mercy. From the servant there will be one step in the road of struggle, and from God a thousand generousities by virtue of solicitude. “My servant, from you a little obedience, from Me great mercy; from you a bit of service, from Me much blessing.” This is the same as what Muṣṭafā said, narrating from the Eternal Enactor: “When someone comes near to Me by a span, I come near to him by a cubit, and when someone comes near to Me by a cubit, I come near to him by a fathom.”

*Surely I am all-forgiving toward the one who repents and has faith.* It is known that repentance without faith is not sound. So what is the profit here of *and has faith*? It means *and has faith* that his salvation does not come through his own repentance and obedience. His salvation comes only through His mercy.

*Ghaffār* [all-forgiving] comes from *ghafr*, and the meaning of *ghafr* is to cover. It is to keep the servant concealed and to hold the curtain of pardon and mercy over his words and deeds, both obedience and disobedience. Not only do the servant’s acts of disobedience need concealing, but also his obedience needs concealing. If the blights of the servant’s obedience were brought forward, he would fear obedience more than he fears disobedience.

°Ā’isha narrated as follows: “I asked Muṣṭafā the meaning of the verse, *Those who give what they give, their hearts quaking* [23:60]. ‘Are they the ones who fornicate, steal, and drink wine’

“He replied, ‘No, they are the ones who pray, fast, give alms, and then fear that these will not be accepted.’”

Rābi’a °Adawiyya often used to say, “I ask forgiveness from God for my lack of truthfulness in saying, ‘I ask forgiveness from God.’”

Know, O chevalier, that the curtains are two: One has been lifted, and may it never be let down! The other has been let down, and may it never be lifted! The curtain that has been lifted is the veil of reflective thought before the hearts of the *tawḥīd*-voicers and the breasts of the faithful.

The curtain that has been let down is the covering of generosity before the words and deeds of the disobedient, the obedient, the sincerely truthful, and the godwary.

By the decree of eternity the curtain of generosity was lifted from the obedience of Iblis, so all of it became disobedience.

When someone is not worthy for union,  
all of his beautiful doing is sin.

By the decree of gentleness and generosity, the curtain of pardon was let down over the slip of Adam. The beginningless solicitude loosened its tongue and said, “*But he forgot, and We found in him no resoluteness*” [20:115].<sup>9</sup>

When someone is not worthy for separation,  
all of his bodily members are hearts.

**20:83 “*And what has made thee hurry from thy people, O Moses!*”**

This is a rebuke of Moses, for he left his people behind and went on ahead of them. He hurried to the promised meeting with the Real, who said: “O Moses, do you not know that I love the weak and I caress the broken more than others? I am always looking into their hearts, and I love all those in whose hearts I look.”

Then Moses offered an excuse:

**20:84 *He said, “They are close upon my footsteps, and I hurried to Thee, my Lord, that Thou mayest approve.”***

“*They are close upon my footsteps.* I did not leave them behind out of neglect, *and I hurried to Thee, my Lord, that Thou mayest approve.* O Lord, You Yourself know and You are aware of my secret core. With this hurry I did not want to neglect them, nor was I aiming to abandon attending to the rightful due of companionship with them. Rather, I wanted Your approval and I was seeking an increase in Your satisfaction.”

He said, “O Moses, My approval lies in taking care of their hearts. ‘I am with those whose hearts are broken for My sake.’ ‘I am the sitting-companion of him who remembers Me.’ O Moses, when you seek Me, seek Me in their hearts, for I sit with the rememberers in the solitariness of *And He is with you* [57:4]. I am the intimate of the hearts of the poor, the remembrance of the spirits of the recognizers, present with the mystery of the lovers, the light of the eyes of the familiar, the resource of the frightened, the traveling supplies of the distressed, and the refuge of the weak. O Moses, wherever you see a poor man, thrown down by the iniquity of the days, wounded by the times, be his servitor. As long as you can, do not seek to be apart from him. Be the purchaser of his companionship, for his makeup is the storehouse of the secrets of the Beginningless and preparation for the bazaar of the Endless.”

He gave Muṣṭafā the same advice: “*And let not thine eyes turn away from them* [18:28]. O Muḥammad, be careful not to turn your eyes away from them. Do not sell them to others, for they are the ones pulled up by My remembrance, named by My bounty, adorned by My gentleness, lifted up by My will. They have come forth from knowledge, are displayed by predetermination, have found the mark of the desire, and were pulled up by the signet of the decree.

“In the Beginningless they were made apparent by My knowledge, today they are existent by My command, tomorrow they will be kept by My decree. Knowledge has the rulership of the Beginningless, the command has the rulership of the present moment, the decree has the rulership of the Endless.

“When a sultan has special friends, he gives each of them a rulership. The rulerships are three: the rulership of the Beginningless, the rulership of the present moment, the rulership of the Endless. O knowledge, you take the side of the Beginningless! O command, you take the road of the present moment! O decree, you seize the skirt of the Endless!

<sup>9</sup> Most of this discussion of forgiveness and the two curtains is drawn from RA 87-88.

“O child of Adam! I gave you three attributes, and in the end I conveyed you to Myself. First I entrusted you to the sultan of knowledge, then I gave you to the king of the command, then I surrendered you to the emperor of the decree. Then I gave this call in the world: ‘*Surely the final end is unto thy Lord*’ [53:42]. O knowledge, you give to the command. O command, you give to the decree. O decree, you give to Me.”

Knowledge is all limpidness, the command is all trial, the decree is all subsistence. Who knows what is made ready inside these secrets?<sup>10</sup>

**20:105-6** *They ask thee about the mountains. Say, “My Lord will scatter them as ashes.”*

In the outwardness He is showing His awesomeness, forcefulness, and exaltation to the creatures. In the inwardness He is bestowing eminence on His servants and friends: “We turned this earth into your bedspread and made it your carpet. If you are not there, of what use is the carpet? We made the heaven your roof, the stars your indications, the sun your cook, the moon your burning candle. When you go, of what use is the candle, what will be done by the indications? When a carpet is prepared for a friend and he goes, it must be taken up. When you go, We will take up this carpet, for We will not create anyone else. *He it is who created for you all that is in the earth* [2:29]. Heaven and earth, moon and sun, unshakeable mountains and surging oceans—these are the go-betweens of your road. Each has a torch in its hand and holds it over your road.

“Tomorrow at the time of gazing, We will lift away everything from before you. We will say, ‘The reports have gone, the gaze has come.’”

Proofs are needed when there is no face-to-face vision. When face-to-face vision comes, what good are proofs? Go-betweens are useful as long as the friend has not reached the friend. When the friend reaches the friend, what use are go-betweens? Since the days were the days of reports, the hoopoe was needed to give the reports [to Solomon]. But when the era of the gaze arrives, the hoopoe is of no use. As long as Muṣṭafā was in Mecca, Gabriel used to come and go. When he reached the Lote Tree of the Final End, Gabriel stood still. He said, “Now I have become a veil. The friend has reached the friend, and the intermediary is of no use, the go-between is nothing more than a veil.”<sup>11</sup>

**20:115** *And We made covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found in him no resoluteness.*

Until the end of this section is the story of Adam and the compact of his vicegerency. First he was addressed by awesomeness. He saw the whip of rebuke, and he stepped into the street of fear and wept. Then he was sat down on gentleness. The beginningless solicitude arrived, he saw the crown of chosenness, and he was happy on the carpet of hope. Yes, it was a work already done, a decree made ready in the Beginningless. Adam had not yet slipped when the tailor of gentleness sewed the waistcoat of his repentance, and Iblis had not yet stepped into disobedience when the druggist of severity mixed the draft of the poison of his curse.<sup>12</sup>

The beginning of the traces of the beginningless solicitude for Adam was that the exalted majesty of the Unity Itself in Its perfect self-sufficiency took a handful of dust from the earth: “Surely God created Adam from a handful taken from the entire surface of the earth.” Then He placed it in the mold of the stature, as He said: “*Surely We created man in the most beautiful stature*” [95:4]. Then He brought him into the ferment of bringing to be: “He fermented the clay of Adam in His hand for forty days.” Then He sat the spirit-king on the royal seat of his makeup: “*I have blown into him of My spirit*” [15:29]. Then He read out the edict of his vicegerency and sultanate in the kingdom of the beginningless: “*Surely I am setting in the earth a vicegerent*” [2:30]. He recorded the names of all existent things with the pen of the gentleness of Eternity on the tablet of his heart: “*And He taught Adam the names, all of them*” [2:31]. He commanded the glorifiers and hallowers of the Holy Pali-

<sup>10</sup> These last four paragraphs are taken from RA 235.

<sup>11</sup> The commentary on this verse is derived from RA 481-82.

<sup>12</sup> This sentence is from RA 71.

sades and the Gardens of Intimacy to prostrate themselves before the throne of his good fortune: “*And when We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate yourselves before Adam’*” [2:34].<sup>13</sup>

Know that this level, distinction, and rank was not for the clay. Rather, it belonged to the sultan of the heart. In the core of Adam’s heart He deposited one of the divine subtleties, royal secrets, and unseen meanings, a secret concealed by the curtain of *Say: “The spirit is of the command of my Lord”* [17:85].

God gave back a mark of this hidden secret on Muṣṭafā’s tongue made pure: “He created Adam in His form.” When the Higher Plenum saw his greatness and elevation, they threw their spirits on the holy doorstep of dust.<sup>14</sup>

O chevalier! Adam was dust. He had not yet seen the mold of Power and had not come out from behind the curtain of subtle artisanry. The light of the secret of Knowledge had not yet shone on him and the secret of union and the reality of the with-ness of love had not yet shown their faces. Once these meanings became manifest and these pearls of the realities were placed in the drawer of his heart, do not call him “dust” [*khāk*], call him “pure” [*pāk*]. Do not call him “*fetid mud*” [15:26], call him “*hidden pearl*” [52:24]. If the alchemy that is made by creatures is worthy of turning copper into gold, why should the love that is the attribute of the Real not be worthy of purifying dust of its opacity and making it the crown on the head of the spheres? If a rose comes from the clay that you mold, what wonder if a heart comes from the clay that He molds?<sup>15</sup>

**20:121-22** *And Adam disobeyed his Lord, so went astray. Then his Lord chose him, so He turned toward him and guided.*

One of the pirs of the Tariqah was asked, “Given all the good fortune, rank, standing, and proximity that Adam the chosen had with the Real, what wisdom is there in the call that went out concerning him, ‘*And Adam disobeyed*’?”

The Pir answered with the tongue of wisdom and the tasting of recognition: “The seed of love had been thrown into the earth of Adam’s heart. Then the canal of his eyes was opened for the water of remorse, and the sun of *And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord* [39:69] shone forth on that good clay, receptive to the seed of pain. The tree of love grew up, and the air of *But he forgot* [20:115] nurtured it in the field of paradise. The sun of *We found in him no resoluteness* [20:115] dried it. Then He cut it down with the scythe of *Then his Lord chose him*. Then, with the wind of *So He turned toward him and guided*, He made it pure. Then He wanted to cook it with fire, so He heated an oven with the harshness of *And Adam disobeyed* and cooked that food of passion in the oven. The flavor of that food had still not reached Adam’s taste buds when he let loose the tongue of need and said, ‘*Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves*’ [7:23].”

It has also been said<sup>16</sup> that Adam had two existences. The first existence was in this world, not paradise, and the second was in paradise. The command came, “O Adam, come out of paradise and go into this world. Gamble away your crown, belt, and cap in the road of passion! Put up with pain and trial. Then tomorrow We will bring you back to this precious homeland and this domicile of subsistence with a hundred thousand robes of gentleness and every sort of honor, as the leader of the witnesses and in the presence of the one-hundred-twenty some thousand center points of prophecy, the possessors of purity and the sources of limpidness.”

Tomorrow, you will see Adam go into paradise with his children. The angels of the Dominion will look with wonder and say, “This is that solitary man who moved out of paradise a few days ago in poverty and indigence!”

“O Adam, bringing you out of paradise was a curtain over this business and a covering over the mysteries, for your loins were the ocean of the one-hundred-twenty some thousand center points of prophethood’s pearls. Suffer a bit of trouble, then in a few days, take the treasure!”

13 This paragraph is derived from RA 63.

14 The paragraph is from RA 164.

15 Derived from RA 234.

16 From here to the end of the commentary on this verse, the text is almost identical with RA 91-92.

“O Muḥammad! When We put the Meccans up to throwing you out of Mecca, We also commanded you—‘Make the hijrah, go to Medina, put on the clothing of exile, and go to the corner of remorse with Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī.’<sup>17</sup> All this was making ready. The goal was to bring you back to Mecca on the Day of the Conquest along with ten thousand sword-wielding, spear-throwing warriors so that the nobles of Quraysh and the leaders of the unbelievers would be in wonder: ‘This is that man who fled all alone. Now look at what his work has reached!’

“In the same way We said to the pure, holy spirit, ‘You are the quarry of subtleness and the source of repose and comfort! It is We who sent you to the homeland of exile, kept you in the company of the turmoil-inducing soul, and imprisoned you in this dustbin. The goal was to call you back at the end of this business to Our own Presence with a hundred thousand robes of gentleness, kindly gifts, and secret bestowals: *O serene soul, return to thy Lord, approving, approved!* [89:27-28].’

“O Adam, though We sent you to this world in the companionship of the serpent and Iblis, We brought you back in the companionship of mercy and forgiveness with the escort of prosperity and good fortune. O Muḥammad, though We brought you out of Mecca with the attribute of abasement, We brought you back with conquest, victory, and triumph in the attribute of exaltedness. O exalted spirit, though We afflicted you for a few days in this dustbin, this domicile of grief, this house full of the sorrows of separation, and We kept you for a time in the company of the commanding soul, in the end We brought you back in the company of approval and with the escort of the address, ‘*Return to thy Lord*’ to the neighborhood of generosity.”

**20:124** *And whosoever turns away from My remembrance, he shall have a life of narrowness, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall muster him blind.*

Concerning this verse Jaʿfar Ṣādiq said, “Had they recognized Me, they would not have turned away from Me. When someone turns away from Me, I will restore him to turning toward the kinds and colors appropriate for him.”

Whoever recognizes Him remembers Him in every state and turns away from remembering everything except Him. Whoever knows Him will always be remembering Him and persevere in performing the obligatory and supererogatory acts, putting aside his own steps and seeking everything rightfully due to Him. Whenever someone turns aside from remembering the Real for one instant in his life and turns to remembering the creatures, the veiled virgin of recognition will conceal her face from him and he will never have a portion of her beauty. This is the case of someone who turns away from His remembrance for one instant in his whole life. How about someone who does not turn toward the remembrance of the Real for one instant in his whole life?

The paragon of the world, the center point of the circle of newly arrived things, was addressed by the Compeller of the engendered beings, “O master! It does not please Me that in the two worlds you should rely on any but Me, that on your tongue should be the remembrance of any but Me, that in your heart should be love for any but Me. I will bring everyone out against you and make them all your antagonists so that you will remember none but Me in the two worlds.” The first He brought out against him were his family, tribe, and relatives so that, when he saw disloyalty from his near ones, he would not place his heart in his far ones. The Real wanted to turn his heart away from the creatures and unbind his secret core from the whole world and join it with Himself, “for conjunction with the Real is in the measure of disjunction from the creatures.”<sup>18</sup>

Wāsiṭī said, “Whoever looks at Him does not look at himself. Whoever remembers Him forgets to remember himself.”

Remembrance of self and remembrance of creatures are the seeds of sorrows. Remembrance

17 When Muḥammad entered Medina on his camel, he refused to accept the hospitality of any of those who offered it and instead let his camel wander until it found a place that suited it. It finally knelt down near the house of Abū Ayyūb Khālīd ibn Zayd, who took the saddle into his house. It was there that Muḥammad lived until he built his own house and a mosque on the site where his camel had knelt. Abū Ayyūb participated in most of the early battles of the Muslim community and was finally killed in the year 52/672 on the outskirts of Constantinople, now known as Istanbul. His tomb there is an important site of pilgrimage.

18 These two paragraphs are based on RA 342.

is remembrance of the Real—the rest is nothing but loss.

If He had not remembered you in the Beginningless, how would you have the gall to remember Him? If this lofty signet had not come forth from the Presence of Exaltation—“*So remember Me; I will remember you*” [2:152]—how would you have dared to dream of His remembrance or to pass His name through your mind?

There were people in the deserts of bewilderment and the darkneses of reflective thought. The lordly gentleness and divine assistance traveled into the world of dust and turned the orphan of Abū Ṭālib into the unique pearl of every seeker. When that master of the two realms of being came, he spread the tablecloth and called out an invitation. The chieftains of the Quraysh like Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab did not respond. They said that chieftains and paragons disdain to be present at the beck and call of beggars. That invitation of the paragon of the two realms of being traveled around the regions of the world looking for someone burnt who would respond. Bilāl Ḥabashī heard the paragon’s invitation and set out on the road. Ṣuhayb heard it in Byzantium—head spinning, he hurried off. Salmān set off from Persia like one of the passionate. When they arrived, they sat down at the tablecloth. Good fortune clapped its hands, and the sun of felicity reached perfection in the heaven of desire.

The stalwarts and the proud looked at them and saw their own ill-fortune next to their good fortune. They became envious and wanted to chase them away from the tablecloth. They said, “O Muḥammad, drive them away so that we may be neighborly with you. It is beneath our dignity to sit with beggars.” The paragon had such an eager desire for their submission that he wanted to do that. This address came from the Exalted Presence: “Do not set out to torment the hearts of the burnt, for it is not the habit of the generous to drive away beggars from the tablecloth. *And drive not away those who supplicate their Lord* [6:52].<sup>19</sup> O Muḥammad, do not drive these poor men away, for their life lies in remembering Me. *And do not obey him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance* [18:28]. Do not obey those chieftains, for their hearts are empty of remembering Me.”

The attribute of the poor was this: *who remember God, standing and sitting* [3:191]. Their habit was this: *who call upon their Lord morning and evening* [18:28]. Their conduct was this: *preferring others over themselves* [59:9]. Their outcome was this: *He loves them, and they love Him* [5:54]. But the attribute of the chieftains of the Quraysh was this: *who wage war against God and His Messenger, striving for corruption in the earth* [5:33]. Their aspiration was this: *to confine thee, or kill thee, or expel thee* [8:30]. Their habit was this: *whosoever turns away from My remembrance. This is why on the Day of Resurrection We shall muster him blind.*

**20:131** *Extend not thine eyes to what We have given pairs of them to enjoy, the flower of this world’s life so that We may entrance them thereby; and thy Lord’s provision is better and more subsisting.*

This is another balm that He lays on the hearts of the poor. He is showing the insignificance and feebleness of this world to people, exposing its defects and blemishes, and holding His friends back from seeing and loving it. He is saying, “*the flower of this world’s life so that We may entrance them thereby*”: This world is a blossom whose moisture, freshness, and comeliness will last a few days. Then it will wither and become nothing, but its entrancement will remain in the heart.

Why are you in love with the loveless one who took Alexander’s life?

Why are you passionate for the friend to whom Darius lost his kingdom? [DS 53]

“The rich turn back to this world and the poor turn back to the Patron. How far apart are these and those!” Whatever happens to the rich, they come back to this world. In every state the heart of the poor is with the Patron. From here is known the eminence of the poor over the rich.

Junayd considered poverty more excellent than wealth. In contrast, Ibn ʿAṭāʾ considered wealth more eminent than poverty. One day there was a debate between the two. Junayd argued

<sup>19</sup> Up to here, this and the preceding paragraph are taken from RA 500.

that God's Messenger said, "The poor of my community will enter the Garden one-half day before the rich, and that is five hundred years." He said that someone who goes into paradise is more excellent than someone who remains five hundred years in the reckoning.

Ibn ʿAṭāʾ said, "No, it is more excellent to remain in the reckoning, for the person in paradise has the pleasure of blessing, but the person in the reckoning has the pleasure of the Real's rebuke. Talking with the Friend, even in the station of rebuke, is beyond being occupied with other than the Friend, even if that is in the station of blessing. This is because being tried by the Friend is sweeter than being in the Friend's blessing without the Friend."

Junayd answered, "Even if the rich man has the pleasure of rebuke, the poor man will have the pleasure of apology." This is in Anas ibn Mālik's narration from the Prophet: "On the Day of Resurrection God will come to the poor servant and conceal him from the people under His wing. Then He will apologize to him just as a man apologizes to a man in this world. He will say, 'My servant, by My exaltation and majesty, I did not hold back this world from you to scorn you, but because of the generosity and excellence I had prepared for you. Go out into those ranks and gaze upon him who fed you and gave you to drink for My sake or who clothed you, desiring nothing from that except My face. Then take his hand, for that belongs to you.'

"On that day the people will be drowning in sweat. He will come out, pass through the ranks, and examine the faces of the people. When he sees someone who did something of that, he will take him by the hand and tell him that the Garden has been given to him."

Junayd mentioned this report as evidence and then said, "Although He rebukes the rich man, He apologizes to the poor man. The pleasure of apology is beyond the pleasure of rebuke, for both friend and enemy are rebuked, but apology is only for friends."<sup>20</sup>

He holds the poor back from this world not because they are being deprived of this world, but because this world is being deprived of them. Their aspiration is better than this world, their desire better than the afterworld, and their goal is seeing the Patron.

Once Luqmān Sarakhsi's hair had become long. It passed into his mind to wish that he had a dirham so that he could go to the bath and have his hair cut. He still had not brought this completely to mind when he saw a desert full of gold. He lifted his eyes and said to himself,

"I did say some words in drunkenness,  
but why did You attach that camel to my train?"<sup>21</sup>

**20:132** *And command thy family to the prayer, and have patience therein. We ask thee for no provision. We shall provide for thee.*

*And command thy family to the prayer, and have patience therein.* He is commanding the servant to teach and telling him to manifest servanthood and constancy in obedience. So long as the servant is not worthy and approved, He will not accept him in service at His threshold and will not give him access in the prayer to the presence of secret whispering.

There is no good fortune beyond the fact that five times a day, by the decree of bounty, He sends the baggage-steed of the court of union at the hand of the stirrup-holder of gentleness to the hut of the servant's incapacity and records this exalted sigil on the edict of his good fortune: "I have divided the prayer between Me and My servant into two halves. When the servant says, 'Praise belongs to God,' God says, 'My servant is praising Me,'" and so on.

He kept Moses the speaking companion waiting for forty days at the promise of whispered prayer. When the turn of this community arrived, He took away the tablecloth of waiting and, five times a day, again and again, He placed the goblet of whispered prayer in the hand of the cupbearer of gentleness: "*Prostrate thyself and draw near*" [96:19]. This is not a bestowal of eminence on the communities over the prophets, but rather, "The weaker someone is, the gentler the Lord is to him." The Lord of the Worlds takes care of the work of the weak such that all the strong are in wonder. A hundred thousand proximate angels dove into the ocean of bowing and prostrating, and

<sup>20</sup> The story of Junayd and Ibn ʿAṭāʾ, though not the long hadith, is taken from RA 355-56.

<sup>21</sup> The story of Sarakhsi is from RA 357.

no one talks about them. But this penniless beggar wakes up from sleep and says, “Oh, it’s late.” In the splendid scripture the Lord of the Worlds wrote this inscription of exaltation on the cape of his secret whispers: “*Their sides shun their couches as they supplicate their Lord in fear and want*” [32:16].<sup>22</sup>

*We ask no provision of thee, and it is We who shall provide thee.* Whenever someone believes that the provider in reality is the Lord and that all provision comes from Him and that the secondary causes are by His predetermination, his mark is that his heart trusts totally in Him and he cuts himself off from others. Then the Exalted Lord, in His gentleness, takes care of his work and at every moment caresses him with various sorts of generosity.

A man came before Ḥātim Aṣamm and asked him, “How are you able to pass your days, for you have no belongings and no estates?”

He said, “From His storehouse.”

He said, “Does He throw bread to you from heaven?”

He said, “Did He not have the earth, He would cast bread to me from heaven.”

Then the man said, “You are just talking words.”

He said, “Because nothing descends from heaven but words.”

He said, “I am not able to argue with you.”

He said, “Because falsehood has no ability before truth.”<sup>23</sup>

O poor man! There is no illness more difficult than weak certainty. Fix your certainty on the Real, and the hand is yours.

There is the name of certainty, the knowledge of certainty, the eye of certainty, the truth of certainty, and the reality of the truth of certainty. The name of certainty belongs to the common people, the knowledge of certainty to the elect, the eye of certainty to the elect of the elect, the truth of certainty to the prophets, and the reality of the truth of certainty to Muṣṭafā. A man who becomes a man becomes so through certainty. Certainty must reach the tongue for him to be a speaker, the eye for him to be as seer, the ear for him to be a hearer, the hand for him to be taker, the foot for him to be a goer.

Muṣṭafā said, “Jesus walked on water. Had his certainty increased, he would have walked on air.” The master Abū °Alī Daqqāq said, “He alluded to himself, meaning, ‘When I was walking on air on the night of the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj*, that was because of the perfection of certainty.’”

22 Most of the commentary on this verse is derived from RA 125-26.

23 Up to here the commentary on this verse is from RA 108, and the rest is from RA 110.

## Surah 21: al-Anbiyā°

**21:19** *To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth. Those who are with Him are not too proud to worship Him, nor do they become weary.*

The newly arrived things belong to Him as a possession, and the engendered beings belong to Him by decree. He is too transcendent to be beautified by conformity or to be diminished by opposition.<sup>1</sup>

In earth and the heavens all the engendered beings and newly arrived things, the existent things and things coming to nothing, are His kingdom and possession, His servants, slaves, and serving boys.

In the view of the lords of the meanings, the reality of kingship is power to originate and devise. This reality is His attribute, and worthy kingship is His kingship—without horse and servants, without drums and flags, without army and retinue. When the kings of the world display their armies, they mount up their servants and retinue, they display their horse and chattel, and then they lift up the head of boasting of their kingship and possessions, blessings and self-indulgences, cavalry and infantry, royal court and audience hall. As for the Real, He strikes the fire of unneediness in the vestiges and traces of the realm of being, He turns the world into *scattered dust* [25:23] and He shakes the dust of the others off the skirt of power. He puts the halter of destruction on the steed of existence and lets out this call in the world: “*Whose is the kingdom today?*” Then He Himself answers with His own exalted majesty: “*God’s, the One, the All-Subjugating*” [40:16].

When a person of faith believes that everything is His rightful due and kingdom and that all exaltedness is His exaltedness, it is fitting for him to break the tablet of making claims, roll up the carpet of folly, put the delusion of egoism out of his head, and pull his skirt back from the two realms of being and the two worlds. He will be ashamed to bow his head before a created thing like himself, or to bind his heart to anyone. “He who aims for the ocean has no need for rivulets.”

When a diver has a high aspiration and uses his own life for give-and-take with the ocean in order to gain the night-brightening pearl, why would he give himself over to a black bead? He said beautiful words, that exalted man of the era: “He who recognizes the Real will not put up with the abasement of the creatures.”<sup>2</sup>

**21:23** *He will not be questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned.*

This is a rejection of the free-willers and a right guidance for the Sunnis. The free-willers say, “If we turn over all the newly arrived things to God, He would be defective.” They say, “Evil is from us and good from Him.” In the same way, the Zoroastrians say that good is from Yazdān and evil from Ahrīman. “The free-willers are the Magi of this community.”

A free-willer said to a Zoroastrian, “Become a Muslim.”

He said, “As long as He does not want it, how can I become a Muslim?”

The free-willer said, “He wants it, but Iblis does not.”

The Zoroastrian said, “Then I will stay with the stronger antagonist. What will I do with the weak one?”<sup>3</sup>

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1 LA 4:169.

2 These three paragraphs are derived from RA 13-14.

3 Up to here is derived from RA 522-23.

As for the right guidance of the Sunnis, it is that the Real is the absolute owner and is able to act upon His possession as He wants. Muṣṭafā said, “Were He to chastise me and the son of Mary, He would chastise us without wronging us.” Fear a God who does whatever He wants while no one has the gall to protest! “Have shame before God because of His proximity to you, and fear God because of His power over you.”<sup>4</sup>

Know also that this a work that is over and done with. He has taken each to his own domicile and made his place apparent, and then He has brought him back to the beginning of the road of interaction. When the prophets came, they did not bring any new work into this world, nor did they place any new report in your breast. Rather, they put into motion what was in your breast and they called you to what had been deposited for you. *We would not have been guided had God not guided us* [7:43].

Alī was asked about the measuring out. He said, “It is God’s secret, so do not disclose it; it is a tremendous ocean, so do not importune it.” Human knowledge does not have the capacity to carry it. Man’s understanding and imagination will never reach it. He does not know that the more he goes forward, the more he becomes bewildered. The more he exercises self-determination, the more he falls.

What is the spirit next to Your face other than a meddler?

What is intellect next to Your lips other than a fool? [DS 902]<sup>5</sup>

**21:24** *Or have they taken gods apart from Him? Say, “Bring your proof.”*

This alludes to true *tawḥīd* and the Lord’s solitariness in the description of aloneness and the attribute of unity.<sup>6</sup> The root of *tawḥīd* is to fly in the field of disengagement, to take up residence at His rulings through solitariness, to cut off fear and hope from both the near and the far, and to surrender the affair to God so that He may decree however He desires.

Shiblī said, “The One suffices you against all, but all will not suffice you against the One.” He is saying, “The Real is One. If you have a thousand enemies and the Real is with you, He will suffice against all. And supposing you have a thousand friends and helpers but the Real is not with you, then nothing will be in your hand but wind.”

God’s Messenger said to Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq in the cave, “Grieve not; surely God is with us” [9:40]. It was said to a spider, “We have concealed the paragon of the prophets and the head of the sincerely truthful in a cave. Go, prepare the corner of your incapacity and poverty in the door of that cave so that it may be their escort.” Nothing in the world is more incapable than a spider, and no house is weaker than its house. *And surely the frailest of houses is the house of the spider* [29:41]. When He wants to destroy an enemy like Nimrod, He destroys him with a gnat.<sup>7</sup>

He is a Lord who does whatever He wants and who shows His power however He wants. Take a look at His perfect power in the creation of heaven and earth, as He says:

**21:30** *Have not those who disbelieve seen that the heavens and the earth were all sewn up, then We unstitched them, and from water We made every living thing?*

*And We made..., and We made..., and We made...* [21:30-32]. Everything to the end of these verses is allusions to the perfection of His power and explanations of His wisdom. When you look at power, all nonexistent things take on the color of existence. When you look at exaltedness, all existent things take on the color of nonexistence.

You should not have the opinion that whatever He knew, He said; whatever He could do, He did; and whatever He had, He showed. The existent things and the created things are a sample of His power. Revelations and inspirations are an iota of His knowledge. Just as He sent a few rulings of His knowledge to the creatures and the knowledge did not reach the bottom, so also He put

4 The paragraph is from RA 580.

5 The last two paragraphs and this verse are summarized or taken from RA 578.

6 LI 4:170.

7 Beginning with “The root of *tawḥīd*,” this passage is derived from RA 503-4.

together a few clods of earth and His power did not reach its end. If He were to create thousands of Thrones, Footstools, heavens, and earths, He still would not have made apparent an iota of His power. Your power is incapable and finite, but His power is transcendent and infinite.<sup>8</sup> Whatever is impossible in the intellect, God is perfectly powerful over that. In power He uses no contrivances, in self-standing His state does not change, in Essence and attributes He is everlasting and transcendent.

**21:33** *And He it is who created night and day, and the sun and the moon, each swimming in a sphere.*

In the tasting of the folk of recognition, night and day are a mark of the contraction and expansion of the recognizers. Contraction and expansion are the divine decree and royal predetermination. Sometimes He puts them in the grasp of His contraction so that the ruling power of His majesty [wreaks havoc on them, and sometimes He gives them a place on the carpet of His expansion such that the ruling power of beauty] may caress them in virtue of bestowal.<sup>9</sup> It is the stipulation of the man with pain that in the grasp of contraction he be rectified and not protest, and on the carpet of expansion he be courteous and not turn away, for the great ones of the religion have said, “The servant will not find the sweetness of faith until trial comes to him from everywhere.”

*And the sun and the moon, each swimming in a sphere.* He created the sun and the moon in the constellations of heaven, and they travel on the peak of the spheres. He created the sun neither to increase nor to decrease and the moon to increase and decrease; sometimes it wanes, and sometimes it shines forth. The sun is the mark of the possessor of *tawhīd*, who says with the attribute of stability in the presence of stability, “Were the covering to be lifted, I would not increase in certainty.” The moon is the mark of the possessor of knowledge, who walks in the playing field of exertion. He comes by way of gazing and inference and keeps his eyes on obedience and good works, *that they might add faith to their faith* [48:4].

The possessor of *tawhīd* is the lord of pain, and the possessor of knowledge is the lord of deeds. The possessor of deeds gazes on the secondary causes, and the possessor of pain gazes on the Causer and is detached from the secondary causes. The great ones of the religion have said, “Not seeing the secondary cause is ignorance, but remaining with the secondary cause is associationism.”<sup>10</sup>

A recognizer was seen on the shore of the Tigris, saying, “My Master, I am thirsty,” but he passed by without drinking. That exalted man was contemplating the Real and saw neither the Tigris nor its water. When someone is busy with a work, even if the houris of paradise pass by, he will not be aware.<sup>11</sup>

God only knows, sweetheart, if I know night from day—  
night and day passion has confounded and perplexed me.

**21:34-35** *We have not assigned everlastingness to any mortal before thee. If thou diest, will they be everlasting? Every soul shall taste death.*

When a speck of truthfulness appears in someone’s heart, the reality of passion for death will show its head from his spirit, for the promise of encounter is there. What sort of spirit would forget the promise of encounter? What sort of heart would seek from someplace else the repose that comes only from contemplating the Real? “The person of faith has no ease without encountering his Lord.”

O dervish, no good fortune is more precious than death. Those who have the religion place the crown of magnificence and generosity on their heads at the gate of death. Those who reap the fruit of the Shariah will find the sigil of good fortune at the door of death. Death is the sanctuary

8 To this point the passage is mostly taken from RA 515.

9 The addition within brackets is from the source of the paragraph (RA 145). The context shows that it must have been dropped either from the manuscripts of *Kashf al-asrār* or the printed edition.

10 Under 4:36 and elsewhere, Maybudī ascribes this saying to Anṣārī.

11 This paragraph is derived partly from RA 357.

of “There is no god but God.” Death is the doorstep of the kingdom of the resurrection and the passageway to the visitors of the Real. Death is the center of the exaltation of the recognizers, the place anticipated by the spirits of the proximate. Death is the vanguard of solicitude and the prelude to endless kind favor. In the two worlds no one has the ease that the *tawhīd*-voicer has in the grave with the One. He took along with him into the dust the banner of the submission and the kettledrum of faith in the resurrection. At the resurrection he will come out of the dust with the banner of the submission and the kettledrum of faith, just as kings enter into their own city.

Dāwūd Ṭāʾī was one of the great jurists in outward knowledge. His truthfulness was such that on the night he left this world a call came from the middle of heaven: “O folk of the earth! Surely Dāwūd Ṭāʾī has stepped forth to his Lord, and He approves of him.”

One of his disciples said that he saw Dāwūd in the throes of death in a ruined house, intense heat, fallen flat on the earth with his head on a piece of brick, reciting the Qur’an. He said to him, “O Dāwūd, what if you were to go out into the open air?” What would happen if you were kind to yourself for an hour and go out into the open air, so this heat would have less effect on you?

Dāwūd said, “My friend, I want to do that, but I am ashamed before my Lord—that I should move my feet in that in which my soul is at ease. This soul of mine has never had the upper hand over me, and in this state it is even more appropriate that it not have it.” It was in this state, lying in the dust, that he emptied his frame.<sup>12</sup>

Junayd said, “Whoever lives through his Lord will be transferred from the life of his nature to the life of the root, and that is life in reality. God says, ‘*We shall surely give him to live a goodly life*’ [16:97].”

**21:37 *Man was created of haste. I shall show you My signs, so seek not to hasten Me.***

*Man was created of haste.* Haste is one thing, hurry is something else. Haste is unapproved and blamed, and a prohibition has come concerning it: “*so seek not to hasten Me.*” Hurry is approved and praised, and a command has come in it: “*Hurry!*” [3:133]. Haste is to go forth to a work before its moment, and hurry is to rush to a work that is commanded at the beginning of its moment. Haste is the result of Satan’s disquieting, and hurry is a requisite of success-giving and reverence for the command. From haste come regret and the heart’s turmoil, and from hurry the joining of spirit and heart with tranquility: *He it is who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the faithful* [48:4]. God sends down repose on the hearts of the faithful so that they will recognize Him without having found Him and love Him without having seen Him. They turn away from their own work to His work, they come from remembering themselves to remembering Him, and they go from love for themselves to love for Him. All rememberings save remembering Him are negligence, all objects of desire save His object of desire are diversions, and all loves save love for Him are idle talk.

**21:69 *We said, “O fire, be coolness and safety!”***

For the companions of recognitions and the lords of realities, there is another intimation in this verse. They have said that this was a call to a fire that was made ready in the fireplace of Abraham’s spirit. When Nimrod placed him in the mangonel, Abraham placed his own secret core in the mangonel of contemplation. As soon as he came near the fire of Nimrod, the burn of witnessing the Real made him want to sigh so as to extinguish Nimrod’s fire. The call came, “*O fire,*” that is, “*O fire of witnessing, be coolness.* Be cold toward Nimrod’s fire and do not exercise your ruling authority over it, for We have decreed that We will bring forth from the midst of the fire a scented garden full of flowers and blossoms to honor Our bosom friend and make manifest a miracle for him. If you extinguish it, it will not become a garden and the miracle will not appear. Be cold toward Nimrod’s fire so that the garden may appear, and be safety for Abraham so that the miracle may appear.”

Listen to another subtle point, more wonderful than that: Your soul is like Nimrod, the soul’s caprice is fire, and your burnt heart is Abraham. The soul has lit up the fire of caprice, placed the

12 The account of Dāʾūd al-Ṭāʾī is derived from RA 581-82.

heart in the mangonel of disobedient acts with the chains of deception and the fetters of appetite, and thrown it into the fire of caprice. Before it takes one step, intellect comes like someone distracted, a servant-boy to the heart, and says, "Have you any need?"

The heart responds, "'Of you, no.' O intellect, do you remember when it was said to you, 'Come!', and you came? It was said, 'Go!', and you went? It was said, 'Who are you?', and you were at a loss? On that day you did not know your own road. How do you know what is right for me today?"<sup>13</sup>

When the heart enters the fire of caprice, the command arrives, "*O fire, be coolness!* O fire of caprice, be cold for the heart, for it is already burned by love for Me."

For in the lover's heart is the fire of love.

The burnt one will not be burned again. When this command comes to the fire of caprice, at once it dies down, and a wondrous garden appears in the midst of the recognizer's heart, a hundred thousand marvels with all sorts of flowers and trees full of fruit. On the garden's caprice, the clouds of bounteousness pour down the rain of welcome; on the soul, the rain of sufficiency so that obedience and loyalty grow from it; on the heart, the rain of guidance so that yearning and limpidness grow from it; on the tongue, the rain of subtlety so that praise and laudation grow from it; on the eye, the rain of generosity, so that vision and encounter grow from it.

**21:78** *And David and Solomon, when they gave judgment about the tillage.*

David and Solomon shared with each other in terms of prophecy, but they were disparate in degree and excellence. Do you not see that in one question He gave Solomon superiority in knowledge? He singled out his understanding, for He said,

**21:79** *So We made Solomon understand this, and to both We gave judgment and knowledge.*

He gave Solomon such a tremendous kingdom, but He did not count it as a favor. Rather, He showed him its insignificance when He said, "*This is Our gift, so bestow*" [38:39], that is, "Give it to whomsoever you want because of its insignificance and meanness." When He reached knowledge and understanding, He declared its eminence and counted it a favor toward him: "*So We made Solomon understand this.*"

The knowledge of understanding is beyond the knowledge of commentary and interpretation. Commentary comes through teaching and instruction, interpretation comes through right guidance and success-giving, and understanding without intermediary comes through Lordly inspiration. Commentary without a master is useless, interpretation without exertion is incorrect, and the possessor of understanding has no teacher other than the Real. Commentary and interpretation come through knowledge and striving, and understanding comes through finding and being pulled.

Ḥasan Baṣṛī said, "I asked Ḥudhayfa Yamān about knowledge of inwardness," that is, understanding. "Ḥudhayfa said that he asked God's Messenger, who said, 'a knowledge between God and His friends, of which no proximate angel or any of His creatures is aware.'"

The understanding of these Men concerning the secrets of the Book and the Sunnah reached an inviolable sanctuary around which the imaginations of the lords of outwardness do not have the gall to circle. From each letter they have a station, from each word a message, from each verse a realm, from each chapter a burning and a celebration. In their road threats are promises, and in their case promises are hard cash. Paradise and hell are way stations on their road, and everything less than the Real is for them unreal. In the desert of their present moment this world and the next world are two miles. By day they are in the lodging of secret whispering, by night in the litter of joy. By day they gaze upon the artifacts, by night they contemplate the beauty of the Artisan. By day they are with the people in good character and by night with the Real in the *footing of truthfulness* [10:2]. By day they are in the work, by night in drunkenness. By day they seek the road, by night they speak of the mysteries.

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13 On Gabriel's question to Abraham and his response, see under 2:131. For the story of intellect's creation, to which the rest of the paragraph refers, see under 2:164.

My night is the forenoon sun from Your face—  
 the darkness is only in the sky.  
 The people are in the darkness from their night,  
 but we are in brightness from Your face.<sup>14</sup>

**21:87-88** *And Dhu'l-Nūn, when he went forth wrathful and thought that We would not have power over him. Then he called out in the darknesses, "There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee! Surely I am one of the wrongdoers." So We responded to him and delivered him from sorrow.*

God has friends who would begin to lament from the lack of trial if for the blink of an eye the assistance of the army of trial were cut off from their days—just as the folk of the world grieve at the lack of blessings, they begin to wail from the lack of trial. The more they see the blows of the times and of trial, the more they are passionate for their trial. The hotter the flames of their passion, then, like moths, the more they are entranced by their trouble.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, may the pain I have never get better! This pain is right for me. When someone is in pain and content with pain, what is the reckoning? O God, my story is this that I recount. What is the answer to this poor wretch stricken by pain?"

The tale they tell about the days and the state of that exalted one of the road, that chosen one of the King, Jonah the prophet, has exactly this attribute. He was a man cleansed by the crucible of trial, ground down by the millstone of tribulation, his head struck by the whip of rebuke without special favor. The more his liver was turned into kabob in the incense-burner of trial, the more he became passionate for his trial, for when he was shown the moon-like beauty of passion for the Haqiqah, he was shown it in the street of trial and the room of tribulation. The traditions narrate that "When God loves a servant, trial is poured down all over him."

Riḍwān and all the slave-boys are servants of the dust under the feet of the folk of trial. The beginningless welcome and the unseen request are prepared in the name of the folk of trial. The divine love is the food of the secret cores of the folk of trial. The lordly gentleness and mercy are trustees specific to the folk of trial. The eternal attributes are the supplies and provisions of the folk of trial. The pure, incomparable Essence is witnessed by the hearts of the folk of trial. *He loves them, and they love Him* [5:54] is the pavilion of the Unseen's gift and bestowal for the folk of trial. *Their Lord will pour for them* [76:21] is the end and outcome of the folk of trial.<sup>15</sup>

"*There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee! Surely I am one of the wrongdoers.*" So We responded to him. In terms of allusion He is reporting that whenever any servant supplicates with a supplication within which are found three things, that supplication will be linked to response. First is *tawḥīd*, second is the declaration of incomparability, and third is acknowledgement of one's sins. Thus Jonah the prophet began with *tawḥīd*, saying, "*There is no god but Thou.*" Then he joined it to the declaration of incomparability, saying, "*Glory be to Thee!*" Then he acknowledged his own sin, saying "*Surely I am one of the wrongdoers.*" Once these three traits were gathered together in his supplication, the response came from the Divine Presence: "*So We responded to him and delivered him from sorrow.*"

*Tawḥīd* is that you say with the tongue that God is one and you know with the heart that He is one—one in Essence, one in attributes, exempt from attachments, hallowed beyond blights, and incomparable with intermixings. None but He is worthy of gratitude and being owed for favors, no one but He has power and strength, from no one else come granting and bestowal.

Know also that *tawḥīd* becomes sound when someone has a limpid heart, a high aspiration, and an empty breast; he has not become prey of this world, nor is he shackled to the afterworld. Nothing hangs on to him, nor is he mixed with anything. Then the beauty of *tawḥīd* is unveiled to him and he is described as perceiving its secret.

Dhu'l-Nūn Miṣrī was seen in a dream, with an approved state and praiseworthy days. It was said to him, "O Dhu'l-Nūn, what is your state and where have your days taken you? Where is your

14 The quote from Ḥudhayfa, the two following paragraphs, and the poem are taken from RA 171-72.

15 This paragraph is inspired by RA 292-93. Under 38:76 Maybudī provides a similar discussion, ascribing it to Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī (who is not mentioned in the RA passage), but with "dust" (*khāk*) in place of "folk of trial" (*ahl-i balāʾ*).

spirit, and what have you found in the Friend's dealings with you?"

He answered, "I asked for three wishes from the Friend. He gave two of them and therein fulfilled my hope. I am waiting for the third. One is that I said, 'O King, before the angel of death becomes aware of my work, take up my spirit and do not leave me with him.' He fulfilled my hope. Another is that I said, 'O King, place me in the garden of approval without any obligation toward Riḍwān, and do not turn me over to anyone.' He did that and He completed His blessings toward me with His bounty. My third wish, for which I am waiting, is that I said, 'O King, give me permission to say Your name in the field of Your majesty in the row of the sincerely truthful and the *tawḥīd*-voicers, to run in the majestic house of all those in union with You, to keep on shouting in the assembly of Your recognizers, and to keep on circumambulating the Kaabah of union with You.' I hope that He will also respond to this."

**21:89** *And Zachariah, when he supplicated his Lord, "My Lord, leave me not solitary."*

In the tasting of the recognizers and the allusion of the realizers, the meaning is "*Leave me not empty of Your protection from sin or turning away from Your remembrance or occupying myself with anything but You.*"

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "God has no use for treasuries and no need for anything. Whatever He has, He has it for the servants. Tomorrow He will give the treasury of mercy to the disobedient and the treasury of bounty to the helpless so that they may discharge what is rightfully due to Him from His treasuries, for the servants cannot discharge His rightful due with what they have of their own. When a sultan gives his daughter to a beggar, the beggar does not have a dower worthy of the sultan's daughter. From his own treasury the sultan sends the dower to the beggar so that the beggar may give the dower to the princess from his treasury."<sup>16</sup>

When the servant obeys Him, he does so with His success-giving and protection from sin. He discharges what is rightfully due to Him with His confirmation and bestowal of strength. Then through His bounty He praises the servant for the excellence of his obedience and through His generosity He approves of him. What He shows to the world's folk is this:

**21:90** *They were vying in good works and they were supplicating Us in eagerness and dread, and they were reverent toward Us.*

"My servants are striving to obey Me and they call upon Me with eagerness and dread. They know only Me and they circle only around My door. They are the burned ones of My Presence, the ones lifted up by My gentleness."

"He guided them so that they would recognize them, He gave them success so that they would worship Him, He instructed them so that they would ask of Him, He illuminated their hearts so that they would love Him. He loves without bribery, He bestows without obligation, and He honors without a means of approach." He scatters a hundred blessings on your head and counts it as a dust mote. He considers a straw of yours to be a mountain. Do you not see that He will give you a paradise with all that tremendousness and vastness, but He calls it an "upper chamber"? "*It is they who will be recompensed with the upper chamber*" [25:75]. Abraham the Bosom Friend placed a calf before his guests. The Exalted Lord approved of him, honored him, and displayed him to the world's folk: "*He brought a roasted calf*" [11:69].

He is a Lord who makes wealthy anyone who presents a need to Him, who exalts anyone who delights in Him. Supposing that the servant disobeys for a hundred years and then says, "I repent," He will say, "I accept." *He it is who accepts repentance from His servants* [42:25].

A bedouin was supplicating, and it was a marvelous supplication. He said, "O God, you will find someone other than me to chastise, but I will find no one other than You to have mercy on me."<sup>17</sup>

16 The quotation is not from Anṣārī, "the Pir of the Tariqah," but is rather abbreviated from RA 541; Maybudī also draws from this passage in his commentary on 25:23, but there he ascribes it to "one of the pirs of the Tariqah." This is one of several passages that suggest that Maybudī uses "Pir of the Tariqah" as a generic term as well as a reference to Anṣārī. If the grammar allowed it, I would translate the expression here as "a pir of the Tariqah."

17 The commentary on this verse is taken mainly from RA 538-39.

**21:101** *As for those to whom the most beautiful has preceded from Us.*

To them solicitude preceded at the beginning, so friendship became manifest at the end.

One must have solicitude at the beginning for there to be friendship at the end. One iota of the beginningless solicitude is better than the bliss of the two worlds. He who is caressed was caressed in the Beginningless, and he who is called was called in the Beginningless. In the Beginningless His friends drank the cup of gentleness and put on the clothing of bounty.

He did the work in the Beginningless, but He made it appear to be done today. He spoke the words in the Beginningless, but He makes what was spoken heard today. He sewed and made ready the robes of honor for the friends in the Beginningless, but today He hands them over. *Each day He is upon some task* [55:29]. He drives the predetermined things to their appointed times. For some time the mysteries have been spoken to you, but you hear them now. The majesty of His Exaltedness is eternal, but you know today. In the Beginningless the beginningless knowledge was your deputy in knowing the beginningless attributes. In the Beginningless the eternal hearing was your deputy in listening to the beginningless speech. When a guardian has a child's property in hand, he has it as his deputy. When the child reaches maturity, he gives it back to him.

In terms of allusion, He is saying that you were the infants of nonexistence when the eternal gentleness took care of your work and acted as your deputy. What bounty and generosity is left that He did not do for you? With the eternal gentleness He conveyed the prescription of the Law to your hearing, He sent the decree to your heart, He spoke of mysteries to your spirit, and He inscribed obedience on your limbs. He made you anticipate arrivals from the Unseen: "O you who anticipate the arrival of Our gentleness! O you who look for the marks bearing witness to Our Unseen! Nothing drives friendship into your heart other than the ruling power of Our curtaining. No one strikes the knocker on the door of your heart other than the messenger of Our kindness."<sup>18</sup>

This is the reality of the beginningless beauty, which preceded to the friends and with which the Exalted Lord favored them: *those to whom the most beautiful has preceded from Us*. The fruit of the most beautiful is endless, for the Exalted Lord has promised, saying, "*Those who do the beautiful shall have the most beautiful and an increase*" [10:26]. Then He explained the outcome and final end of the folk of felicity and He joined the beginningless precedent with the endless subsequent:

**21:103** *The greatest terror shall not make them sorrow, and the angels will receive them: "This is the day that you were promised."*

On the Day of Resurrection in the greatest gathering place and most tremendous courtyard, they will not hear from the angels the call "*no good news*" [25:22], nor the address, "*Stand apart today, O offenders!*" [36:59], nor the harsh call, "*Slink into it, and do not talk to Me!*" [23:108]. They will not hear the call of separation's pain, nor will they despair of mercy. Rather the angels will keep on coming, company after company, and they will give the good news: "*This is the day that you were promised,*" that is, "*This is the day in which you have the promised reward.*" Among them are those who will be received by the angels, and among them are those who will be addressed and made known by the King.<sup>19</sup> God will say, "My servants, have you been yearning for Me?"

He will say "*Peace*" to a group by the intermediary of the angels, saying, "*Peace be upon you! Enter the Garden for what you were doing*" [16:32]. He will make another group hear without the intermediary and spokespersonship of the angels: *Their greeting on the day they encounter Him will be "Peace"* [33:44].

He will say, "My servants, have you been yearning for Me?" My servants, have you been wishing for Me?" This is a generosity and caress that will reach the faithful servants tomorrow at the resurrection. As for today, their hearts are as that exalted man of the road said: "The hearts of the yearners are illuminated by God's light. When their yearning moves, the light brightens everything between heaven and earth. God presents them to the angels and says, 'These are those who yearn for Me. I bear witness to you that I yearn even more for them.'" He is saying, "The hearts of

<sup>18</sup> These two paragraphs are derived from RA 304-5; cf. 41:1.

<sup>19</sup> This sentence is from LI 4:197.

the yearners are illuminated by the divine light. When the fire of their yearning brightens heaven and earth and the Throne and Footstool, the Real will declare, ‘O proximate ones of the Presence! These are the yearners for My beauty and majesty. I testify to you that My yearning for them is more than their yearning for Me.’”<sup>20</sup>

**21:107** *We sent thee only as a mercy to the worlds.*

In the days of the interval between prophets, before Muṣṭafā the Arab was given his mission, the beauty of the submission had pulled its face behind the mask of exaltedness. They considered nature the effector and originator. They had taken up a road whose end was nothing but blindness and misguidance. They considered intellect as God, they made nature its messenger, and they called the spheres the determiner. They made what intellect deemed beautiful their Shariah and they called what nature disliked “prohibited things.” They were busy with the celestial figures and guises and wasted their days with epicycles and falsifications. Suddenly the sun of the Muhammadan Shariah’s good fortune appeared from the horizon of the unitary welcome: *We sent thee only as a mercy to the worlds.*<sup>21</sup>

Tubba<sup>c</sup>, the king of Himyar, said to his diviner, “Do you find any kingdom whose kingdom is greater than mine?”

The diviner said, “Yes, there is a prophet on the way whose kingdom will be greater than the kingdom of the world’s folk. He will be a master, a paragon, a leader; on his forehead will be the light of prostration, on his eyebrows the light of humility, on his hair the light of beauty, in his eyes the light of heedfulness, in his face the light of mercy, between his shoulders the light of prophecy, in his heart the light of recognition, in his secret core the light of love, in his speech the light of wisdom, in his wisdom the light of jealousy, in his jealousy the light of the Presence. He will be pious and blessed, and aided by triumph. He is described in the Psalms, and his community is considered most excellent in the scriptures. He will dispel the darknesses with light. He is Aḥmad the prophet. Blessed will be his community when he comes!”<sup>22</sup>

It has been sung,

Surely the Messenger is a sword that brightens,  
Indian steel, a drawn sword of God.  
I have been told that God’s Messenger threatened me,  
but pardon from God’s Messenger is to be hoped.<sup>23</sup>

He was a man who came out from under the cloak of °Abdallāh ibn °Abd al-Muṭṭalib. He passed by mortal loins, but he received help from the Unseen. God transformed his states and words: *Surely thou hast a tremendous character* [68:4]. The character of mortal nature was removed, and the character of the Qur’an put in its place. The speech of mortal nature was taken, and pure revelation was given: *He does not speak out of caprice. It is naught but a revelation revealed* [53:3-4]. Hence he came speaking of the Shariah, traveling to the Real, and moving in accordance with the command.

On the night of the *mi’rāj* the paradises were presented to him, the marvels and the chambers were shown to him, and he did not pay one speck of attention to any of them. This embroidery of loyalty was sewn on his limpid cape: “*The eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass*” [53:17].

Again, when he stepped on to the carpet of secret whispering in the prayer, he said, “The delight of my eyes was placed in the prayer,” for it is the station of “The praying person is whispering with his Lord.”<sup>24</sup>

*We sent thee only as a mercy to the world.* Part of his mercy is that he did not forget you in any station, whether he was in Mecca or Medina, whether he was in the mosque or in his room. In the same way, he did not forget you at the summit of the Throne and at Two-Bows’ Length. In

20 This paragraph is from RA 22.

21 This paragraph is derived from RA 528.

22 The two paragraphs and the poetry that follows are taken from RA 526-27, with a good deal of rearrangement.

23 The two verses are from the *Qaṣīdat al-burda* by the Prophet’s Companion, Ka’b ibn Zuhayr.

24 These three paragraphs are derived from RA 244.

Mecca he was saying, “*And pardon us*” [2:286]. In the cave he was saying, “*Surely God is with us*” [9:40]. At the top of the Two-Bows’ Length he was saying, “Peace be upon us and upon God’s wholesome servants.” And at the moment of death he was saying, “God is my vicegerent over you.” Tomorrow at the *praiseworthy station* [17:79], when the carpet of intercession is spread, he will be saying, “My community! My community!”

## Surah 22: al-Ḥajj

**22:1** *O people, be wary of your Lord—surely the quaking of the Hour is a tremendous thing.*

*O people* is a vocative, and *O you have faith* is a call of generosity. The vocative is for the common people, and the call of generosity is for the elect. The vocative is for striking fear and warning, and the call of generosity is for bestowing eminence and giving good news.

*Be wary of your Lord* is two words, one severity, the other gentleness. *Be wary* is severity, which He drives home with His justice. *Your Lord* is gentleness, which He shows through His bounty. He keeps the servant between severity and gentleness so that he will live in fear and hope. When he is in fear, he looks at his own activity and weeps. When he is in hope, he looks at God's gentleness and is delighted.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, when I look at myself, I ask who is more miserable than I. When I look at You, I ask who is greater than I."

When the servant looks at his own activity, he says with the tongue of contempt and in beatenness and brokenness,

"My two eyes full of water, my liver full of fire,  
my hands full of wind, my head full of dust!"

When he looks at the divine gentleness and the lordly bounty, he says with the tongue of happiness and the blessing of gratitude,

"What does the Throne do that it does not carry my saddlecloth?  
In my heart I carry the saddlecloth of Your ruling and decree.  
The scent of the spirit comes to my lips when I speak of You,  
the branch of exaltedness grows from my heart when I suffer Your trial."

*Surely the quaking of the Hour is a tremendous thing.* The quaking of the resurrection and the harshness of the resurrection—how can this be explained and what mark can be given of it? For the Exalted Lord says it is "*a tremendous thing.*" It is a day, and what a day! It is a work, and what a work! It is a day of the bazaar, and what a day of the bazaar! The pavilion of exaltedness will be raised in the desert of power, the carpet of tremendousness spread, the balance of justice hung, the path of straightness drawn out. All the eloquent tongues will be silent and dumb, all excuses will be nullified, for *this is a day in which they do not speak, nor will they be given permission to offer excuses* [77:35-36]. How many curtains will be torn on that day! How many lineages will be broken on that day! How many with white-faces will become black-faced on that day! How many of the pious will be disgraced! How many hats of good fortune will be thrown in the dust of abasement! How many edicts of sultans will be stamped with the signet of dismissal! For *the command that day will belong to God* [82:19]. How many fathers will be lamenting in the depths of hell, their children strolling in the meadows of paradise! *No father will suffice for his child, nor will any child suffice in anything for his father* [31:33].

At the harshness of that day Adam will come forward: "Lord God, let Adam go, and do as You know with his children." Noah will lament, "Lord God, have mercy on my weakness and helplessness!" Abraham the bosom friend, Moses the speaking companion, and Jesus the spirit of God—each will be helpless in himself and be saying with the tongue of poverty in the

state of brokenness, “Myself, myself!”

Then the master of the first and the last, the lamp of heaven and earth, the chosen and approved of the Lord of the Worlds, Muḥammad, will come forth in that desert of the resurrection like a full moon and the whole world will be brightened and the spheres a rose garden. When the master shows his beauty and perfection and the glitter of the light of his face reaches the world of the resurrection, felicity and security will appear for the folk of faith. Just as the moon passes by the stars in the spheres, on that day the paragon of the world will pass by the faithful and keep on gazing on their faces, and he will intercede for the folk of faith. *Thy Lord shall bestow upon thee so that thou shalt approve* [93:5].

**22:5** *O people, if you are in doubt about the Uprising, surely We created you of dust, then of a sperm drop, then of a blood clot, then of a lump of flesh, fully created and not fully created, that We might make clear to you.*

The composition of the Adamic body in the first creation is a clear argument against the deniers of the Uprising. He is saying, “I am the Lord who created a body and figure with such comeliness, a stature and form with such beauty, from that feeble sperm drop in that *firm settledness*. He says, “*Did We not create you of feeble water, then put it in a firm settledness?*” [77:20-21].

If you ponder this body, you will find an exemplar of all the created and newly arrived things in the celestial and terrestrial worlds. Just as He arranged the seven spheres in heaven, so also He composed seven parts in this body—water and dust, and then flesh, skin, veins, sinews, and bones. Just as He divided the spheres into twelve constellations, so also He made twelve holes in this structure in the likeness of the twelve constellations: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two breasts, the two well-known roads, the mouth, and the navel. Just as the angels travel in the layers of the heavens, so also the faculties of the soul travel in this Adamic composition. Just as some of the constellations in heaven are southern and some northern, some of these holes in the body are toward the right and some toward the left. Just as there are seven stars in the spheres of heaven called planets and, in the view of some, misfortune and felicity are tied to their forelocks, so also in your body there are seven faculties to which the wholesomeness of the body is tied: the faculty of eyesight, the faculty of hearing, and the faculties of taste, smell, touch, speech, and intellect. The root of these branches is in the heart, and to this the Prophet alluded with his words, “Surely in the body of Adam’s child there is a lump of flesh. When it is wholesome, the rest of the body is also wholesome, and surely it is the heart.” This then is taking into account the celestial world.

As for how the body takes into account the terrestrial world, it is that the body is just like the earth, the bones are like the mountains, marrow is like the minerals, the belly like the ocean, the viscera and veins are like rivers, flesh is like the dust, hair is like plants, the front is like the inhabited parts, the back like the uninhabited parts, before the front is like the east, behind the back is like the west, the right is like the south, the left is like the north, breath is like wind, speech like thunder, sounds like thunderbolts, laughter like light, sorrow and grief like darkness, weeping like rain, the days of childhood like the days of spring, the days of youth like the days of summer, the days of maturity like the days of autumn, and the days of old age like the days of winter.

In sum, you should know that there is no animal or plant, nothing silent or speaking, whose characteristic you will not find in this dust-dwelling speck. This is why the great ones of the religion have said that you will find everything in the Adamite, but you will not find the Adamite in anything.

This body whose attributes you have heard is like a throne upon which is sitting a king who is called the “heart.” He has no kinship with this dense dust and is like a prisoner who has no rest and settledness in the dreadfulness of the prison. Night and day he is thinking about when he will be delivered from the prison and return to the world of the gentleness of *Return to thy Lord!* [89:27]. He is like a bird in a cage, always looking up from the doorway of the soul:<sup>1</sup>

When will I be released from this cage  
to make a nest in the divine garden? [DS 371]

1 Except for the first paragraph, this is all drawn from RA 177-79.

**22:23** *They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and pearls, and their clothes therein will be silk.*

Just as today the folk of recognition are disparate in recognition and the faithful have more or less faith, tomorrow in the house of subsistence everyone will see caresses and generosity in keeping with his own state and in the measure of his own recognition. The worshipers will wear clothing of silk along with bracelets of gold and pearls and be with houris and palaces; the recognizers will have clothing of solitariness in the ocean of face-to-face vision, drowned in light. One group will be adorned with the ornaments of paradise, and another group will adorn paradise with the light of their beauty.

Though pearls increase the beauty of faces,  
the beauty of your face adorns the pearl.

**22:24** *And they will be guided unto the goodly in speech.*

It has been said that this is to acknowledge one's sins and attest to His words, "*Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves*" [7:23].<sup>2</sup>

True speech and pure words are free of making claims, far from pride, and near to need. They are to attest to one's own incapacity, to acknowledge one's own sins, and to emulate Adam with burning and need in saying "*We have wronged ourselves.*"

Sahl Tustarī said, "I looked at this affair and saw no path closer to God than need, and no veil thicker than making claims."

Look closely at the road of Iblis and you will only see making claims. Look closely at the road of Adam and you will see only need. O Iblis, what do you say? "*I am better*" [38:76]. O Adam, what do you say? "*Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves.*"

All the existent things were brought out from the concealment of nonexistence into the open space of the decree, but the plant of need grew from Adam's dust. He was made the object to whom the angels prostrated themselves. He was sat down on the throne of kingship and vicegerency, and the proximate angels were made to stand before his throne, but he did not lose one iota of his need: "O Lord, this is all Your bounty. What is rightfully ours is this: *Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves.* The seat of vicegerency is Your bestowal, but the gift of our makeup is *Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves.*"

A great man said, "One day I sinned. I repented 300,000 times but I still see myself walking in danger from that sin."

You poor wretch! The men of this road waged a war against their own souls. This war will never have a way to peace, for they found that their own souls are the enemy of the religion. How can a man of the religion make peace with the religion's opposite?

O soul mean in aspiration and deranged,  
whatever touchstone I use, you come up false.<sup>3</sup>

**22:26** *When We built for Abraham the place of the House: "Associate nothing with Me, and make My house pure for those who circumambulate, stand, and bow in prostration."*

Ibn ʿAṭāʾ said, "We gave him the success to build the House, We gave him the ability to do so, We helped him with it, and We said to him, 'Associate nothing with Me,' that is, 'Do not have any regard for the House and do not look at the fact that you built it.'"<sup>4</sup>

He is saying, "We gave Abraham ability and We gave him means, tools, strength, skill, power, and help so that he could build the house of the Kaabah as We wanted and commanded. Then We said to him, 'Do not look at what you have done and what you have made. Look at Our success-giving and Our help. Do not look at your striving but see Our desire and solicitude.'"

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<sup>2</sup> LI 4:209.

<sup>3</sup> Most of the commentary here including this verse is derived from RA 90 and 88-89.

<sup>4</sup> Sulamī (*Ḥaqāʾiq*) gives what may be the source of this version of this saying.

O chevalier! The servant was given two eyes so that with one eye he would see the attributes of his own soul's blights and with the other eye the gentle attributes of the Real's generosity. With one eye he sees His bounty, with the other eye his own acts. When he sees His bounty, he boasts of it, and when he sees his own acts he shows poverty. When he sees the generosity of the Beginningless, he becomes joyful, and when he sees the footsteps of dust's nonexistence, he becomes needful.

That distracted man of °Irāq [Shiblī], burnt by the fire of separation, used to say, "Would that I were fuel for the furnace and had not heard this tale!"

Sometimes he would say, "Where are the proximate angels and residents of the Holy Palisades?! Let them spread their carpets before the throne of my good fortune and the chair of my exaltedness!"

Sometimes my hands are full of silver, sometimes I'm poor.

Sometimes my heart's elated, sometimes wounded.

Sometimes I'm behind the people, sometimes ahead—

I indeed am the chameleon of the days.<sup>5</sup>

*And make My house pure.* In the tongue of learning, this is the Kaabah, but according to the explanation by allusion, the meaning is, "Empty your heart of all things save the remembrance of God." He is saying, "Occupy your heart totally with My remembrance and do not give any stranger or other access to it, for the heart is the container of the wine of My affection and love."

"The hearts are God's containers in the earth. The most beloved of the containers to God is the most limpid, the most tender, and the most solid." Any heart that is more limpid in relation to engendered beings and more merciful toward the faithful is more exalted and beloved to the Exalted Presence. The heart is the sultan of your makeup. Be careful to consider it exalted and preserve it from the opacity of caprice and appetite. Do not pollute it with the darkness and appetite of this world.

Revelation came to David: "'O David, make for Me a pure house in which I may reside!' O David, make the house pure so that the Lord of the house may settle down in the house."

He said, "'Lord God, which house can embrace You?' Which house is suited for Your tremendousness and majesty?"

He said, "That is the heart of the faithful servant."

David said, "Lord God, how can I make it pure?"

He said, "Strike the fire of love to it so that everything that does not have My lineage may burn away. Then sweep it with the broom of remorse so that if anything is left it may be swept pure. O David, after that if you see anyone perplexed in the road of seeking Me, take that as the mark, for the pavilion of My holiness is there. 'I am with fevered hearts.'"

**22:61** *That is because God makes the night pass into the day and makes the day pass into the night, and God is hearing, seeing.*

This is an explication of power and its attribute of exaltedness in the creation of day and night, light and darkness.

**22:62** *That is because God is the Real and what they supplicate other than Him is the unreal, and because God is the high, the great.*

This is the affirmation of unity in the divine attributes and the nullification of associates and associationism.

**22:63** *Hast thou not seen that God sends down water from heaven, and then the earth becomes green?*

The purport of this verse and the verses that follow is to remind of the blessings and to manifest the

<sup>5</sup> These three paragraphs and the poem are derived from RA 130.

wisdom of creating benefits for creation. Whatever He created, He created as is worthy of Himself and as it should be created. Whatever He put, He put in its own place. Whatever He gave, He gave to its own folk. He is the powerful who does whatever He wants. And He is the wise who does *not* do whatever He can. In this world, He created even the foot of an ant and the wing of a gnat in keeping with the requirement of power, the requisite of wisdom, and according to His will. He gave wisdom and power each other's hands so that the work of the Divinity would go forth well-ordered. If wisdom had not been with power, the universe would have been disrupted.

God has attributes that are the antagonists of the existence and acts of the creatures. These are the attributes of exaltedness, tremendousness, compulsion, magnificence, and endless unneediness. He also has attributes that are the interceders for the existence and acts of the creatures, like wisdom, mercy, gentleness, clemency, munificence, and generosity. The attributes of mercy and wisdom hold back the reins of the attributes of exaltedness and unneediness so that this handful of hapless creatures may live out their lives in the shadow of gentleness and mercy in accordance with wisdom. Were it not for these interceders, everything—from the Throne and the Footstool down to the ant's foot and the gnat's wing—would become nothing and nonexistent.<sup>6</sup>

One word of the beginningless unneediness and independence showed itself to this world, and the day of deprivation came forth for the unbelievers and the estranged. Like strangers, they set their heads to their own thoughts and did not recognize God's measure or gain access to what is worthy of Him. They set up a helpless, inanimate idol without attributes as His partner, worshiping it and taking it as a friend, such that the Exalted Lord said of them,

**22:73 *Feeble are the seeker and the sought!***

Weak and helpless are both the worshiper and the worshiped.

**22:74 *They measured not God with the rightful due of His measure. Surely God is strong, exalted.***

Wasiṭī said, "Creatures do not recognize the rightful due of His measure—only the Real." No one knows His measure save He. No one can recognize Him as is worthy of Him save He. Intellects are confounded and understandings bewildered at the beginnings of the shining of His majesty. Prophets and messengers came back on the feet of incapacity from the threshold of the reality of recognizing Him.

O chevalier, tomorrow when the servants reach the exaltedness of union with Him and see the marks bearing witness to proximity, He will bestow the vision of Himself in the measure of your capacity, not in the measure of His tremendousness and majesty. This is why it has been said, "He spoke to Moses in respect of Moses. Had He spoken to Moses in respect of His tremendousness, Moses would have melted."<sup>7</sup>

**22:77 *O you who have faith, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord!***

In respect of understanding, the Pir of the Tariqah said in the tongue of allusion, "He commanded the faithful to bowing and prostrating. In saying '*and worship your Lord,*' He means 'Put up with trials in the religion and this world since God has placed you among the folk of service and provided you with the sweetness of the taste of being chosen by Him.'" He is saying, "If the trials of the passing days and the tribulation of this world are made into a draft and placed in the hand of your incapacity, do not make a sour face. Carry the load of tribulation with spirit and heart. Drink the draft in gratitude for the fact that He has commanded you to His service and kept you in the presence of prayer and the station of secret whispering."

Take care not to lay favors on Him with your obedience and worship. Know that in reality, all the acts of obedience and worship, the good deeds and words, of Adam's children from the beginning of existence to the end of the era, placed next to the divine perfection and beauty, are nothing

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<sup>6</sup> These two paragraphs are derived from RA 398.

<sup>7</sup> This paragraph is derived from RA 26-27.

but the noise of an old woman's spindle. Had He in His generosity and bounty not invited this handful of dust to the threshold of His eternity and, with His gentleness, spread out the carpet of bold expansiveness in the house of guidance, how could this woebegone of existence, this speck of impure dust, have the gall to take a step on the edge of the carpet of kings? What is suited for dust is to say with the attribute of brokenness and the tongue of incapacity and poverty,

“We have come to shame at our own existence,  
we've encountered stone because of the decree.  
On the surface of the rug of misfortune,  
our black days have come in place of color.”<sup>8</sup>

**22:78** *And struggle in God as is the rightful due of His struggle. He chose you, and He placed no hardship upon you in the religion—the creed of your father Abraham. He named you submit- ters from before.... He is your Patron, so what an excellent Patron and what an excellent Helper!*

Struggle is of three sorts: One with the soul, one with the heart, and one with possessions. Struggle with the soul is that you not rest from service and discipline, you do not look for concessions and interpretations, and you go forward in the commands and prohibitions with reverence. Struggle with the heart is that you do not give odious thoughts access to your self, you do not have deter- mined resoluteness in opposition, and you do not rest from meditation on blessings and bounties.<sup>9</sup>

Struggle with possessions is by giving away, generosity, munificence, and largesse. Generos- ity is that you give away some and you keep some for yourself. Munificence is that you give away most and keep a little for yourself. Largesse is that you give away all and live in poverty and want. This was the state of Abū Bakr, the greatest of the sincerely truthful, to whom Muṣṭafā said, “What remains for your family?” He said, “God and His Messenger.”

It has been said that *the rightful due of His struggle* is that you do not slacken from struggle against the soul for a moment. Their speaker said,

O Lord, my struggle is never over,  
so Your earth is all my front line and fortress.<sup>10</sup>

*He chose you... He named you... He is your Patron.*

*He chose you.* When He chose you, He saw the faults, and He was pleased despite the faults.

*He named you.* There was no heaven and no earth, no Throne and no Footstool, no Adam and no Eve, and you were Muslim in His knowledge. He placed the name of Muslim upon you and wrote for you the inscription of election: *those to whom the most beautiful has preceded from Us* [21:101].

*He chose you* through guidance, *He named you* with the name of friendship, and *He is your Patron* by manifesting solicitude. *He chose you*, not because of the excellence of your deeds, *He named you* with the name of the Substitutes, and *He is your Patron* in all states. *He chose you*, so who will misguide you? *He named you*, so who will change you? *He is your Patron*, so who will abandon you?

He chose you through guidance. He gave you the name of being a Muslim through solicitude. He did this because He is your Patron in reality, your heart-opener through mercy, and your secret core-adorned through love.

*So what an excellent Patron!* He curtains faults, He removes distress, He forgives sins. At the time of sin He calls you ignorant—*They do the ugly in ignorance* [4:17]—so that He may accept your apology. At the time of bearing witness, He calls you a knower—*except those who have borne witness to the truth while they are knowing* [43:86]—so that He may accept your testimony. At the time of shortcom- ing He calls you weak—*Man was created weak* [4:28]—so that He may efface your shortcoming.<sup>11</sup>

8 The paragraph and poetry are from RA 17.

9 This is a Persian translation of LI 4:236.

10 The paragraph and poem are taken from *ibid.*

11 The paragraph is inspired by RA 539.

*So what an excellent Patron!* He is your Patron. If you call upon Him, He says “Here I am,” and if you turn away from Him, He calls out to you. *So what an excellent Patron!* He made you appear through love before you loved Him and He desired you before you desired Him.

What a fine Lord, joined with love, pleased with the faulty, passing over, pardoning! He passes over so as to put aside, or He sets aside so as to overlook. If He puts aside, He is without need, and if He overlooks, He is the servant-caresser. He is tremendous in favor, eternal in beautiful doing, and He gives turns to the world’s folk.

Part of his good Lordhood is that He does not take back His gifts at the servant’s missteps, nor does He cut off blessings at his disloyalty.

Dhu’l-Nūn Miṣrī said, “Once I was at the Nile river, washing clothes. Suddenly I saw a tremendous scorpion coming. I sought refuge in God from its evil, and God spared me its evil. I followed it until it reached the edge of the water. A frog came out of the water and held up its back so that the scorpion could sit on its back, and it crossed the Nile. In wonder I said, ‘Surely this is significant.’”

Dhu’l-Nūn bound up his loin-cloth and went over to the other side. He saw that the frog had put down the scorpion and returned to its own place. The scorpion went on until it reached a tremendous tree. Dhu’l-Nūn said, “I looked and saw a boy, a young man, fallen drunk, ruined, and asleep. I said to myself, ‘*Surely we belong to God!*’ [2:156]. Right now the scorpion is going to destroy that young man.’ While I was in these thoughts, a tremendous serpent appeared from a corner aiming to destroy that young man. I saw the scorpion jump on the serpent’s back and sting its brain, killing it. From there it went to the edge of the water, the frog returned, and it crossed on its back. I came back from there and the young man was still in the sleep of heedlessness. I began to sing, saying,

“O sleeper, the Majestic protects you  
from everything crawling in the darkness!  
How do your eyes sleep when you have a King  
from whom come the benefits of blessings?”

“The young man awoke and saw the state. I said to him, ‘Look at what God has turned away from you and how He has turned it away from you!’ Then I told him the story. When he heard those words, a pain and grief arose from inside his heart, and he lamented a great deal. He turned his face to heaven and wept to God saying, ‘O my Master and Patron! This is Your act toward him who disobeyed you last night! By Your exaltedness, I will not disobey You again until I meet You! He took off the garment of foolishness and put on the garment of good and rectitude.’”<sup>12</sup>

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12 The story of Dhu’l-Nūn and the previous paragraph are taken from RA 389-90.

## Surah 23: al-Mu<sup>o</sup>minūn

**23:17** *We indeed created above you seven paths and We were not heedless of creation.*

In the allusion of the lords of recognitions and the deduction of the folk of understanding, the seven paths allude to the seven veils that the Exalted Lord created in the Adamic makeup. With them He keeps him veiled from seeing the subtleties and finding the realities. First is the veil of intellect, second the veil of knowledge, third the veil of the heart, fourth the veil of the soul, fifth sense perception, sixth desire, and seventh will.

Intellect keeps the Adamite occupied with this world and with governing his livelihood so that he will be held back from the Real. Knowledge pulls him into the playing field of bragging with his peers so that he will stay in the valley of boasting and vying for increase. The heart puts him into the station of courage and stout-heartedness so that he will fall into temptation in the arenas of champions by craving for fame in this world, so much so that he will have no concern for his religion or its victory. The soul is itself the greatest veil and the enemy of the religion. “Your worst enemy is the soul that is between your two sides.” If you gain the upper hand over it, you will win, but otherwise, you will fall such that you will never rise again. Here “sense perception” is appetite, “desire” is disobedience, and “will” is lassitude. Appetite and disobedience are the veil of the common people, and lassitude is the veil that keeps the elect of the Presence from the road of the Reality.

Any talk that keeps you back from the road—let it be unbelief or faith.

Any picture that holds you back from the Friend—let it be ugly or beautiful. [DS 51]

He mentioned these seven veils. Then, after that, He said, “*And We were not heedless of creation.* Despite all these veils before the servant, We do not put him aside, nor are We heedless of him.” With the first part of the verse He threatens the servant with His severity and justice, and at the end He makes him hope for His bounty and generosity. The traveling of the wayfarers is built on this rule: first fear, then hope. Be fearful, O dervish, so that one day it will be said to you, “*Fear not and grieve not*” [41:30]. In the playing field of hope wait for His pardon until the time it is said, “*Rejoice in the Garden*” [41:30].

Sahl ibn ʿAbdallāh Tustarī said, “Fear is masculine, hope is feminine, and from the two are born the realities of faith.” Fear and hope are each other’s mates. When they come together, the realities of faith are born from them. He gave hope the attribute of femininity and fear the attribute of masculinity because the domination of hope gives rise to lassitude and laziness, attributes of the female. The domination of fear gives rise to briskness and toughness, attributes of the male. The perfection of faith was placed in the subsistence of these two meanings. When these two meanings disappear from the disposition, the result will be either security or despair. Both are the attributes of the unbelievers, for one feels secure from the incapable, and one despairs of the base. Believing that God is incapable or base is sheer unbelief.<sup>1</sup>

**23:18** *And We sent down from heaven water in a measure and settled it in the earth, and surely We are powerful over taking it away.*

He places a favor on the servants: “With perfect power We sent down from heaven the rain of mercy at the time of spring and the pollination of trees so that the dead earth will thereby come to

<sup>1</sup> These two paragraphs are slightly rewritten from RA 85.

life.” He gave forth hundreds of thousands of wonders and deposits that were made ready therein, namely the various sorts of plants, fruits, and herbs, as He says:

**23:19** *And therewith We made grow up for you gardens of palms and grape vines.*

The deducers of the Tariqah and the wayfarers of the road of the Haqiqah have said that the outwardness of this verse alludes to the springtime of the common people, and the inwardness alludes to the springtime of the elect. “Every verse has an outwardness and an inwardness.” The springtime of the common people is the signs of the *horizons*, and the springtime of the elect is the signs of the *souls*. God says, “*We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in their souls*” [41:53]. If the springtime of the common people has raining clouds, the springtime of the elect has weeping eyes. If the springtime of the common people has violent thunder, the springtime of the elect has wailing and remorse. If the springtime of the common people has fiery lightning, the springtime of the elect has the light of perspicacity. In the springtime of the common people, you should open the eyes of taking heed so that you may see the roses. In the springtime of the elect, you should assign the eyes of reflection to seeing the heart.

Someone saw a dervish at springtime, his head hung down, and said, “O dervish, lift up your head to see the roses!”

He said, “O chevalier, hang down your head to see the heart.”

**23:52** *Surely this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord, so be wary of Me.*

By way of allusion he is saying, “The religion of the submission is the unique religion, you are My unique community, and I who am your Lord am the unique Lord. Beware of My anger if you choose another religion and take another god. This submission has the attribute of the All-Compeller. There should be someone with an all-compelling aspiration so that the beauty of the submission will welcome him. The one with an all-compelling aspiration is he who does not bow his head before this world or the afterworld.”

It was said to Abraham, “O Abraham, *submit!* [2:131]. Belong to the submission and make do with the submission!”

He said, “The submission has the attribute of all-compellingness and will not give me access to my attachments. Let me come out of the bonds of attachment.” He gave his property to visitors, his son to sacrifice, and his own soul to the burning fire. Then he said, “*I submit to the Lord of the worlds* [2:131]. Now that I have turned back from all, I have turned to You; having held back from all, I remain for You.”

**23:55-56** *Do they think that We aid them with possessions and children only that We may hurry good things to them?*

Why do the chieftains who possess this world, nurture the soul, and worship creation, having placed the mantle of pride on their shoulders and become drunk with appetite, fancy that this world is a generous gift for them, or that possessions and children are a felicity for them. No, of course not! They are not aware that when the vanguard of the army of blessings arrives, it always seeks the threshold of the estranged. It brings along the banner of wretchedness and puts down the brand of estrangement. Again, when the vanguard of the army of tribulation arrives, it always seeks the corner of the dear ones and wanders around the house of the friends. For in shape tribulation [محنة] and love [محبة] are companions and equals, like each other and differentiated only by the dot above and below. Otherwise, they are not separate in shape and form.

God gave the miserable Pharaoh four hundred years of the well-being and blessings of this world and did not constrict him in anything. But, if for one hour he had wanted the pain and burning of Moses, He would not have given it to him, for he was not worthy of that pain’s beauty. And if we suppose that someone had asked Zachariah what he wanted when the saw was placed on the crown of his head, the cries of passion would have come forth from his parts and motes saying, “I want them to saw me forever!”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> These two paragraphs are largely derived from RA 431.

A report says, “When someone loves Us, let him put on an armor for trial, for trial comes faster to Our lovers than a flood to its resting place.”

As long as I live, I will bind my servanthood to Your cloak  
and put all my safety into the work of Your trials.

**23:57-61** *Surely those who tremble in fear of their Lord... it is they who hurry to good deeds.*

When an intelligent man ponders the meaning of these verses, he will come to know that the obedient are more fearful in their obedience than the disobedient are fearful in their disobedience. Just as the disobedient need His curtaining, so also the obedient need His curtaining. The Real says, “*And repent all together to God, O you who have faith!* [24:31]. O faithful, you who are obedient and you who are disobedient! All of you return to Our threshold with the attribute of pleading! In the state of poverty and brokenness ask for Our forgiveness, so that We may cover you with the curtain of Our mercy.”

I wonder at the empty-headed Qur'an-reciter who makes two cycles of prayer at night and the next day knits the knot of self-seeing on his brow and places the favor of his own being on heaven and earth. All the motes of existence say to him, “What a simpleton you are! It is here that they make a Kaabah into an idol-temple, turn a seven hundred thousand-year worshiper into the forever accursed Satan, and bind Balaam son of Beor—who had God's greatest name in his breast and whose every prayer was answered—in a kennel for dogs. But you make two cycles of prayer one night and the next day you want the whole world to be full of talk of your prayer!”

You poor wretch! The realizer fills the east and the west with prostrations of self-purification. Then he dips everything into the water of unneediness and returns with two empty hands to the end of the street of Muhammad Muṣṭafā's intercession and says, “*O exalted man, harm has touched us and our folk, and we come with scant goods*” [12:88].<sup>3</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, I have come with two empty hands. I have burned in the hope of better days. What harm if You place a balm on this wounded heart of mine?”

**23:62** *We burden no soul save to its capacity.*

The highway of the religion has a beginning and an end. The beginning belongs to the folk of the Shariah and the end to the lords of the Haqiqah. The practice of the folk of the Shariah is service according to the Shariah, and the attribute of the lords of the Haqiqah is exile in contemplation.

The foundation of the folk of the Shariah was built with easiness. Muṣṭafā said, “I was sent out with easy and indulgent unswervingness.” The weak and the folk of concessions do not have the capacity for heavy burdens. The Exalted Lord put concessions into the Shariah for their sake and set aside heavy burdens: *We burden no soul save to its capacity*. This is the same as saying, “*He placed no hardship upon you in the religion* [22:78]. *God desires for you ease and does not desire for you hardship* [2:185].”

As for the traveling of the lords of the Haqiqah, God founded that on discipline and difficulty. They are addressed by the words, “*Struggle in God as is the rightful due of His struggle* [22:78]. *Be wary of God as is the rightful due of His wariness* [3:102]. *Whether you show what is within your souls or you hide it, God will bring you to account for it* [2:284].”

The Pir of the Tariqah was asked about Sufism. He said, “It is nothing but throwing away the spirit; otherwise, do not busy yourself with the nonsense of the claimants.”<sup>4</sup>

Al-Jurayrī said, “God does not burden the servants with recognizing Him in His measure; He

3 Most of these two paragraphs are from RA 88.

4 This is an Arabic saying, which is unusual for quotations from Anṣārī. I suspect Maybudī has taken it from RA 113, where Sam'ānī provides the following text, with “Sufis” instead of “claimants”: “The short of it is that the blood of the friends' livers was mixed with the tears of their eyes to make the mortar for the bricks of passion's castle. Then they sent the crier of unneediness to the top of the castle to convey this call to the ears of the passionate: ‘This is nothing but throwing away the spirit. Otherwise, do not busy yourself with the nonsense of the Sufis.’” By changing the text this way, Maybudī is clarifying which “Sufis” Sam'ānī has in mind (compare the reference to “Sufi claimants” in the saying ascribed to Abū Yazīd under 2:148).

only burdens them in their measure, for He says, ‘*We burden no soul save to its capacity.*’ Were He to burden them in His measure, they would be ignorant of Him and would not recognize Him, for no one but He recognizes His measure and no one other than He recognizes Him in reality.” God burdened the servants with recognizing Him in the measure of their obedience and the extent of their ability, not in the measure of His majesty and exaltedness. Everyone can know Him in his own measure, but only He knows and recognizes how He is in Himself. God says, “*They encompass Him not in knowledge [20:110]. The All-Merciful. So ask about Him from someone who is aware [25:59].*” °Ali said, “O He who none knows how He is but He!”

Were He to make an iota of the recognition of the Haqīqah that He has in Himself apparent to the creatures, all the recalcitrant people in the world and all the satans of the universe would become *tawhīd*-voicers, all the sashes of unbelief would become belts of love in the religion, all the thorns of the world would become fragrant herbs, all the dust would become musk and ambergris, and all the attributes of mortal nature would become the good news of the breeze of recognition.

Were You to glance once as You are,  
no idol would remain, no idol-worshiper, no sprite.

O God, describing You is not the work of the tongue. Expression of the reality of finding You is calumny. With the onslaught of the heart’s union and vision, what can be done?

Your beauty is greater than my seeing,  
Your mystery outside of my knowing.

### **23:96 Repel the ugly with what is more beautiful.**

In this verse the generous Lord, the wise and renowned Enactor, commands Muṣṭafā to noble character traits and beautiful habits—a bright face, mild words, a soft heart, and a pleasant character; pardoning the bad-doers, hiding the defects of the defective, and doing good in place of bad.

In the tongue of the Tariqah, the *more beautiful* is for the heart to give fatwas by the Real’s dictation. The *ugly* is for the soul to issue commands by its own caprice. He is saying, “O Master, repel what the soul commands by means of what the Real shows: *Repel the ugly with what is more beautiful.*”

The Prophet always used to say, “‘Our Lord, do not entrust us to our souls for the blink of an eye, or less than that.’ O God, lift up this curtain of self from before our heart so that the bird of the heart may be completely delivered from the cage of the soul and fly in the air of the Patron’s approval! O God, this burden of soul is the burden of selfhood. Lift this burden of selfhood away from us so we may be released from self and turn to You!”

O chevalier, take care not to say that his blessed soul was like the souls of others, for if a speck of his soul’s shining were to shine forth on the spirits and hearts of the world’s sincerely truthful, all of them would go forth to the world of holiness and the gardens of intimacy and settle down in the *seat of truthfulness* [54:55]. Despite all this, he says, “O Lord, this is our veil on the road of the Haqīqah—lift it up from our road!”

The command came, “O Muḥammad, unasked We put Ourselves beside you: *Did We not expand for thee thy breast and lift from thee thy burden?* [94:1-2]. O Muḥammad, We put aside that burden of you-ness from you. Our desire took care of your work, Our solicitude lit up your lamp. You did not come by yourself, nor did you come for yourself. You did not come by yourself because We brought you: *Who took His servant by night* [17:1]. You did not come for yourself because you came as a mercy for the world’s folk: *We sent thee only as a mercy to the worlds*” [21:107].

### **23:115 What, did you reckon that We created you aimlessly and that you would not be returned to Us?**

Abū Bakr Wāsiṭī recited this verse and said, “He made manifest the colors and created the creatures to make manifest His existence, for had He not created, it would not be recognized that He exists; and to make manifest the perfection of His knowledge and power through the manifestation of His acts soundly arranged by wisdom; and to make manifest the signs of friendship on the friends and the signs of wretchedness on the wretched.”

He is saying, “The majestic and perfectly powerful Lord, in His majesty and exaltedness and His perfect power, brought the engendered beings and newly arrived things into existence. Thereby they would know His Being, recognize His lordhood, and find evidence of His perfect knowledge and power from His artisanry. In keeping with His knowledge of them, He made apparent the mark of friendship on the friends and inscribed enmity on the enemies. He brought them from the concealment of nonexistence into existence in keeping with the knowledge, known in the Beginningless, that He would create creation. He wanted to make His creation come to be in exact correspondence with His knowledge.”

David the prophet said in his whispered prayer, “O God, O endless Majesty described by the attribute of perfection and qualified by the description of unneediness! You have no need for anything and You subsist in Your own description. You require nobody and You take help and aid from no one. Why did You create these creatures? What wisdom is there in their existence?”

The answer came, “‘I was a hidden treasure, and I loved to be recognized.’ I was a concealed treasure and no one knew or recognized Me. I wanted to be known and I loved to be recognized.”

“I loved to be recognized” is an allusion to the fact that recognition is built on love. Wherever there is love, there is recognition, and wherever there is no love, there is no recognition.

The great ones of the religion and the Tariqah have said, “No one recognizes Him save those to whom He has made Himself recognized, no one voices His *tawhīd* save those to whom He has shown His *tawhīd*, and no one describes Him save those to whose secret cores He has disclosed Himself.”

No one recognizes the Real save someone to whom He shows Himself as the One; no one describes Him save someone to whose secret core He makes Himself appear. Expression is the spokesman of the secret core, and the secret core is gazing on the Real. First there is seeing, then the tongue expresses what the secret core saw. The tongue is the mark of the folk of practice.

As for the folk of the Haqiqah, they have no expression or allusion. This is what they have said: “He who recognizes Him does not describe Him, and he who describes Him does not recognize Him.” When someone has received the self-disclosure to the secret core according to the rightful due of the Haqiqah, his secret core is in contemplation itself and his spirit is drowned in the ocean of face-to-face vision. When the Friend is present, giving a mark of the Friend is to abandon veneration.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “When the inwardness’s contemplation has been set aright in someone, he does not want to express it with the tongue or have his outwardness become aware of it.”<sup>5</sup>

Shiblī said, “On the night they killed Ḥusayn Manṣūr Ḥallāj, I whispered secretly with the Real all night until dawn. Then I placed my head down in prostration and said, ‘O Lord, He was a servant of Yours, a man of faith, a *tawhīd*-voicer, a firm believer, numbered among Your friends. What was this trial You brought down upon him? How did he come to be considered worthy for this tribulation?’

“Then I dreamt, and it was as if I was shown this call of exaltedness reaching my ears: ‘He is one of Our servants. We informed him of one of Our secrets and he disclosed it, so We sent down upon him what you saw. It is fine for a green-grocer to call out about his vegetables, but absurd for a jeweler to call out about a night-brightening pearl.’”<sup>6</sup>

5 In the source of this passage (RA 417), Sam‘ānī attributes this saying to “the realizers.”

6 The last five paragraphs are taken from RA 416-17 (with a good deal of abridgment).

## Surah 24: al-Nūr

**24:1** *A surah that We have sent down and made obligatory; and We sent down in it clear signs that perhaps you will remember.*

A dervish was asked, “What is the evidence for God’s being?”

He replied, “Morning takes away the need for a lamp.” When the sun rises, a lamp is not required. The whole cosmos is the evidence, it needs someone to look. The whole cosmos is fragrant herbs, it needs someone to smell. The whole cosmos is the antidote, it needs someone bitten by a snake. The whole cosmos is the signs and banners of His power, the marks and denotations of His wisdom, the proof of His unity and solitariness.

O chevalier! If one day you see the sun of recognition shining from the sphere of magnificence, and if the eyes of your aspiration see the signs and banners of the exalted majesticness, then this world, which had taken you as its prey, will be made into a shoe and nailed to the hoof of your aspiration’s steed. The afterworld, which had been your shackle, will be made into a ring for the ears of your presence’s servants. Then you will be brought, like a king, into the special court of majesty, *in a seat of truthfulness, at an Omnipotent King* [54:55].

**24:2** *The fornicatress and the fornicator—flog each of them a hundred lashes, and let no clemency toward them seize you in God’s religion, if you have faith in God and the Last Day. And let a group of the faithful witness their chastisement.*

The world’s folk are three groups: the common people, the elect of the Presence, and the elect of the elect. If the common people fornicate, their penalty, in the tongue of the Shariah, is whipping or stoning. Muṣṭafā said, “Take this from me! Take this from me! God has appointed for them a path: for virgins, one hundred stripes and banishment; for those formerly married, one hundred stripes and stoning.” He also said, “Receive kindly the stumbles of those with positions except in the case of penalties.”

The fornication of the elect is the gazing of the eyes. Muṣṭafā said, “The fornication of the eyes is the gaze.” Their penalty is to cast down the eyesight and to turn the eyes away from the soul’s pleasures and appetites, even if they are licit. The Prophet said, “Cast down your eyes, guard your private parts, and hold back your hands.”

The fornication of the elect of the elect is the heart’s thoughts about anything less than the Real. If they give something else access to their secret core, this is counted in the Tariqah as fornication. Their penalty is disentanglement from attachments and withdrawal from people. God says, “Say ‘God,’ then leave them” [6:91].

*Let no clemency toward them seize you in God’s religion, if you have faith in God.* One of them said this means, “If you are among the folk of affection and love for Me, oppose those who oppose My command and do what I have prohibited. No one is a lover who has patience with opposition to his beloved.”

Junayd said, “Tenderness toward those in opposition is like turning away from those who conform.” In other words, “Being tender to those who oppose at the moment of opposition is just like turning away from those who conform at the moment of their conformity.”

Having mercy in accordance with the Shariah is beautiful and praiseworthy. “The All-Merciful has mercy on those who are merciful.” But, it is not a stipulation to have mercy as a requisite

of nature and habit at the moment of opposition, and it is not allowable to be remiss in enacting the penalties. God says, “*Let no clemency toward them seize you in God’s religion.*” What is more marvelous is that He commands us to have no mercy, even though He Himself has mercy, for He preserves the person in faith and does not cut off from him because of his disloyalty and acts of disobedience. He offers repentance and pardon to him and promises forgiveness: “*He invites you so that He may forgive you some of your sins*” [14:10]. When He is like this toward the disobedient sinner, what can I say about what He is like toward the obedient observer of the command?

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O You who plant the sorrow of regret in the hearts of those acquainted with You, O You who throw burning into the hearts of those who repent, O You who accept the sinners and acknowledgers! No one came back whom You did not bring back, no one found the road until You took his hand. Take my hand, for there is no hand-taker but You; come to my help, for there is no refuge but You, no one to answer my asking but You, no remedy for my pain but You, no ease from my grief but You.”

*And let a group of the faithful witness their chastisement.* He says that a group of the faithful should be present where they may witness the enactment of the penalties of the Shariah in keeping with God’s command. The state of that group will not be outside of two: Either no sin like that has ever appeared from them, God having protected them from that. Or no, it has appeared from them, but God has guarded them with His concealment and has not disgraced them before witnesses. In both cases, they should consider this a tremendous blessing on themselves from God and they should add to their gratitude and thankfulness. With the tongue of pleading they should say, “O God, we are impure and without excuse and we are deluded by the concealment of Your forbearance! O Lord, do not look at the abasement of our defects! Look rather from the exaltedness of Your lack of defects at our inability, look from Your forbearance at our poverty, look from Your loving kindness at the bonds of our servanthood and incapacity! By Your good Godhood and bounty, put aside what is worthy of us for what is worthy of You, our disloyalty for Your loyalty, and what belongs to us for what belongs to You!”

**24:11** *Those who came with the slander are a band of you. Do not reckon it evil for you; rather, it is good for you. Against every man of them shall be the sin he has earned. Whosoever of them took upon himself most of it will have a great chastisement.*

Know that God is jealous over the hearts of His elect servants. So when two of them take repose in each other, God brings to pass what will repel each from his companion and push him back to Himself. Thus have they sung,

When my spirit clings to a beloved and attaches to him,  
the changing of the days steal him away from me.<sup>1</sup>

Know, O chevalier, that the hearts of the Real’s friends are inside the curtain of jealousy—today they listen inside the curtain of jealousy, and tomorrow they will see inside the curtain of jealousy.

The Real does not show your heart to anyone, for He keeps it inside the curtain of jealousy. In the grip of the attributes it sees the Real face-to-face on the carpet of joy in the presence of witnessing and seclusion, and the Real gazes upon it. If the heart looks back at another, at once it will see the courtesy-teaching whip.

Thus it happened to a great one of his time: He was exceedingly happy in a tremendous desire for God. He had complete ecstasy and his work was in total conformity with Him. Then once he heard the call of a bird, and he looked back toward the call. He went beneath the tree and was waiting for the bird to call again. A voice spoke to him, “You have dissolved God’s bond! You have given away the key to My covenant, for you have become intimate with another!”<sup>2</sup>

Muḥammad ibn Ḥassān said, “Once I was wandering in the mountain of Lebanon hoping to see one of the friends of the Real, one of the great ones who take up residence there. I saw a young man come out from a corner. The hot wind of summer had blown against him, and he was

<sup>1</sup> The paragraph and poem are from LI 4:268.

<sup>2</sup> The anecdote is taken from RA 493.

burnt and bedraggled. When he saw me, he turned away and entered in among the chestnut trees to conceal himself. I followed him. I said, ‘O chevalier! Give me the benefit of some words, for I came in hope of that.’

“He answered, ‘Beware! He is jealous. He does not love to see other than Himself in the heart of His servant.’”

Adam the Chosen was the center point of the compass of existence, the basis of the creation of mortal man, and the chosen of the empire. He turned his heart toward the bliss of paradise and gave himself over to it. From the Exalted Presence came jealousy’s messenger: “Are you not ashamed to bring your aspiration down to Ridwān’s house of good fortune and to look back at something other than Me? Now that You have looked back at something else, take your bags and go down to the house of the decree. Throw down your head in incapacity and be broken by shortcoming in the quarry of trial, and wait for My decree!”

In the same way, Abraham’s eyes looked back at Ishmael. He saw an exalted nobility and rectitude, the extract of bosom friendship, the oyster shell for the pearl of the chosen Muḥammad. His heart busied itself with him. The command came, “O My bosom friend! Did I keep you away from the Azari idols so that you could gaze on Ishmael’s beauty? Now, take up knife and rope and sacrifice everything less than Me in the road. Two friendships cannot fit into one heart.”

The same state happened for Muḥammad the Arab, the Master of Adam’s children, the foremost of the prophets and messengers. He had busied a corner of his heart with °Ā’isha, so much so that when he was asked, “Which of the people do you love most?,” he said “°Ā’isha.”

In one of the reports it has come that °Ā’isha said, “O Messenger of God! I love you and I love being near to you!”

When they busied their hearts with love for each other, the ruling power of jealousy opened the curtain of exaltedness and, with the attribute of harshness, showed them a sliver of its ruling authority. The satans of mankind and jinn joined hands, and slanderous talk entered the midst. The lie fabricated by the hypocrites took flight. What is even more wondrous is that in those days the path of perspicacity was shut to Muṣṭafā lest the innocence of °Ā’isha should appear to him. He did not know the reality of that business until jealousy had driven home its severity and the turn of trial had come to an end.

The cause of this is that at the time of trial, God blocks the eyes of His friends’ perspicacity in order to complete the trial. This is why Abraham did not distinguish and recognize the angels when he presented to them the *roasted calf* [11:69] and imagined them to be guests. Lot also did not recognize them as angels until they announced to him that they were angels.<sup>3</sup>

Things reached the point that all the joy, whispered secrets, and gentleness that Muṣṭafā had with °Ā’isha came to a halt. Instead of calling her Ḥumayrā by way of endearment, he kept on saying, “How is your family?” °Ā’isha was kept away from nearness to Muṣṭafā at her father’s house. She was ill, wailing, burning, weeping, her heart full of pain and her spirit full of remorse. She was looking at her own misery and abasement and saying, “I never fancied that anyone could suspect me of this or bring words like this to the tongue.”

To Him who hears all sounds despite distance  
I complained of my pain in remembrance.  
Would that I knew, though hopes are many,  
if he who left is aware of me—should I await his coming?

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The friend, it seems, is unaware of my grief,  
and sleep no longer comes my way.  
Each moment my night becomes darker—  
O Lord, it seems the night has no dawn!

Then, when the verses of exoneration came down and the turn of trial came to an end, God’s Messenger gave °Ā’isha the good news: “God has revealed your innocence.”

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<sup>3</sup> This paragraph is from LI 4:269.

Her mother and father said to her, “O °Ā’isha, betake yourself to God’s Messenger and praise him.”

She said, “No, by God, I will not betake myself to him, nor will I praise him, nor will I praise you two. Rather, I will praise God, who revealed my innocence.”

She had given all of her heart to the Messenger’s nearness and love such that she had said, “I love you and I love being near to you.” After being immersed in that, she gave everything over to love for the Unity and busied herself with serving the Divine Threshold. She always used to say, “By the praise of God, not your praise!”

O chevalier, if the accusers of °Ā’isha had not voiced that calumny, the verses declaring her eminence would not have descended from heaven. If the Christians had not said, “*The Messiah is the son of God*” [9:30], Jesus would not have been given the generosity of “*Surely I am the servant of God—He gave me the Book and made me a prophet*” [19:30]. If the man of faith did not sin, he would not have been honored with the address, “*Despair not of God’s mercy*” [39:53].

This is why, at the beginning of the story, He said, “*Do not count it as evil for you; no, it is good for you.* O °Ā’isha, do not fancy that what they said was bad for you. If it was bad, it was bad for them. Because of it they became worthy for *great chastisement*. For you it was all goodness and generosity, the perfection of reward and the elevation of rank.”

It has come in the stories that paradise has an outskirts, and tomorrow the Exalted Lord will gather the faithful in the outskirts and, before they go into paradise, He will host them in a perfect invitation, a fitting bestowal of eminence, a complete caressing. Then He will place a favor on Muṣṭafā: “O Muḥammad, this invitation is the banquet for your contract of marriage with Mary, daughter of °Imrān, and Āsiya daughter of Muzāḥim. O Muḥammad, I kept Mary away from companionship with men and brought forth from her a child without a man for the sake of your honor and jealousy. I kept Āsiya next to Pharaoh, but I took away Pharaoh’s manliness and never let him be alone with her. I conveyed her to you pure, without defect, no one’s hand having touched her.”

Now listen to a subtle point: He honored Mary and Āsiya, who will be wives of Muṣṭafā tomorrow in the next world, and He praised them for purity and guarded them from the people. °Ā’isha the truthful, who was his wife in this world, who pleased him, who was his companion, whose love was in his heart, and who will be married to him tomorrow in paradise—what wonder that God honored her, sent Qur’anic verses and revelation exonerating her, and Himself gave witness to her purity and approved of her?

**24:26** *The goodly women are for the goodly men, and the goodly men for the goodly women—these are innocent of what they say. They will have forgiveness and a generous provision.*

In the tasting of the lords of recognitions the *generous provision* is not the provision of the soul that is sometimes there and sometimes not. It is the provision of the spirit and the nourishment of the living self that is never cut off and always arrives continuously, *neither cut off nor withheld* [56:33]. What is nurtured by bread and water is one thing, what is nurtured by unmixed light is something else.

When Muṣṭafā said, “I spend the night at my Lord; He gives me to eat and drink,” he was talking of the attributes of the spiritual, not the attributes of the bodily. Snow is not the opposite of fire as much as the spiritual is that of the bodily. Two antagonists are kept together in one house, apparently getting along with each other, but inwardly enemies.

Once when his time had become short a great man was seen in revelry and delight. They asked, “What is this revelry?”

He said, “What is surprising about it? Union with the Friend and separation from the enemy are near. Which day will be sweeter than the day when dawn opens up with the arrival of a drink and a blow? Which drink and which blow is that? It will put this idol-worshiper on the gallows and deliver this sultan from the dark fetters, carrying him on the Burāq of good fortune to the Presence of Majesty.”<sup>4</sup>

4 These three paragraphs are derived from RA 348.

“The spirits of the elect are in the grasp of exaltedness: He unveils His Essence to them and bestows on them the gentle favors of His attributes.”

**24:30** *Say to the faithful that they cast down their eyes.*

That is, the eyes of the heads from forbidden things and the eyes of the hearts from everything other than Him.

He commands the faithful to turn the eyes of the head away from forbidden things and the eye of the secret core from everything less than the Real. They should throw the dust of nonbeing into the eyes of their own being, and from the tablet of their existence they should read out reproach to the deceiving soul. Because of the pain of his own being, Muḥammad the Arab, the unique pearl of the oceans of messengerhood and the centerpiece of the necklace of evidence, used to lament, “Would that the Lord of Muḥammad had never created Muḥammad!” Those who were the preceders, the truthful, and the wayfarers of the road never paid the slightest attention to themselves. They were not happy with their own being and did not look at themselves with the eye of approval.

One day Junayd was sitting with Ruwaym when Shibli came in, and Shibli was exceedingly kind-hearted. When Junayd’s words were finished, Ruwaym looked at Junayd and said, “He is a kind-hearted man, this Shibli.”

Junayd said, “You are talking about someone who is one of those who have been rejected by the Threshold.” When Shibli heard this, he was broken. He got up in shame and went outside.

Ruwaym, “Junayd, what were those words you said about Shibli? You know the purity and truthfulness of his state.”

Junayd, “Yes, Shibli is one of the great ones at the Threshold. But, when you speak to Shibli, do not speak to him from beneath the Throne, for His swords spill blood. Ruwaym, those words of yours concerning his purification were a sword aimed at his days to hamstring the steed of his practice. I made my words into a shield to repel that sword.”<sup>5</sup>

*Say to the faithful that they cast down their eyes.* One group do not look at this world, and they are the renunciants. Another group do not look at the realm of being, and they are the folk of recognition. Still another group are the companions of guarding and awe; just as they do not look at others with their hearts, so also they do not see themselves worthy of witnessing. Then the Real lifts the veil from them without any choice, endeavor, or self-exertion on their part.<sup>6</sup>

The chevaliers of the Tariqah are those who do not look at the others. They do not open the eyes of their aspiration toward anyone. They have lost themselves in the magnificent wilderness of Unity. They have thrown the fire of longing into the hut of their existence and drowned in the ocean of awesomeness and the waves of confoundedness. Their intellects are bewildered, their hearts lost—without reason or rhyme, without name or sign.

They are rushing, running, wailing in the world,  
in the mountain monasteries, in the desert caves.  
Totally effaced in the ocean of bewilderment,  
of themselves they recite for all, “No home, no possessions.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said in his whispered prayers, “O God, You appeared to Your friends in gentleness so as to make a group drunk with the wine of intimacy and drown another group in the ocean of confoundedness. You made them hear the call up close, and You gave the mark from afar. You called the servants back, then You hid Yourself. You displayed Yourself from behind the curtain and disclosed Yourself in the mark of tremendousness so that You lost the chevaliers in the valley of confoundedness and made them dizzy in their incapacity. What is it that You have done to these helpless creatures!? The judge of these complainants is You, the giver of justice to these aid-seekers is You, the wergild of the slain is You, the hand-taker of the drowning is You, the guide of the lost is You. When will the lost come to the road? When will the drowning reach the

5 Except for the first sentence, this discussion is taken from RA 126-27 and 128.

6 LI 4:279-80

shore? When will the wounded in spirit find ease? When will their hidden story find its answer? When will the night of their waiting reach its dawn?"

**24:31** *And say to the faithful women that they cast down their eyes, guard their private parts, and not show their adornment, save what is outward thereof.... And repent all together to God, O you who have faith!*

The allusion is that the servant has an adornment that it is not permissible to make manifest, just as women have private parts and that it is not permissible for them to show their adornment. In the same way, if someone makes manifest to the people the adornment of his secret core, such as the limpidness of his states and the purity of his acts, the adornment turns into a stain, unless he makes manifest something to someone that he did not do on his own or undertake. That is an exception, because he will not be taken to task for something that he did not himself determine or undertake.<sup>7</sup>

*And repent all together to God, O you who have faith!* He commands the faithful generally to repent. The repentance of the common people is from slips, the repentance of the elect from heedlessness, and the repentance of the elect of the elect from observing the attributes of mortal nature. The repentance of the common people is to turn from disobedience to obedience. The repentance of the elect is to come from seeing obedience to seeing success-giving; instead of seeing their own obedience, they see the Real's success-giving. The repentance of the elect of the elect is to turn from the contemplation of success-giving to the contemplation of the Success-Giver.

The limit of the gaze of the common people is their own acts. The field of the gaze of the elect is the attributes. The locus of the gaze of the elect of the elect is the majesty of the Essence. "I seek refuge in Thy pardon from Thy punishment" is an allusion to the gaze of the common people. "I seek refuge in Thy approval from Thy anger" is an allusion to the gaze of the elect. "I seek refuge in Thee from Thee" is an allusion to the gaze of the elect of the elect.

It has also been said that He commanded all to repent so that the disobedient would not be shamed by turning back to Him alone. In the same way, at the Resurrection both the obedient and the disobedient will enter the Fire, according to His words, "*And none of you there is but will enter it*" [19:71]. Thus He will conceal the disobedient with the obedient, and their defects will not be unveiled.

**24:35** *God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of His light is as a niche, inside the niche is a lamp, the lamp inside a glass.... Light upon light. God guides to His light whomsoever He will.*

In reality light is that which illuminates other than itself. Whatever does not illuminate another is not called light. The sun is light, the moon is light, and the lamp is light—not in the sense that they are bright in themselves, but in the sense that they illuminate others. Mirrors, water, jewels, and the like are not called light, even if they are bright by their own essences, for they do not illuminate others.

Now that this reality is known, know that *God is the light of the heavens and the earth*: It is God who is the brightener of the heavens and the earths for the faithful and the friends. It is He who gives form to bodies and illuminates spirits. All lights come forth from Him and abide through Him, some outward and some inward. Concerning the outward He says, "*And We appointed a blazing lamp*" [78:13]. Concerning the inward He says, "*Is he whose breast God has expanded for the submission, so he is upon a light from his Lord?*" [39:22].

Although the outward light is bright and beautiful, it is subordinate to and servant of the inward light. The outward light is the light of sun and moon; the inward light is the light of *tawhīd* and recognition.

The light of sun and moon is lovely and bright, but at the end of the day it will be eclipsed and occulted. Tomorrow at the resurrection it will be opaque and enwrapped, according to His words, "*When the sun is enwrapped*" [81:1]. As for the sun of recognition and the light of *tawhīd*, these rise up from the hearts of the faithful and will never be eclipsed or occulted, nor will they be

7 LI 4:279.

overcome and enwrapped. They are a rising without setting, an unveiling without eclipse, and a radiance from the station of yearning. A poet has said,

Surely the noonday sun sets at night,  
but the heart's sun never disappears.<sup>8</sup>

Know also that the outward lights are diverse in their levels. The first is the light of submission, and along with submission the light of self-purification. The second is the light of faith, and along with faith the light of truthfulness. The third is the light of beautiful doing, and along with beautiful doing the light of certainty.

The brightness of submission is found in the light of self-purification, the brightness of faith in the light of truthfulness, and the brightness of beautiful doing in the light of certainty. These are the way stations of the Shariah's road and the stations of the common people among the faithful.

Then the folk of the Haqiqah and the chevaliers of the Tariqah have another light and another state. They have the light of perspicacity, and along with it the light of unveiling; the light of straightness, and along it the light of contemplation; and the light of *tawhīd*, and along with it the light of proximity in the Presence of At-ness.

As long as the servant is within the stations, he is bound by his own traveling. It is here that the Real's pulling begins. The divine attraction joins with him and the lights take each others' hands—the light of tremendousness and majesty, the light of gentleness and beauty, the light of awesomeness, the light of jealousy, the light of proximity, the light of divinity, the light of the He-ness. This is why the Lord of the Worlds said, "*Light upon light.*"

The situation reaches the point where servanthood disappears in the light of lordhood. But no one in the whole world has ever had these lights or this proximity to the Possessor of Majesty perfectly save Muṣṭafā the Arab. Everyone has part of it, and he has the whole, for he is the whole of perfection, the totality of beauty, and the kiblah of bounteousness.

It has been narrated from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudarī that he said, "I was with a group among whom were the weak among the Emigrants, and some were curtaining the nakedness of others. A reciter was reciting the Qur'an for us and we were listening to his recitation. The Prophet came and stood over us, and when the reciter saw him, he became silent. He greeted us and said, 'What are you doing?'"

"We said, 'O Messenger of God, a reciter was reciting for us and we were listening to his recitation.'

"God's Messenger said, 'Praise belongs to God who placed in my community those with whom He commanded me to make myself patient.' Then he sat in our midst so as to be level with us. Then he indicated with his hand that we should form a circle, and their faces were illumined, but God's Messenger did not recognize any of them, for they were the weak among the Emigrants. Then he said, 'To the destitute among the Emigrants give the good news of complete light on the Day of Resurrection! You will enter the Garden a half-day before the rich among the faithful, a half-day whose measure is five hundred years.'"<sup>9</sup>

The likeness of this light is the same as what Muṣṭafā said: "God created the creatures in darkness, then He sprinkled them with some of His light." The world's folk were a handful of dust left in their own darkness and bewildered in the darkness of their makeup. They remained unaware in the wrap of their createdness. All at once the rain of the lights of eternity began to pour from the heaven of beginninglessness. The dust became jasmine and the stone became pearls. The color of heaven and earth changed when the dust stepped forth. It was said, "This is a dust, all dismal and dark. A makeup is needed all limpid and pure." A subtlety joined with that makeup, and this subtlety was expressed as "He sprinkled them with some of His light."<sup>10</sup>

They said, "O Messenger of God, what are the marks of this light?"

8 The line of poetry and most of the preceding text are derived from RA 586.

9 The text here seems to have some errors (in contrast to the same text in KA 3:472). I have taken help in the translation from the versions of the hadith given in Abū Dāwūd (ʿIlm 13) and Aḥmad 3:63.

10 Most of this paragraph is derived from RA 587.

He said, “‘When the light enters the heart, the breast dilates.’ When the banner of the just sultan enters the city, no tumult remains. When the breast is opened up by the divine light, the aspiration becomes elevated, sorrow is given ease, enemies become friends, scatteredness is changed into togetherness, the carpet of subsistence is spread, the rug of annihilation is rolled up, the door to the corner of grief is shut, and the door to the garden of union is opened. With the tongue of poverty he will say, ‘O God, Your work has a beautiful beginning—without us You lit up Your lamp with loving kindness, without us You sent light from the Unseen with servant-caressing, without us Your gentleness brought the servant to these days. What harm if Your gentleness carries through without us?’”

It is well-known and transmitted in the traditions that one of the knowers from the second generation went with the army of Islam to battle with Byzantium. He was taken prisoner and remained there for a time. One day he saw that the Byzantines were gathered in the desert and asked the cause. They said that there was a bishop, the leader of the bishops, who came out of the monastery once every four years and gave advice to the people. Today was the promised time of his coming out. The Muslim was present in that session, and they say that 30,000 Byzantines were present. The bishop went to the pulpit and sat silently without saying a word. The people were thirsty for him to speak. Then he said, “My speaking has been shut down. Look around, perhaps a stranger from the folk of Islam is among you.”

They said, “We don’t know and we don’t recognize anyone.”

The bishop said with a loud voice, “Whoever is here in this gathering from the community and religion of Muḥammad, stand up!”

That Muslim said, “I was afraid to stand up and disregarded him.”

The bishop said, “If you do not recognize him, and he does not recognize himself, then I will recognize him, God willing.” Then he pondered and he looked sharply at the faces of the people.

He said, “His eyes fell upon me, and quickly he said, ‘This is the person I am seeking. Rise up, young man and come close to me so that I may speak with you.’ He said to me, ‘Are you a Muslim?’ I said, ‘Yes, I am a Muslim.’ He said, ‘Are you one of their knowers, or are you one of the ignorant?’ I said, ‘I know what I know, and I am learning what I do not know, and I am not among the ignorant.’

“He said, ‘I will ask three questions, and you answer.’ I said, ‘I will answer with two conditions: First, that you tell me how you recognized me. Second, that I also will ask you three questions.’”

The two of them agreed on this and made a compact.

“Then the bishop placed his mouth to my ear and said softly to me, hidden from the Byzantines, ‘I recognized you by the light of your faith and your *tawḥīd*. It was shining from your face.’ Then with a loud voice he asked, ‘Your messenger said to you that there is a tree in paradise, in every palace and every chamber of which is a branch. What is its likeness in this world?’

“I said, ‘The likeness of that tree in this world is the sun. Its disk is one, but in every house and every room there is a branch of its shining.’

“The bishop said, ‘You have spoken the truth.’

“He asked the second question: ‘Your Messenger reported that the folk of paradise consume food and drink, but no excrement comes from them. What is the likeness of that in this world?’

“I said, ‘The embryo in the womb of its mother. It nourishes itself but it does not excrete.’

“The bishop said, ‘You have spoken the truth.’

“He asked the third question: ‘Your Messenger reported that on the Day of Resurrection, a mouthful, a mote, and a grain of charity will be like a great mountain in the Scales. What is the likeness of this in this world?’

“I said, ‘In the morning when the sun comes up, or in the evening when it goes down, when you hold before the sun something that itself is short, it shows itself as long and much.’

“The bishop said, ‘You have spoken the truth.’”

Then the Muslim asked him, “How many are the gates to the Gardens.” He said, “Eight.”

He asked, “And how many are the gates to the Fires?” He said, “Seven.”

He asked, “And what is written on the gates of the Garden?”

The Muslim said, “When I asked him what was written on the door of paradise, he was at a loss and did not answer. The Byzantines said, ‘Answer, lest this foreign man say that the bishop does not know.’ The bishop said, ‘If this question must be answered, it will not be truthful with sash and cross. He undid the sash and threw down the cross and said with a loud voice, ‘Written on the gate of the Garden is “There is no God but God and Muḥammad is God’s Messenger.”’”

When the Byzantines heard this answer they threw stones and cursed. The bishop turned to that stranger and said, “Do you have anything memorized from the Qur’an?”

He said, “I do,” and then he recited the verse, “*And God invites to the Abode of Peace*” [10:25]. The bishop wept and then said with a loud voice, “O people, the veil has been lifted from my eyes. Right now seven hundred angels are coming from heaven with seven hundred ornamented litters to take the spirits of the martyrs to heaven, and I am certain that seven hundred of you agree with me. Now look at this honor and fear no antagonist. Do not be frightened.” Then a large group of them broke their crosses and cut their sashes and became Muslims. The deniers and unbelievers were killing them, and they also killed the bishop. When they counted the killed, there were seven hundred persons, not one more or less.

The point of this story is that the light of that *tawḥīd*-voicing man of faith shone among a handful of deniers and unbelievers such that the bishop saw him and this affair took place. O chevalier! If assistance is sent in your name from the light of the Unseen, a Byzantine warrior will not take you prisoner the way that that assistance of light will imprison you. But it will not come down because of any cause or travel for the sake of any occasion.<sup>11</sup>

*The likeness of His light.* A group of the commentators have said that the pronoun refers to Muṣṭafā, for his creation was light, his robe of honor light, his lineage light, his birth light, his contemplation light, his practice light, his miracle light, and he himself, in his essence, was *light upon light*. He was a paragon in whose face was the light of mercy, in whose eyes the light of heedfulness, on whose tongue the light of wisdom, between whose shoulders the light of prophethood, on whose palm the light of liberality, in whose feet the light of service, in whose hair the light of beauty, in whose disposition the light of humility, in whose breast the light of contentment, in whose secret core the light of limpidness, in whose essence the light of obedience, in whose obedience the light of *tawḥīd*, in whose *tawḥīd* the light of realization, in whose realization the light of success-giving, in whose stillness the light of reverence, in whose reverence the light of surrender.

Surely the Messenger is a sword glittering bright,  
Indian steel, a drawn sword of God.<sup>12</sup>

Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr Ḥallāj said, “In the head is the light of revelation, between the eyes the light of whispered prayer, in the ears the light of certainty, in the tongue the light of explication, in the breast the light of faith, and in the natures the light of glorification. When any of these lights blazes up, it dominates over another light and puts it under its ruling power. When it becomes still, the ruling power of the other light comes back, more ample and more complete than it was. When all of them blaze up, that is *light upon light*.”

*God guides to His light whomsoever He will.* With His light He guides whomsoever He will to His power, with His power to His Unseen, with His Unseen to His eternity, with His eternity to His beginninglessness and endlessness, and with His beginninglessness and endlessness to His unity.

**24:36** *In houses that God has permitted to be raised up and in which His name is mentioned, glorifying Him therein.*

One view is that these are houses in which needs are *raised up* to God.<sup>13</sup> These are mosques in which the servants supplicate Him and lift up the story of their needs to God and display their requirements.

It is not beautiful for servants to debase themselves before the wishes of just anyone, for the

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11 The story of the bishop is from RA 587-89.

12 This paragraph and the line of poetry are based on RA 524, 526-27.

13 LI 4:286.

Real Himself has assured for them what they need and what they must have. Bishr Ḥāfi said, “I saw the Commander of the Faithful °Ali in a dream and asked him for advice. He said, ‘How beautiful it is for the rich to be compassionate toward the poor in seeking God’s reward! And more beautiful than that is for the poor to be haughty toward the rich by relying on God.’” How beautiful is the tenderness of the rich toward the poor hoping for reward! And more beautiful than that is the pride of the poor toward the rich by relying on the generosity of the Real.<sup>14</sup>

*Glorifying Him therein.* That is, in the mosques, for the mosques are the houses of worship, just as the hearts are the houses of desire. Through his worship the worshiper reaches God’s reward, and through his desire the desirer reaches God.

It has also been said that the hearts are the houses of recognition, the spirits the places of witnessing love, and the secret cores the loci of self-disclosure.<sup>15</sup>

**24:37 *Men whom neither trade nor buying diverts from the remembrance of God.***

He does not say that they do not trade and they do not buy. He says, “*whom neither trade nor buying diverts from the remembrance of God.*” If it is possible to combine the two, there is no objection, but this is like something that cannot be done, except for the great ones, over whom affairs flow while they have been taken from them.<sup>16</sup>

This is the attribute of men whose outward occupation does not hold them back from remembering God. Their outwardness is with people while their inwardness is witnessing the names and attributes of the Real. They are men whose seeking is the equitable, whose remembrance is the evidence, and whose love is the path. In their eyes this world is small. They are men whose watchword is the remembrance of God, whose blanket is God’s love, whose place and settledness is the threshold of God’s gentleness, whose aspirations are free from any others. They are the beauty of Firdaws, the ornament of the Abode of Settledness, begrudged by the Emigrants and envied by the Helpers, and they walk on the earth while it boasts of them.

*Men.* These are men who have no crown or hat on their heads, and there is nothing in their hearts but God’s friendship. In the street of the Friend they have no friend or companions. “When the sought is great, assistants are few.” What harm to them if in this world they are the specious coin of the bazaars? Their hearts are all hard cash. They are faulted by noblemen and rejected by neighbors, but their names are in the register of the friends. They are lifted up by gentleness, they are caressed by the All-Merciful, and their hearts are always gazing at the Real. They sit on the dust, they sleep on the earth, their hands are their pillow, the mosque is their house. What harm to them are this poverty and indigence? With one allusion of their eye, they bring rain for the world’s folk; with one gaze of their heart, they rout the unbelievers; with one sorrow of their heart, they bring Gabriel into the road. *And let not thine eyes turn away from them* [18:28].

Dhu’l-Nūn Miṣrī said, “There was a time when rain did not come and the people were suffering terribly because of the drought. A group went outside the city to pray for rain, and I went along with them. I saw Sa’dūn Majnūn and said to him, ‘All these people that you see gathered here, hands raised in their need—what would it matter if you were to make an allusion?’

“He turned his face to heaven and said these words: ‘By the rightful due of what happened last night!’ He had still not finished the words when the rain began to pour.” Thus you come to know that the allusion of a friend is dear to the Friend.<sup>17</sup>

**24:39-40 *As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are like a mirage.... Or like darkneses in a deep sea covered with waves, above which are waves, above which are clouds. Darkneses, one on top of another. When he stretches forth his hand, he barely sees it. And he to whom God***

14 This paragraph is from RA 100.

15 Both paragraphs are from LI 4:286.

16 LI 4:286.

17 The story of Dhu’l-Nūn is from RA 622.

***assigns no light has no light.***

God strikes a likeness for the person of faith and the unbeliever. He makes the belief of the person of faith light, his activity light, and his final issue at the resurrection light, as He says: “*Light upon light*” [24:35]. He makes the belief of the unbeliever darkness, his activity darkness, and his final issue at the resurrection darkness, as He says: “*darknesses, one on top of another.*” Then He says, “*And he to whom God assigns no light has no light.*”

Wāsiṭī said, “God does not bring a poor man near because of his poverty, nor does He take a rich man far because of his wealth. Accidental things have no weight with Him such that someone would arrive or be cut off because of them. Were you freely to give Him this world and the next, He would not make you arrive by that, and were you to take it all, He would not cut you off by that. Whoever comes near to Him comes near without cause, and whoever stays far from Him stays far without cause. God says, ‘*And he to whom God assigns no light has no light.*’”

***24:43 Dost thou not see how God drives the clouds, then combines them, then makes them a heap? Then thou seest the rain coming out from their midst.***

He *drives the clouds* of His compassion, then pours down the rain of His munificence on His friends with His gentleness. He rolls up the carpet of decorum from the courtyards of His nearness, He strikes the domes of awe with the loci of witnessing His unveiling, and He spreads over them the flowers of His intimacy. Then He discloses Himself to them in the realities of His holiness and pours for them with His own hand the wine of His love. Afterwards He effaces their descriptions from them and awakens them not to themselves but to Him.

In the tasting of the chevaliers of the Tariqah the *clouds* are the clouds of compassion, the rain the rain of compassion that His gentleness rains down on the secret cores of His friends. From the soil of loyalty the fragrant herb of limpidness grows up. The sun of beginningless gentleness shines upon it and in the garden of holiness the rose of intimacy blooms. The wind of happiness blows from the horizon of self-disclosure, snatching the servant away from water and dust. Delay and lingering leave the feet of gentleness, and the breeze of beginninglessness blows from the side of proximity.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “It is You who shone the light of self-disclosure on the hearts of the friends, set the springs of affection flowing in their secret cores, and made those hearts Your own mirror and a locus of limpidness. You appeared therein, and with Your appearance You made the two worlds disappear. O light of the eyes of the familiar, celebration of the hearts of the friends, joy of the spirits of the near! All was You and all is You. You are not far that they should seek, nor absent that they should ask. They will not find You other than through You.”

“By God, if not for God, we would not have been guided.” How could a bit of water and dust have the gall to talk about eternity if not for eternal solicitude and desire?

Had He not in His generosity and bounty invited this handful of dust to the threshold of eternity and spread the carpet of expansiveness in the house of guidance, how could this woebegone of existence and this mote of impure dust have the gall to take a step on the edge of the carpet of kings? What is suited for dust is to say with the attribute of brokenness and the tongue of incapacity and poverty,

“We’ve come to shame at our own existence,  
we’ve encountered stone because of the decree.  
On the surface of the rug of misfortune,  
our black days have come in place of color.”<sup>18</sup>

***24:44 God turns about the night and the day. Surely in that is a lesson for the possessors of eyes.***

Wāsiṭī said, “No one has ever opposed Him and no one has ever conformed with Him. All of them are put to use by His will and His power. How can there be conformity and opposition when He

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<sup>18</sup> Paragraph and poetry from RA 17.

turns about the night and the day along with what is within them and He stands over the things and in the things through their subsistence and their annihilation. Finding does not become intimate with Him, nor does not finding bring about alienation.”

Whatever the ulama have said is a report and whatever the shaykhs have said is a tradition. The reality of the Real is beyond reports and traditions.

A field has been placed before the creatures and the call has gone out, “O folk of the world! Step into this field and walk in the veil. Know not where you go, and know not whence you are coming. Set out from the threshold of Our knowledge and settle down at the threshold of Our decree. Tighten the belt of serving Us and keep watch over Our will. Be ready for Our power, which comes along with Our pardon and forgiveness and Our severity and punishment. ‘The power of the powerful suspends every contrivance.’”<sup>19</sup>

When someone’s secret core is the mine of secret whispering, his heart is in the grasp of joy, his forehead has the mark of prosperity, and the eye of his certainty sees with the light of learning lessons from the acts of the Majestic, then he will be aware of the secrets and intimations in these verses and understand these states, for the Exalted Lord says, “*Surely in that is a lesson for the possessors of eyes.*” In another place He says, “*Surely in that is a reminder for him who has a heart*” [50:37].

**24:55** *God promises those of you who have faith and do wholesome deeds that He will surely make you vicegerents in the earth.*

The verse makes an allusion to leaders, those who are the pillars of the creed, the props of the submission, and the counselors of God’s religion. They are three sorts: One sort are the ulama and the jurists, those to whom reference is made in the sciences of the Shariah, such as acts of worship, transactions, and so on. They stand with the Real in their *tawhīd* through the marks giving witness to their souls and their shares. They intervene in the secondary causes through the Real, but their souls, their shares, and their love for this world veil them from the realities of *tawhīd*.

The second sort are the folk of recognition and the companions of the realities. In the religion they are like the elect of a king. They are described by purity of desire, beauty of aim, and truthfulness in intention. They stand with the Real along with what gives witness to their states and their desire. They act freely in all the secondary causes through the Real, but they are veiled from the disengagement of *tawhīd* by seeing their own states and desires and the marks giving witness to their aims.

The third sort are the elect of the elect because of their recognition. They stand with the Real contemplating the Real in the manner of the disengagement of *tawhīd* and the realization of solitariness.

Thus the religion is kept flourishing with these sorts, despite all their disagreement, until the Day of Resurrection.

Know that the vicegerents in the earth to whom the Exalted Lord alludes in this verse are three groups. Each group has a known station in *tawhīd* and a defined limit in making servanthood manifest.

The first are the ulama of the religion of submission and the jurists of the Shariah, the guardians of the creed and the counselors of the community. Their limit in making servanthood manifest goes no further than hoping to recognize the Real and fearing punishment. The fruit of their *tawhīd* is confined to safety in this world and well-being in that world. Their submission and faith are the Real’s gentle favors and succor, but these are mixed with the contaminants of personal motives and the marks bearing witness to the soul’s own shares. Their innate disposition has been overcome by the attributes of mortal nature, and their life put under the sway of habits and customs. In the world of servanthood, they are called those who mimic the folk of *No god but God*. They are veiled from the world of realities by the attributes of mortal nature. They are headed for paradise, but their state is as Junayd said to Nūrī: “These are the stuffing of the Garden, which has companions

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19 These two paragraphs are from RA 575.

other than these. The stuffing of the Garden are its prisoners, and the companions of the Garden are its commanders.”

The next group are called the elect of the empire. They abide through self-purification in obedience, soundness of desire, and truthfulness in poverty and intention. They are far from the contaminants of personal motives and the soul's shares and protected from lassitude and backsliding, but the hand of mortal nature displays the mirror of their attributes to their eyes, so they see that they abide on the carpet of *tawhīd* by the Real's succor. Their seeing of their own present moment in the mirror of limpidness keeps them on the carpet of being. They have an excuse, but they are far from the world of nonbeing. Their vision of truthfulness and their observation of the marks bearing witness to self-purification block them from the world of nonbeing. Until someone reaches the world of nonbeing, the realities of *tawhīd* will not show their face to him.

The third group are the elect of the elect. They abide through the Real's making them abide, not through their own abiding. They live through the opening that disengages, not the spirit that mobilizes. They have been emancipated from their own power and strength and disengaged from their own desires and aims. They do not remain in the circle of their own deeds and states, nor are they captive to self-determination and free choice. They do not read the edict of felicity and wretchedness. They are not brought out from the pavilion of the Unseen, nor are they recorded in the registers of effacement and affirmation. In face of the severity of lordhood they are like balls in the bend of the sultan's polo stick. They say, “We must stay in the bend of the sultan's polo stick, whether he sends the ball right or left.”

The first group are the self-purifiers who see that all is from Him. The second group are the recognizers who see that all is in Him. The third group are the *tawhīd*-voicers who see that all is He.

The first two groups dwell in the marks giving witness to service and have not been released from the intrusions of dispersion. The third group are in companionship itself. They have reached the center point of togetherness. One breath as His companion is better than a thousand years of living in service.

Aḥmad Khidrūya sent a prayer carpet to Abū Yazīd and asked him by letter to pray on the carpet. In his answer to the letter Abū Yazīd wrote, “I gathered the worship of the first folk and the last folk and placed it on a pillow. I was commanded to put my head on it so that my sleep would be permissible for it.”

Of the same sort is the story of Junayd and Shiblī who were going on a road. Junayd said to Shiblī, “Be with God for an hour until I come back.” Junayd went and Shiblī stood reciting the Qur'an. Junayd returned and shouted at him, “Did I not tell you to busy yourself with God?”

Shiblī said, “I had come to know that when I read the Qur'an, I am busy with Him.”

Junayd said, “Don't you know that wherever God is, no one can speak?”

Shiblī said what he said from dispersion, and Junayd answered him from the center point of togetherness. In the same way, the letter that Aḥmad Khidrūya wrote to Abū Yazīd was written in dispersion, and Abū Yazīd answered from the center point of togetherness.

It is reported that when Moses wanted to go and whisper secretly with the Real, he circled around the neighborhoods of the Children of Israel and asked for their stories so that he could present them to the Exalted Presence. With this pretext he could whisper secretly with the Real and listen to the beginningless address, even if the dust of Moses' dispersion was more exalted than the center point of togetherness of all the friends and the sincerely truthful. Nonetheless, in relation to our Messenger, it was dispersion itself that he had to beg stories from the neighborhoods so that he would have a pretext to speak a great deal with the Real. The Messenger, whose center point of gathering was his gate, had no need to ask for stories. On the contrary, the exaltedness itself said to his sinlessness, “*With all the stories of the messengers that We recount to thee, We make thy heart firm*” [11:120].

## Surah 25: al-Furqān

**25:23** *We shall advance on what deeds they have done and make them scattered dust.*

One of the pirs of the Tariqah recited this verse and said, “Of all the Qur’an’s verses, this is the sweetest. When He throws these tainted deeds of ours to the wind of unneediness, He will act toward us with bounty alone. What He does with His bounty will be fitting for His generosity. What is fitting for His generosity is better than what is fitting for our deeds.”

Then he said, “He has things rightfully due against us, like obedience and worship, but we in our makeup are destitute, and He has decreed our destitution. When the decreer decrees that someone be destitute, the plaintiff can have nothing against him. ‘If he has suffered hardship, that has comfort in view.’

“Whenever someone is destitute, it is incumbent to give him respite so that he may acquire some capital. But, we will never acquire capital until that world, when He will pour down the treasure of His bounty on our heads. We are not wealthy through our own being—we are wealthy through His attributes. Nothing comes from us or our deeds. When an affair is opened up for us, it opens up from His bounty.<sup>1</sup>

“When He accepts us, He does not accept us because of the form of our practice. He accepts us because of the readiness that He gazed upon in His beginningless knowledge. Whatever there may be in the world follows upon that readiness. Wait until tomorrow when He makes that readiness apparent and opens the doors of the treasuries. He will give the treasury of mercy to the disobedient and the treasury of bounty to the destitute so that they may discharge what is rightfully due to Him from His treasury, for the servants cannot discharge His rightful due from what belongs to them.”<sup>2</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, whatever I counted as a mark curtailed me and whatever I considered a basis was foolish. O God, lift up this curtain from me totally, remove from me the defect of my being, and do not leave me in the hand of striving! O God, let none of our deeds circle around us! Lift us up from our loss! O Beautiful-Doer, straighten out what You made without us! Entrust us not to what You can put up with!”

**25:45** *Dost thou not see thy Lord, how He stretched out the shadow? Had He willed, He would have made it still. Then We made the sun an indicator of it.*

In terms of outwardness, this verse explains a miracle of Muṣṭafā, but in the meaning understood by the folk of the realities, it alludes to the special favors and redoublings of generosity he received. The explanation of the miracle is that during one of his journeys, God’s Messenger dismounted under a tree at the time of the afternoon nap. All the companions were with him, but the tree’s shadow was small. To make manifest a miracle for Muḥammad, the Exalted Lord pulled out that shadow by His power such that the whole army of Islam had a place in the tree’s shadow. In that state the Exalted Lord sent down this verse, and this miracle became manifest.

As for the explanation of his being singled out for proximity and nearness, it is that *Dost thou not see thy Lord* is addressed to those who have presence and declares the eminence of the proximate. In the station of whispered prayer Moses wanted to see the Real: “*Show me, that I may gaze*

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1 Taken from RA 540-41.

2 The paragraph combines sentences from RA 548 and 541.

upon Thee!” [7:143]. The exalted majesty of the Unity pulled the bodkin of severity across the eyes of his holiness: “*Thou shalt not see Me*” [7:143]. To Muṣṭafā He said, “*Dost thou not see thy Lord?*”: “Do you not see Me and gaze upon Me? What do you want with another?”

O chevalier! Do not suppose that when someone reaches the contemplation of the exaltedness of the Possessor of Majesty, his passion and yearning will become less by one iota. In the liver of a fish there is a heat that will not settle down by one iota even if you gather together all the oceans of the world. A heart that is a heart is at work today and it will also be at work tomorrow. Today it is in yearning itself and tomorrow it will be in tasting itself.<sup>3</sup>

One of the secrets of *Dost thou not see thy Lord?* is that mortal man, though he is singled out for the special favors of proximity, would never reach the point where he requests the vision of the exaltedness of the Possessor of Majesty if mutual seeing had not come at the request of Beauty. The explanation of this intimation is found in the report of Muṣṭafā where he says, “When the folk of the Garden enter the Garden, they will be called, ‘O folk of the Garden, God has promised you something that He desires to fulfill for you,’” and so on to the end.<sup>4</sup> This indeed is the degree of the common people among the faithful. First they will reach their own degrees and domiciles and become familiar with their own followers, stewards, and servitors as well as the folk of their empire, and then they will reach the contemplation of Unity at the request of the Exaltedness.

There is another group who are the lords of the eye. They had become disengaged from their own attributes and reached the eye of their own innate disposition. Before they join with the ascending steps of paradise’s good fortune, the beauty of the lordhood will block their road and unveil the Cloak of Magnificence. He will let them witness His beauty and disclose Himself to them in His majesty before they arrive at the domiciles and degrees. That is His words, “*Surely thy Lord lies in wait*” [89:14].

It has also been said that *Dost thou not see thy Lord, how He stretched out the shadow?* means that “He stretched out the shadow of protection from sin before He sent thee as a messenger to the people. Had He willed, He would have made it still,” that is, “He would have neglected it and not done so. On the contrary, He made the sun, which rose up from thy breast, an indicator of it.”

**25:46 Then We contracted it to Us with an easy contracting.**

This is addressed to those from whom He made the traces and intermediaries fall away.

**25:48 And He it is who has sent the winds, bearing good news before His mercy. And We sent down from heaven pure water.**

This is an allusion to the wind of kind favor from the direction of solicitude, which blows over the hearts of the faithful to sweep away completely the rubbish of opposition and the varieties of opacity. Then the hearts will be worthy of receiving the generous arrivals from the Real. When the scent of the repose of those winds reaches the breast of the servants, they seek for increase in those influxes and search out the fragrance of those arrivals and that solicitude. In loving kindness and gentleness, the Exalted Lord opens four doors for them: The door of beautiful doing, the door of blessings, the door of obedience, and the door of love.

By virtue of mortal nature the servant enters the road of his own ingratitude, for *Surely man is ungrateful to his Lord* [100:6], so he closes the door of beautiful doing to himself. The Real sends the messenger of generosity with the key of disregard and pardon: “I will curtain your ugly-doing with My mercy, for I am the kind Master and you are the weak servant.” That is His words, “*He it is who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons the ugly deeds*” [42:25].

In the same way, the Exalted Lord opens the door of blessings for the servant. The servant comes forward with ingratitude, for *Surely man is a clear ingrate* [43:15], so he closes that door to himself with shortcoming in giving thanks. The Real sends the messenger of bounty with the key of favor and says, “Though you have fallen short in giving thanks, I do not fall short in My kind-

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<sup>3</sup> This paragraph is based on RA 26.

<sup>4</sup> Maybudī offers one version of the whole hadith under 10:26.

ness.” That is His words, “*In the bounty of God, and His mercy [in that let them rejoice]*” [10:58].

The third door that God opens for the servant is the door of obedience. The servant closes that door to himself with disobedience. The Real sends the messenger of forgiveness with the key of repentance: “When you commit a sin, I will forgive you, and I do not care.” That is His words, “*Surely God forgives the sins altogether*” [39:53].

The fourth is the door of love, which God opens for the servant with His own bounty. The servant comes forth with disloyalty and closes that door to himself with impudence and breaking the covenant. The Exalted Lord sends the messenger of clemency with the key of curtaining: “My servant, though you have dared to act with ugly deeds, I will let that go, for I am your Beloved and I am the one who says, ‘*He loves them, and they love Him*’ [5:54].”<sup>5</sup>

**25:48-49** *And We sent down from heaven pure water, thereby giving life to a dead earth and giving drink to many cattle and men that We created.*

*And We sent down from heaven pure water.* Naṣrābādī said, “This is the sprinkles of the waters of love that He sprinkles on the hearts of the recognizers, thereby bringing their souls to life by putting their nature to death. Then He makes their hearts a leader for the people, effusing His blessings upon them, and the blessings of their heart’s light reaches everything that has a spirit. God says, ‘*thereby giving life to a dead earth and giving drink to many cattle and men that We created.*’”

**25:53** *He it is who mixed the two oceans, this one sweet, delicious; that one salty, bitter.*

*Hū* [*He*] is one solitary letter that alludes to the solitary Lord. It is neither a name nor an attribute, but an allusion to a Lord who has no name and no attribute. The one letter is the *h*. The *ū* is the resting place of the breath. Do you not see that when you make its dual, you say *humā*, not *hūmā*? This is so that you will know that it is indeed one letter pointing to the One Lord.

Whenever you say any of the names and attributes, you say them from the tip of the tongue, in contrast to *hū*, which comes forth from the midst of the spirit and goes by way of the core of the breast and the depth of the heart. The tongue and lips have nothing to do with it.

When this word comes from the depths of the breasts of the men of the religion’s road and the lords of the eye of certainty—those who have limpid hearts, high aspirations, and empty breasts—what they mean and understand is nothing but the Real. Unless someone becomes a chevalier of this sort, the reality of the He-ness will not be unveiled to him.

A great man was walking on a road, and a dervish was coming toward him. He said, “Where are you coming from?”

He said, “He.”

He said, “Where are you going?”

He said, “He.”

He said, “What is your goal?”

He said, “He.”

No matter what he asked, he replied “He.” This is like what someone said:

“So much is your image in my eyes  
that whatever I see I fancy is you.”<sup>6</sup>

*And He it is who mixed the two oceans, this one sweet, delicious; that one salty, bitter.* The salty ocean has no sweetness, and the sweet no saltiness. The two are one in substantiality, but God in His power made them differ in attribute. In the same way He created hearts, some of which are quarries of certainty and recognition and others of which are loci of doubt and ingratitude.<sup>7</sup>

*Sweet, delicious* is an allusion to the hearts of the friends, which are bright with the light of guidance and adorned with the ornament of faith and within which is shining the radiance of

5 The explanation of the four doors is derived from RA 390-91.

6 The first two paragraphs, the dervish story, and line of poetry are from RA 3 and 2.

7 LI 4:313.

*tawhīd's sun. Salty, bitter* is an allusion to the hearts of the estranged, which have become dark through the darkneses of unbelief and the opacities of doubt and remained in the bewilderment of ignorance. One has put on the robe of elevation without deviation, and the other's foot is shackled with abasement and degradation, without iniquity. Indeed, when the Exalted Lord wants to place the crown of exaltation on a servant's head, He gives him access to the carpet of secret whispering and keeps the road of faith bright for him. When He wants to place the scar of loss on his cheek, He drives him from the station of proximity with the whip of vengeance. *And he to whom God assigns no light has no light* [24:40].<sup>8</sup>

**25:63** *The servants of the All-Merciful are those who walk in the earth in lowliness.*

It has been narrated from Abū Baraza al-Aslamī that God's Messenger said, "I saw a people from my community, not yet created, who will come into being after this day and whom I love and who love me. They counsel each other, act with kindness to each other, and walk gently among the people with the light of God, in hiddenness and godwariness. They are secure from the people, and the people are secure from them because of their patience and forbearance. Their hearts are serene in the remembrance of God, their mosques flourishing with their prayers. They have mercy on their young and revere their old. They share what they own among themselves; their rich visit their poor and their strong visit their weak. They visit their ill, and they follow in funeral processions."

One of the group said, "They are being benevolent to their close friends."

God's Messenger turned to him and said, "Not at all. They have no close friends. They are serving their own souls. That is nobler with God than those who are openhanded to people, because of the lowliness of this world in the Lord's view." Then God's Messenger recited, "*The servants of the All-Merciful are those who walk in the earth in lowliness.*"

The Persian of this report is this: Muṣṭafā said, "I saw," that is, in his unveilings and visionary encounters, or in a dream, "a people of my own community whose persons and semblances had not yet entered into the bonds of created nature. The compass of power had not yet turned on the circle of their existence, for today is not the time of their manifestation. That will come in other days and another time, when the desire moves and the apportionings join with their designated times. This is a people whom I love and who love me. Each of them would love to see me along with his family and possessions. They are chevaliers who always want good for each other. Whatever they have, whether possessions or position, they do not hold back from one another. They put aside their own rightful dues and shares and put forward the rightful dues of their brothers. They are leaders to the Real who travel with the light of God. They travel the road of the religion with the lamp of guidance, the candle of faith, and the light of certainty. They go forward among the people softly, easily, and harmlessly. Their hearts are at ease in the remembrance of God and they keep their mosques flourishing with prayer and worship. With their old folk they live with respect and honor, toward their children they have mercy and clemency, and they give comfort and show consideration to everyone. Their wealthy do not disdain to visit the poor. They look after the weak, they ask after the ill, and they go out to take part in funeral processions."

A man said, "O Messenger of God! If they have this attribute and conduct, it seems that they are showing benevolence and kindness to their slaves and mercenaries."

God's Messenger said, "Not at all, it is not as you say. For they themselves do not have servants and slaves, and they have no one and accept no one to serve themselves but themselves. They are more honored by God than those who give away this lowly, trifling world." Then the Messenger recited this verse: "*The servants of the All-Merciful are those who walk in the earth in lowliness.*"

The elect servants and creatures of the All-Merciful are those who pull out the thorn of free choice from their own feet in the midst of the flow of apportionments. They have lopped off the head of the portion-seeking soul with the sword of humility and thereby reached the station of servanthood. His servants in reality are those who are always performing the command. They are pure of portion and far from free choice. They have disowned their own wants.

In the world you see a hundred thousand °Abd al-Raḥmāns [Servant of the All-Merciful],

<sup>8</sup> From "Indeed" these sentences are derived from RA 183.

°Abd al-Razzāqs [Servant of the Provider], and °Abd al-Wahhābs [Servant of the Bestower], but you do not see one °Abdallāh [Servant of God]. Or rather, you see them in name, but seldom in meaning. Their servanthood is mixed with their portions and tainted by their own shares. He who seeks or worships the Real for his portion is a servant of the portion, not a servant of Him.

Pir Bū °Alī Siyāh said, “If you are asked, ‘Do you want paradise, or two cycles of the prayer?’ do not choose paradise. Choose the two cycles of the prayer, for paradise is your portion, but the prayer is service to Him.”

When Moses, who was God’s speaking companion and honored by the Exalted Presence, came to Khiḍr, he protested twice: once because of killing the boy, and again because of breaking the boat. Since his portion was not in the midst, Khiḍr was patient. But when Moses was moved by his portion and said, “*If you wanted, you could have taken a wage for it*” [18:77], Khiḍr said, “*This is separation between me and you* [18:78]. Now that your own portion has come into view, there is no way for me to be your companion, for wages are not a condition of companionship.”<sup>9</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The lord of companionship is not a wage-earner. In reality, the wage-earner is deluded. As long as a man is a wage-earner, he is far from companionship, and as long as he makes claims he is deceived. As long as the commands are revered and the prohibitions inviolable, he is drowned in light. *The servants of the All-Merciful* in truth are those whose outwardness is bound by the command and whose inwardness has the largesse of the All-Merciful’s bounty. The bond of the command in the outwardness is the mark of the fearful, and the largesse of the All-Merciful’s bounty in the inwardness is the mark of the proximate.”

It has been recounted that Jesus passed by three people and saw them weak and emaciated, their outsides withered and shrunken. He asked them the cause of their withering and emaciation. They said, “Fear of the Fire.”

He said, “It is rightfully due to God that He keep the fearful secure from the Fire.”

When he had passed them by, he saw three other people, even more emaciated and weak, their faces like mirrors to the light. He said, “What is it that has brought you to this state and made you so weak?”

They said, “Love for God.”

He said, “‘You are the proximate.’ Your state is something else, and your passion something else. You are the proximate and the friends, the chosen and near ones.”

Among the reports has come this: “O David, My remembrance is for the rememberers, My Garden for the obedient, My visitation for the grateful, and I belong specifically to the lovers.”<sup>10</sup>

Within the curtain of friendship, things happen that outside the curtain of friendship are faults. It is as if God has said, “When We brought them into existence and knew that they would stumble and slip, first We spread the carpet of love and put forth this call of generosity: ‘*He loves them, and they love Him*’ [5:54]. Thus whatever they do will be lifted away from them and repelled because of love.”<sup>11</sup>

On the day that the beauty of Adam’s limpidness lifted its head from the World of the Unseen, he had a stature like an *alif*, a straight shape, and an upright makeup. His outwardness and inwardness were joined together, and the bonds of his elements had been tied by the hand of power. The eyes of the angels did not pass beyond the outward contours of his body. They did not know which oyster lay in the depths of his breast’s ocean and which pearl was inside that oyster. They gazed briefly at his outwardness and said, “*What, wilt Thou set therein one who will work corruption there?*” [2:30].

Then the call of the Unseen came: “You gaze on the outward disobedience, but We judge in keeping with the inner recognition. If the outwardness of this vicegerent becomes dusty with a slip, or if his children step into the trap of pleasures, their adorned inwardness and their tongue trimmed by asking pardon and forgiveness will beg pardon for that offense and We, at the intercession of

9 These four paragraphs (beginning with “The elect servants”) are derived from RA 68-69.

10 The story about Jesus and the words addressed to David are derived from RA 170-71.

11 This paragraph is summarized from RA 169.

a heart purified by faith and a tongue purified by the remembrance of the All-Merciful, will wash away that outward slip.”

When the beloved comes with one sin,  
his beautiful traits come with a thousand interceders.

One of them said in describing *the servants of the All-Merciful*, “Worship is their adornment, poverty their nobility, obedience to God their sweetness, love for God their pleasure, their need for God alone, godwariness their traveling supplies, guidance their mount, the Qur’an their talk, remembrance their ornament, contentment their possessions, worship their acquisition, Satan their enemy, the Real their protector, day their heedfulness, night their reflective thought, life a leg of their journey, death their way station, the grave their fortress, paradise their dwelling place, and gazing upon the Lord of the Worlds their wish. These are the elect among His servants, those about whom God says, ‘*The servants of the All-Merciful are those who walk in the earth in lowliness.*’”

## Surah 26: al-Shu<sup>c</sup>arā<sup>o</sup>

### 26:1 *Ṭā<sup>o</sup> Sīn Mīm*

*Ṭā<sup>o</sup>* is an allusion to the purity [*tahāra*] of His exaltedness, *sīn* an allusion to the brilliance [*sinā<sup>o</sup>*] of His all-compellingness, and *mīm* an allusion to the splendor [*majd*] of His majesty. He is the Lord whose love is the repose of hearts, whose remembrance is the adornment of the eras, whose words are the banquet of the ears, whose seeing is the celebration of the eyes, whose assurance is the promise of caresses, whose face-to-face vision is the ease of the spirits, whose street is the home of the chevaliers, whose conversation is the goal of the recognizers, and from whose direction blows the breeze of union. All is from Him, all is in Him and indeed, all is He. Say “God,” then leave them [6:91].

### 26:3 *Perhaps thou tormentest thyself because they are not of the faithful.*

He is saying, “O master, they are a handful of the estranged, the objects of My harsh and forceful severity. Why do you occupy your heart with them? Why do you make yourself suffer because they will not believe? Turn them over to My decree and busy your heart with My love and companionship. Whenever a heart takes its ease in My love and companionship, it has no room for any other.”

Sahl °Alī Marwazī was asked, “What is the greatest of God’s generous gifts to the servant?”

He said, “That He empty his heart of everyone but Him.”

Junayd was asked, “When is the heart happy?”

He said, “When He is inside the heart.”

Shaykh al-Islām said, “He is not in the heart by His Essence. Rather the remembrance of Him is in the heart, love for Him in the secret core, and gazing upon Him in the spirit. In contemplation there is first the heart’s vision, then the heart’s proximity, then the heart’s finding, then the heart’s seeing face-to-face, then proximity’s mastery over the heart, then the heart’s dissolution in face-to-face vision. Beyond that, nothing can be expressed.”

I set off on the oceans of love not knowing their measure—  
oceans that do not quench the fire of those who drown.

### 26:22 *And the blessing that you have laid on me as a favor is that you have enslaved the Children of Israel.*

When Moses came to Pharaoh, inviting him to *tawhīd* and making manifest a few signs and miracles for him, Pharaoh refused to accept *tawhīd*, and then he laid gratitude and obligation on Moses: “Was it not I who brought you up from childhood and conveyed you to adulthood?”

In denial Moses answered, “Why are laying gratitude on me for the fact that you took the Children of Israel into servanthood? Indeed, who can take servants and act as a lord other than the God of the world’s folk, the Enactor of the universe and its folk?”

### 26:23 *Pharaoh said, “And what is the Lord of the worlds?”*

“What and who is this ‘Lord of the worlds’?” Pharaoh asked this question in a discourteous manner, but Moses showed reverence and said,

**26:24** *“The Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatsoever is between the two.”*

“Pharaoh, even if you do not know and do not have access to His *tawhīd*, nonetheless the seven heavens, the seven earths, and everything in between are the mark and testimony of the Lord and His oneness. The engendered and newly arrived things are all the signs and banners of His power.”

In each thing He has a sign  
showing that He is one.

The chronicle of the Beginningless and the Endless is one instant at the beginning of His welcome, the blessings of both houses are a dust mote in the ray of the sun of His bounteousness, those prepared for service are the ones burned by His love, and those wounded by tribulation are the ones exalted by His presence. He is the Lord who is worthy of all laudations, with no equal in Essence and no companion in attributes. He does what He wants according to His choice, takes care of things without testing, forgives the disobedient, does the beautiful toward the destitute, brings forth the darknesses, brings out the lights, sees the states, and knows the secrets.

Next to the color of your face, tulips are worthless;  
next to the scent of your tresses' tips, perfume is trifling.

Know that in these verses, the Real ascribes creation to Himself in four places. He says, “*the Lord of the worlds*” [26:23], “*the Lord of the heavens, the earth, and whatsoever is between the two*” [26:24], “*The Lord of you and your fathers, the first ones*” [26:26], and “*the Lord of the east, the west, and what is between the two*” [26:28]. This sort of ascription—that is, of God’s Essence to His creation—comes in the Qur’an in two respects: one is partial ascription, and the other universal ascription.

Thus He says to Muṣṭafā, “*Remember thy Lord* [7:205], *And worship thy Lord* [15:99], *And when thy Lord said* [2:30], *And for thy Lord be patient* [74:7], *And thy Lord magnify* [74:3], *And thy Lord creates* [28:68].” In the Qur’an there are many examples of this, and all of them bestow eminence and honor on Muṣṭafā. The Real is the Lord of all created and newly arrived things, but He singled out Muṣṭafā by mentioning him in order to make him great in the hearts of the servants. In the same way, He is the king of all sites, but He singled out the Kaabah by mentioning it in order to make it great in the hearts of the servants: “*Surely I have been commanded to worship the Lord of this city* [27:91]. *So let them worship the Lord of this house* [106:3].”

As for the universal ascription, it is like what He says in these four verses, similar to which there are many more in the Qur’an. The purpose is to explain power and to make manifest awesomeness and exaltedness.

**26:61** *And when the two hosts saw each other, the companions of Moses said, “We have been overtaken.”*

Generous and great is the Lord who has everywhere a concealed artisanry and in everything a hidden gentleness! Look at what the concealed artisanry did with Pharaoh the enemy and what the hidden gentleness prepared for Moses the speaking companion. Moses fled from the enemy at night and turned his face toward the sea, and Pharaoh with his troops and retinue followed in his tracks. The Children of Israel said, “O Moses, the sea is before us and the enemy behind us. What can be done?” They have caught up to us, they are upon us.” Moses said,

**26:62** *“No indeed, surely with me is my Lord; He will guide me.”*

Do not despair, for the hidden gentleness is our guide and the concealed artisanry is lying in wait for Pharaoh.

*Surely with me is my Lord.* In this statement Moses made himself solitary. He did not say “with us is our Lord,” because the decree had already gone forth that after the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, a group of the Children of Israel would become calf-worshippers. This is why he made himself solitary. Again, when Muṣṭafā was in the cave with Abū Bakr, the greatest

of the sincerely truthful, he had recognized the realities and meanings of the states of that sincerely truthful man, so he joined him with himself in declaring with-ness. He said, “*Surely God is with us*” [9:40].

A subtle point: Moses brought forth *with me* because he was looking from himself to the Real. But Muṣṭafā said, “*Surely God is with us*” because he was looking from the Real to himself. This is like His words, “*Dost thou not see thy Lord, how He stretched out the shadow?*” [25:45]. He did not say, “the shadow, how thy Lord stretched it out.” Moses had the state of the desirers, but Muṣṭafā had the state of the desired. The former is the road of the travelers, the latter the attribute of those snatched away.

It has been said that when Pharaoh reached the shore and saw the sea split open and the roads apparent, he said to his people, “This sea has split in fear of me, and *I am your Lord the most high* [79:24].” When he said that, Gabriel wanted to chastise him, so he spread his wings to knock him to the ground. The command came from the Compeller of the World, “No, Gabriel. Only those who fear death should be hurried to punishment.”

It has also been said that Moses said about himself, “*Surely with me is my Lord,*” and the Exalted Lord said about the community of Aḥmad, “*Surely God is with those who are godwary*” [16:128]. God did not reject what Moses said about himself, for He showed him the road of deliverance and lifted the deceit of the enemy away from him. What then do you say about what the Real Himself said concerning the community of Aḥmad? It is even more appropriate that He fulfill the promise He gave, deliver them from the sorrow of sins, and convey them to His mercy and forgiveness.

**26:77-78** *Surely they are an enemy to me, save the Lord of the Worlds, who created me, so He is guiding me.*

The mark of love is that, when the lover comes to the description of the Beloved, he turns his heart away from others. He remembers only the Beloved and speaks only in laudation of the Beloved. He does not become satiated by remembering Him, lauding Him, and thanking Him, nor can he remain silent. This was the case when Abraham began to remember and praise God. Look how he clung to plentiful remembrance and laudation and much supplication and pleading!

What a difference between these two groups—the owners of requests and the companions of the realities! The owners of requests strive, bring forth obedience, and count out litanies, and then, after that, they present their requests. Their hearts are attached to the reward, and they implore by supplicating and requesting what they want. A report has come: “Surely God loves those who implore in their supplications.” This is the station of the lords of the Shariah. Moses was in this station when he said, “*My Lord, open my breast and ease my task!*” [20:26] and so on.

Above this is the station of the companions of the realities. In remembering and lauding the Beloved they never turn to requesting what they want. Sometimes their tongues cling to laudation and sometimes their hearts are mixed with contemplation, their secret cores having reached union. Annihilated from themselves, they subsist through the Real. This was the state of Abraham when he said, “*who created me, so He is guiding me.*” In other words: “He is guiding me from me to Him, for my existence has been effaced, and none but the Object of my worship guides me in myself.”

This is why the Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, show me the road to Yourself and release me from the bonds of myself. O He who makes arrive, make me arrive at Yourself, for no one arrives by himself!

“O God, remembering You is delight, loving You celebration, recognizing You the kingdom, finding You joy, companionship with You the spirit’s repose, proximity to You light. Your seeker is slain though alive, and finding You is the resurrection without Trumpet.”

**26:79** *And who gives me to eat and gives me drink.*

Abraham was shunning delicious and refreshing foods and clear and refined drinks. They said to him, “Why do you not want this and why do you not eat?”

He answered, “*Surely His are the creation and the command* [7:54]. This form of ours is commanded by His creation, and this soul of ours is commanded by His command. We have tied ourselves to His desire and pulled ourselves into the stable of His graciousness so that He will not leave us without nourishment.”

The compass of Power had not yet turned around the circle of existence when He gave everyone what was suited for him and was done with him. “God is finished with creation, character, moment of death, and provision.”

One person is in bondage to the nourishment of the soul, another hopes for the nourishment of the heart. The nourishment of the soul is food and drink, and the nourishment of the heart is recognition and love. One person lives through the soul—he lives by food and air. Another lives through the Real—he lives by love and remembrance.

Whenever this verse was recited Dhu’l-Nūn Miṣrī would say, “*Who gives me to eat* of the food of recognition, *and gives me to drink* of the wine of love.” Then he would sing,

“The wine of love is the best wine—  
every other wine is a mirage.”

Abū Bakr al-Warrāq said, “*Who gives me to eat* without food and *gives me to drink* without drink. Metaphorically, ‘He satiates me and quenches me without attachment.’ There is evidence for this in the account of the cup-bearer during the era of God’s Messenger. For three days the Prophet was heard reciting ‘*There is no creature crawling on the earth but that its provision rests on God*’ [11:6]. He had doubts about his proximity. Then someone came to him in a dream with a cup of the wine of the Garden and gave him to drink of it. Anas said, ‘After that he lived twenty-some years never eating or drinking because of appetite.’”

**26:105-6** *The people of Noah cried lies to the messengers when their brother Noah said to them, “Will you not be godwary?”*

The purport of this verse is to explain how to invite and to explain the attribute of the inviter. Whenever someone invites and calls another to God, his road is first to command godwariness, just as God recounts from the prophets that they said, “*Will you not be godwary?*” Then, when they speak to them, they should speak with the utmost gentleness so that the words will get to them and be easier for them to accept. Do you not see that the Exalted Lord sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and commanded them to speak gently? He said, “*Speak to him with soft words. Perhaps he will remember or fear*” [20:44]. He commanded Muṣṭafā in the same way: “*Say: ‘I admonish you in but one thing, that you stand up for God*” [34:46].

In these accounts, when the prophets spoke to their communities with gentleness saying, “*Will you not be godwary?*,” they did not say, “Be wary of God,” or “Be wary of His punishment,” for in that there would have been a kind of harshness, and the hearts of the people would have found it repellent. This is like when someone says to someone else, “Do such and such!” This is a peremptory command, empty of benevolence and gentleness. If he were to say, “Will you not do such and such?,” this is the same command, but mixed with a gentleness and benevolence that will cling to the listener’s heart.

*Will you not be godwary?* is a command to godwariness, and godwariness is the root of all excellent qualities and the basis of all obedient acts. For the lords of certainty, there are no supplies for the promised return other than godwariness: *And take along supplies, but the best of supplies is godwariness* [2:197].

There are all sorts of clothing. The clothing that you yourself can put on and take off is trifling. What does the work is the clothing of godwariness that the Real puts on someone. One person is draped in the clothing of submission, and he then sometimes falls and sometimes rises; finally, at the end, he is saved. Another is given the clothing of faith. He also falls and rises, but he seldom falls and mostly rises, so he is saved quickly. Another is draped in the clothing of godwariness. He lives happy, dies happy, and rises up happy. Another is draped in the clothing of love. He lives unsettled, dies yearning, and rises up drunk.

Know also that the aspects of godwariness in the Qur'an are many, and all go back to five meanings: One is to be wary of associationism by means of *tawhīd*: He said to Moses, "*I shall write it for those who are wary of Me*" [7:156], that is, in the next world He will make it, that is, mercy, necessary for those who were wary of associationism.

Second is to be wary by purifying oneself of hypocrisy, as He says, "*O you who have faith, be wary of God!*" [9:119]: O you who have faith, avoid rising up against My torment. Do not mix hypocrisy and doubt with purifying your deeds. Flee from My torment, know your own measure, and rise beyond the road of delusion so that you will not burn in the fire of severance. *And be with the truthful* [9:119]: Be with the upright and the straight speakers."

Third is to be wary by truthfulness against eye-service, as the Exalted Lord says in the story of Abel: "*God accepts only from the godwary*" [5:27]. Yes, the work of the worthy is worthy and that of the washed washed, but what will be accepted from a striver who is not wanted? How can the one whose feet are tied with the bonds of unwantedness arrive? Musk did not buy its scent, nor did honey search for its sweetness. Colocynth and dates grow in the same soil and the same water. So, the work is tied to solicitude, not to obedience. He does what He wants, and He does not add or subtract from what He wants. The desire is His desire, the will His will: *God does whatsoever He wills* [14:27] and *He decrees whatsoever He desires* [5:1].

Fourth is to be wary of innovation in the Sunnah, as the Exalted Lord says: "*Surely those who lower their voices with God's Messenger, they are the ones whose hearts God has tested for godwariness*" [49:3]. God made the hearts of the Sunnis clean and pure for abstaining. He scoured their hearts of innovation and adorned them with the Sunnah. He tanned them with fear, brought them to life with shame, and brightened them with purification for the sake of companionship with Him.

Fifth is godwariness by avoiding acts of disobedience, as He says in the story of Joseph: "*Surely whosoever is godwary and patient*" [12:90]. This godwariness is an allusion to the day when he was alone with Rā'īl, and the patience is an allusion to the day when he was thrown into the well. Whoever avoids acts of disobedience and is patient in tribulation, *surely God does not leave to waste the wage of the beautiful-doers* [12:90].

**26:109** *I ask from you no wage for this; surely my wage falls on God, the Lord of the Worlds.*

This is a report about each of the prophets. Each of them said, "*I ask from you no wage for this.*" Thus everyone who acts for God's sake will know that it is not appropriate to seek wages from other than God.

If one day someone takes a step in God's road and desires a reward or lifts up a request, let him never desire it from other than Him! To Moses it was revealed, "*Lift up your request to Me! Whatever you ask for, ask from Me, even the salt for your dough or the straw for your sheep.*"

This indeed is the degree of the wage-earners, for they act with an ear to the reward. The recognizers have another state and another work. When they act, they do not do so for the sake of the reward. They consider reward a freckle on the face of the deed.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "In any case, calling to account will be for the wage-earners. What calling to account could there be for the recognizers? The recognizer is indeed a guest. The wage of the wage-earner befits the wage-earner, and the feast of the guest befits the host. The resource of the wage-earner is bewilderment, and the resource of the recognizer is face-to-face vision.

"The recognizer's spirit is radiant with His love; his spirit is all eye, his secret core all tongue. His eye and tongue are helpless in the light of face-to-face vision.

"The wage-earner's heart has the shining light of hope, but the recognizer's spirit has face-to-face vision. The wage-earner wanders in the midst of blessings, but the recognizer cannot fit into expression."

The worth of the recognizer's spirit is not apparent. Do you know why? Because his spirit is not separate from the Presence. His bodily frame is like a shell, and his soul is like a pearl that originated from the Presence and returned to the Presence. If the soul had come from here, it would be soulish, and if it were soulish, the veil of dispersion would not have been incinerated. The fire

of hell does not burn like the fire that burns in the recognizer's soul, for his fire is lit by friendship.

For in the lover's heart is the fire of love,  
hotter than the hottest fire of hell.

How can the recognizer be aware of the sound of the Trumpet, or preoccupied with the terror of the Resurrection, or touched by the smoke of hell, or cling to the bliss of paradise? Today, the whole world is preoccupied, but the recognizers are with the One. Tomorrow, all creatures will be drowned in bliss, but they will still be with the One.

In glorifying You enough for me is to describe Your beauty.  
Of the eight paradises enough for me is union with You.  
Everyone's heart has a different goal—  
enough goal for my heart is Your image.

**26:217 *And trust in the Exalted, the Ever-Merciful!***

“Sever yourself from all but Us! Seek protection with Us! Take Us as the means of approach to Us!”<sup>1</sup>

“O Muḥammad, O unique pearl! I brought you out from the depths of the ocean of power and displayed you to the world's folk so that the whole world would take on the color of your being's beauty. I created all for your sake, and I created you for My sake. Support yourself with Me and entrust yourself totally to Me. O Muḥammad, Adam was still between caresses and harshness when I inscribed gentleness in your heart and, with the hand of generosity, poured the wine of approval for you to taste. I lifted up the curtain between Myself and you, and I showed Myself to your spirit.”

**26:218-19 *Who sees thee when thou standest and when thou movest about among those who prostrate themselves.***

“I see My friends constantly, and nothing of them is veiled from Me. Were something to be veiled, they would not stay alive.”

O chevaliers! Know that the body lives by serving Him, the heart lives by gazing on Him, and the spirit lives by loving Him. The body that does not live by serving Him is idle, the heart that does not live by gazing on Him is carrion, the spirit that does not live by loving Him is captive to death.

My joy from time is encountering You,  
my abode of peace is Your house.  
You are the object of my hope as long as I live;  
my life would not be happy without You.

\*

Who is the heart that it should scatter pearls without You?  
What is the body that it should run a kingdom without You?  
By God, intelligence does not know the way without You,  
the spirit has not the gall to stay without You

*Who sees thee when thou standest and when thou movest about among those who prostrate themselves.* With this verse, He severed him from the witnessing of creation, for when someone knows that he is witnessed by the Real, he looks to the details of his own states and his hidden affairs with the Real. The toil of the compact of the acts of worship becomes easy for him because He has reported that He sees him. There is no hardship for him who knows he is seen by his Patron.<sup>2</sup> In the report has come, “Worship God as if you see Him, for even if you do not see Him, He sees you.”

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1 LI 5:20.

2 The paragraph to here is from LI 5:21.

## Surah 27: al-Naml

### 27:15 *And We gave David and Solomon knowledge.*

In this verse the Lord of the Worlds lays a favor on David and Solomon, for He taught them the knowledge of the religion. Religion is a comprehensive name that comprises submission, faith, the Sunnah and the congregation, performing obedient acts and worship, and avoiding unbelief and disobedience. This is the religion of the angels by which they worship and obey God, and it is the religion of the prophets and messengers from Adam to Muḥammad. The prophets and messengers invited their communities to it, as the Lord of the Worlds says: “*He has set down for you as the religion that with which He counseled Noah, and what We have revealed to thee, and that with which We charged Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: Uphold the religion, and scatter not regarding it*” [42:13].

This religion is extremely obvious and unveiled to the folk of felicity, but extremely hidden from the folk of wretchedness. The Real gives religion-recognizing eyesight only to the folk of felicity. Only the folk of this eyesight recognize the religion, as the Prophet said: “How is it that you are with your religion like the moon when it is full, but only the seeing see it?”

It has also been narrated that he said, “I have brought you a white, immaculate splendor whose night is like its day. For those of you who live, a great diversity will be seen among you after me concerning my Sunnah and that of the rightly guided vicegerents, so hold fast to it.”

The religion in its totality is built on two things: listening and following. Listening is that you accept with spirit and heart the revelation sent down on Muṣṭafā. Then you go straight by following him. That is His words, “*Whatever the Messenger gives you, take*” [59:7].

*And We gave David and Solomon knowledge.* In the tongue of the folk of recognition and the tasting of the lords of finding, this is the knowledge of understanding. The knowledge of understanding is the knowledge of the Haqiqah.

Junayd was asked, “What is the knowledge of the Haqiqah?”

He said, “The God-given, lordly knowledge—the attributes gone, the Haqiqah staying.”

The state of the recognizer is exactly this: the attributes gone, the Haqiqah staying. The common people are in a station in which the attributes are apparent and the Haqiqah concealed. As for the folk of election, the attributes have ceased to be and the Haqiqah stays. That chevalier has said this beautifully in the line,

Endless passion has nothing to do with a heart  
that stays firm in its own attributes. [DS 209]

First there is the knowledge of the Haqiqah, above this the eye of the Haqiqah, and beyond that the truth of the Haqiqah. The knowledge of the Haqiqah is recognition, the eye of the Haqiqah is finding, and the truth of the Haqiqah is annihilation.

The knowledge of the Haqiqah is what you have of the Real. The eye of the Haqiqah is the Real through which you are. The truth of the Haqiqah is your dissolution in the Real.

Recognition means *shinākht* [in Persian], and finding [*wujūd*] means *yāft*. Between recognition and finding are more than a thousand valleys. Junayd said, “This group did not come down from the Patron for the sake of recognition—they seek so as to find.” Poor man, how will you find Him when you are incapable of recognition?

It is also Junayd who was asked, “How is it that one finds Him?” He did not answer, but stood up from his place. In other words, this answer is given by the heart, not the tongue. He who has it knows.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The light of faith comes from finding God. It is not that finding God comes from the light of faith.”

Hallāj said, “When someone seeks God with the light of faith, that is like seeking the sun with a star’s light. He, however, stands in His measure and abides in His exaltedness. He is far in His exaltedness and near in His gentleness.”

**27:59 Say: “The praise belongs to God, and peace be upon His servants whom He has chosen.”**

Know that the stations of the religion’s road are of two sorts: One sort are called the preliminaries, for they are not the goal in themselves. These are like repentance, patience, fear, renunciation, poverty, and self-accounting, all of which are the means of approach to something beyond themselves.

The second sort are called the destinations or the ends, for they are the goal in themselves. These are like love, yearning, approval, *tawhīd*, and trust, all of which are goals in themselves. They are not needed as the means of approach to something else. Praise of God and thanking and lauding Him are of this sort, for they are goals in themselves. Anything that is a goal in itself will remain at the resurrection and will never be cut off in paradise.

Praise pertains to this category because the Exalted Lord says about the attribute of the paradise-dwellers, “*And the last of their supplication will be ‘Praise belongs to God, the Lord of the worlds’*” [10:10]; “*Praise belongs to God, who has put away sorrow from us*” [35:34]; “*Praise belongs to God, who was truthful in His promise to us*” [39:74].

In the Splendorous Qur’an He linked gratitude and praise with remembrance when He says, “*So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful for Me and not ungrateful toward Me*” [2:152]. Tomorrow, at the most tremendous courtyard and greatest gathering place, when the portico of magnificence is raised and the carpet of tremendousness spread, a caller will call out, “Let the praisers stand up!” At this time no one will stand up except those who in all states and times were constantly praising and thanking God and showing the rightful due of gratitude for His blessings.

The servant will not become sound in the station of gratitude and praise unless three things exist in him: first knowledge, second state, and third deed. First is knowledge; from knowledge the state is born, and from state the deed rises up. Knowledge is recognizing the blessings from the Lord. State is the heart’s happiness with those blessings. He alludes to this with His words, “*In that let them rejoice*” [10:58]. Deed is putting the blessings to work in that which is desired and approved by the Lord; He alludes to this with His words, “*Do, O family of David, in gratitude!*” [34:13]

*And peace be upon His servants whom He has chosen.* One opinion is that these servants are the Companions of the Messenger—the paragons of the presence of messengerhood, the stars in the heaven of the creed, and those adorned with the attribute of limpidness. In the presence of messengerhood they were like the stars in heaven with the shining sun. Just as the stars take help from the light of the sun and receive the luster of felicity from it, so also that paragon of the world and master of the children of Adam is like the sun in the heaven of the religion’s good fortune. Those great Companions are like the stars in the presence of messengerhood and are adorned by it. It is the clemency and mercy of prophethood that has refined them by teaching them courtesy and rectifying them. The tongue of prophethood alluded to this meaning: “My Companions are like the stars; whichever you emulate, you will be guided.”

That paragon of the world is seated at the front, and the Companions are present in keeping with the levels of their states: One is the vizier, one the advisor, one the planner, one the assistant. One is the root of truthfulness, one the basis of justice, one the comrade of shame, one the mine of liberality. One is the chieftain of the sincerely truthful, one the commander of the just, one the paragon of the spenders, one the king of the chevaliers. One is like hearing, one like eyesight, one like smell, one like speech.

Just as the beauty of most people lies in these four attributes, so also the perfection of the state of faith lies in these four attributes—truthfulness, justice, shame, and liberality. These are the attributes of the chevaliers, for the Lord of the Worlds says, “*And peace be upon His servants whom He has chosen.*”

It has also been said, “He chose them in the eras of His beginninglessness, then guided them in the eras of His endlessness.” The chosen servants are those who found chosenness in the beginningless and reached guidance in the endless. They found the road because they were shown the road. They went straight because they were chosen. They obeyed because they were approved.

They receive three sorts of *peace* from the Real: On the Day of the Compact they heard *peace* in their spirits: “*And peace be upon His servants whom He has chosen.*” Today they hear peace on the tongue of the emissary with the intermediary of prophethood: “*And when those who have faith in Our signs come to thee, say ‘Peace be upon you’*” [6:54]. Tomorrow—which is the day of the bazaar and the time of access—they will hear it without emissary and without intermediary: “*‘Peace!’—a word from an ever-merciful Lord*” [36:58].

**27:61** *Who is it that made the earth a settledness, made rivers in its midst, made for it firm mountains, and made a barrier between the two oceans? Is there a god along with God? No, but most of them know not.*

The souls of the worshipers are where their obedience settles, the hearts of the recognizers are where their recognition settles, the spirits of the finders are where their love settles, and the secret cores of the *tawhīd*-voicers are where their contemplation settles. In their spirits are the rivers of union and the springs of proximity. Thereby the thirst of their yearning and the agitation of their burning are quenched. *Made for it firm mountains*, namely the Substitutes, the friends, and the Pegs. Through them He continually holds fast to the earth and through their blessings trials are repelled from the creatures. It has also been said that *the firm mountains* are the ones who guide those who ask for directions to the Lord of the Worlds.<sup>1</sup>

*Who is it that made the earth a settledness*: Who is it that brought the earth of the submission under the feet of the *tawhīd* of the *tawhīd*-voicers? *Made rivers in its midst*: Who is it that made the springs of wisdom appear in the hearts of the recognizers? *Made for it firm mountains*: Who is it that built the fortresses of recognition in the secret cores of the friends? *Made a barrier between the two oceans*: Who is it that set up the clouds of going straight between the oceans of fear and hope? *Is there a god along with God?* Do you know of another god who did this? Do you know of another object of worship who made all this?

It has also been said that *made a barrier between the two oceans* means between the heart and the soul, so that neither will overpower its companion. In the human makeup, there are both the Kaabah of the heart and the tavern of the soul, two opposite substances joined in creation and separate in path, each open toward the other, but between the two God’s power has placed a barrier. Whenever the commanding soul raids the heart’s pavilion, the afflicted heart goes to the Exalted Threshold to complain, and from the gardens of Eternity the robe of the gaze reaches it. This is the secret of the report, “Surely in every day and night God has 360 gazes at the hearts of the servants.”

The equivalent of this verse is in Surah al-Furqān: “*And He it is who mixed the two oceans, that one sweet, delicious, this one salty, bitter*” [25:53]. In the tongue of the folk of recognition, these two oceans are the attributes of the heart of the faithful person. The two sorts of water are the attributes of opposite meaning that he has within himself: fear and hope, doubt and certainty, misguidance and guidance, avarice and contentment, heedlessness and wakefulness. The Exalted Lord made a barrier and obstacle appear between the two opposites. Between fear and hope there is the barrier of a beautiful opinion so that the bitterness of fear will not destroy the sweetness of hope. Between doubt and certainty there is the barrier of recognition so that the saltiness of doubt will not destroy the sweetness of certainty. Between misguidance and guidance there is the barrier of protection so that the bitterness of misguidance will not destroy the sweetness of guidance.

1 LI 5:43-44.

Between avarice and contentment there is the barrier of godwariness so that the opacity of avarice will not destroy the limpidness of contentment. Between heedlessness and wakefulness there is the barrier of observation by gazing so that the darkness of heedlessness will not destroy the light of wakefulness.

*Is there a god along with God? Other than God do you know of another god who makes such artisanry and has such power?*

**27:80 *Surely thou wilt not make the dead to hear.***

In reality, life is three things, and any heart that is empty of these three things is in fact carrion and counted as dead: the life of fear along with knowledge, the life of hope along with knowledge, and the life of friendship along with knowledge.

The life of fear keeps a man's skirt pure of defilement, his eyes awake, and his road straight. The life of hope keeps a man's steed quick, his traveling supplies complete, and the road near. The life of friendship makes a man's measure great, his secret core free, and his heart happy.

Fear without knowledge is the fear of the Khawarij, hope without knowledge is the hope of the Murji'ah, and friendship without knowledge is the friendship of the libertines.<sup>2</sup>

Anyone who combines these three traits with knowledge will reach a pure life and be released from death. The Lord of the Worlds says, "*We shall surely give him to live a goodly life* [16:97]. I will make them live a pure life, disowned of self and free of the whole world."

Disown everything in the realm of being—  
be that Heart-taker's "companion of the cave."

The chevaliers are those to whom He gave access to face-to-face vision, and they made do with that. When the veil was lifted, they turned away from all creation. They took back the skirt of attachments from the hands of the creatures.

Her love came to me before I knew love—  
it came across an empty heart and took possession.

**27:93 *Say: "Praise belongs to God. He will show you His signs, and you will recognize them."***

This road can be traversed with three way stations: first showing, then traveling, then being pulled. Showing is this: "*He will show you His signs, and you will recognize them.*" Traveling is what He said: "*And He created you in stages*" [71:14]; "*You shall surely ride stage after stage*" [84:19]. Being pulled is what He said: "*Then He drew close, so He came down*" [53:8].

About showing He said in the case of Abraham, "*We were showing Abraham the dominion of the heavens and the earth*" [6:75]. Again, He spoke of traveling on the part of Moses: "*Surely with me is my Lord; He will guide me*" [26:62]. He spoke of being pulled in the case of Muṣṭafā the Arab: "*Who took His servant by night*" [17:1].

You poor wretch! You have lost the road, you have remained in yourself, you have not taken the road to the road. You have traveled lifetimes in yourself and not reached anywhere. Your traveling is like that great pir said:

I was young when He said, "May your nights be sweet!"  
I became old in passion but my night did not become day.

O chevalier! Take a step outside of yourself so that the road may become clear and your Companion may appear to you.

Have you not heard the words spoken by the Pir of the Tariqah: "O gone out of yourself without reaching the Friend! Do not let your heart be tight, for in each breath your companion is He. Exalted is he who is scarred by Him! On His road is he who has His lamp! This is why the Lord of the Worlds said, '*So he is upon a light from his Lord*' [39:22]."

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<sup>2</sup> These three paragraphs are from *Ṣad maydān*, no. 73 (313).

## Surah 28: al-Qaṣaṣ

### 28:1 *Ṭā' Sīn Mīm*

*Ṭā'* alludes to the recognizer's heart, its purity [*tahāra*] of everything other than He. *Sīn* alludes to His secret [*sirr*] with His friends in their contemplation of His majesty and beauty. *Mīm* alludes to His favors [*minna*] toward the faithful in His blessings and bounties.

Wherever talk of Him goes, the session becomes fragrant. Wherever there is listening to His name and mark, the spirits become luminous. In the 18,000 worlds, no one can step on the carpet of His success-giving without His help and gentleness. In the two realms of being and the two worlds, life is not given over to anyone unless by His protection and kind favor.

The great ones of the religion have said that the chevaliers and the friends of the Real have three sorts of life: life through remembrance, life through recognition, and life through finding. The fruit of the life of remembrance is intimacy, the fruit of the life of recognition is stillness, and the fruit of the life of finding is annihilation. In reality, this annihilation is subsistence. Until you have been annihilated from yourself you will not subsist through Him.

Abū Sa'īd Kharrāz said, "I was at Arafat on the Day of Arafat and I saw that the hajjis were making supplications and weeping beautifully: on every tongue a remembrance, in every heart a fervor, in every soul a passion, in every corner a burning and a need, with everyone a pain and a melting. The wish arose in me that I also should make a supplication and ask for something. I asked myself what supplication I should make and what I should ask, since everything needed is given unasked for; it is made ready and taken care of without being spoken. In the end I made the intention to open up the road of the Haqīqah to Him and to supplicate. He inspired in my secret core, 'You want something from Me after finding Me?'"

In wonder the violet keeps on saying, "Strange—  
if someone has the Friend's tresses, why would he pick me?"

Abū Sa'īd stepped back from that and kept on reciting this verse:

"Your loyalty clings inside my heart,  
Your love is my goal, yearning my supplies."

**28:22** *When he turned his face toward Midian, he said, "Perhaps my Lord will guide me on the even way."*

In what preceded all precedents, the scented garden of recognition was adorned with the trees of love. The playing field of bewilderment and love was placed in front of it and made its access-way. "The Garden is surrounded by disliked things." Whenever they wanted to bring someone into the garden of recognition, they first brought him into the playing field of bewilderment, and they made his head the polo-ball of tribulation. Thus he would taste the flavor of bewilderment and tribulation, and then he would reach the fragrance of love. This was the state of Moses, God's speaking companion.

When they wanted to garb him in the clothing of prophethood and take him to the presence of messengerhood and conversation, first they put him in the bend of trial's polo stick until he was cooked in those trials and troubles. Thus the Exalted Lord says, "*We tried thee with trials*" [20:40].

In other words: “We cooked you well with trial until you became limpid and immaculate.”<sup>1</sup>

He came out of Egypt fearful and trembling. In terror of his enemy he was looking right and left, just as a fearful person does. That is His words, “*So he left there, fearful and vigilant*” [28:21]. In the end he wept to God and complained of his burning liver. He said, “*My Lord, deliver me from the wrongdoing people*” [28:21]. The Lord of the Worlds answered his supplication and kept him safe from the enemy. Tranquility came down into his heart and took up residence. It was said to his secret core, “Have no fear and no sorrow. The Lord who kept you under His protection and guarding and did not give you over to the enemy when you were an infant in Pharaoh’s chamber and you were slapping his face will today also keep you in His protection and not give you over to the enemy.”

Then he set off in the desert all at once, not aiming for Midian. The Exalted Lord threw him to Midian for the sake of a secret that He had prepared there. Shu<sup>‘</sup>ayb was God’s prophet and dwelled in Midian. He was a worshipful man, overcome by fear. In the moments of his seclusion he wept so much that he lost his eyesight from weeping, but the Exalted Lord gave him back his eyesight through a miracle. He still kept on weeping until he became blind again and the Exalted Lord again gave him eyesight. For the second time, for the third time, he kept on weeping until he lost his eyesight. Revelation came to him, “Why are you weeping so much, O Shu<sup>‘</sup>ayb? If you fear hell, I have made you secure from hell, and if you hope for paradise, I have permitted that to you.”

Shu<sup>‘</sup>ayb said, “No, O Lord, but in yearning for You. I am not weeping in fear of hell or in hope of paradise, but I am burning in my wish for the Possessor of Majesty.”

God revealed to him, “Because of this, I will put My prophet and speaking companion in your service for ten years.”

*When he turned his face toward Midian.* In his person Moses went to Midian and fell into the service of Shu<sup>‘</sup>ayb. In his heart he went toward the Real and fell into prophethood and messengerhood. *He said, “Perhaps my Lord will guide me on the even way.”* In terms of allusion in the tongue of unveiling, *the even way* is the perseverance of the soul in service and the resting of the soul in straightness. Until the man traveling the road traverses the road’s way stations, he will not reach the top of *tawḥīd*’s street.

At the beginning of the work when Abraham was brought to the threshold, he was sent to the street of the star until he said, “*This is my Lord*” [6:76]. Then he left the street of the star and entered the street of the moon. He left the street of the moon and entered the street of the sun. He saw that every street had a defect. In the street of the star he saw the blight of change. In the street of the moon he saw the fault of transition. In the street of the sun he saw the defect of disappearance. He came to know that this is not the highway of straightness nor the top of *tawḥīd*’s street. All the roads were blocked for him. He stood with the feet of reflection at the top of bewilderment’s street, bewildered, languishing, seeking the Friend. Anyone who saw him would have said that he was captive to the dust at the top of friendship’s street.

The dust at the top of the Friend’s street has become jasmine—  
everyone who passes by that dust becomes like me.

When Abraham saw that all the roads were blocked, he knew that the Presence is one. He cried out, “*Surely I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth*” [6:79]. The manly man is not he who rides on the highway when the road is open. The man is he who goes in the darkness of night on a narrow road without a guide to the top of the Friend’s street.

### **28:23** *When he entered upon the water of Midian.*

He entered the water of Midian with his outwardness, and he entered the influxes of intimacy with his heart. The influxes of intimacy are the courtyards of *tawḥīd*. When the servant enters the courtyards of *tawḥīd*, the lights of contemplation are unveiled for him and he becomes absent from his senses in his soul. Rulership then belongs to God alone, for there is no soul, no sense perception,

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<sup>1</sup> This last sentence is from LI 4:129.

no heart, no intimacy. This is dissolution in the self-sufficiency and total annihilation.<sup>2</sup>

When the servant reaches the courtyards of *tawhīd*, he is drowned in the light of contemplation, absent from himself, and present with the Real. Seeking ceases to be in the Found, recognition ceases to be in the Recognized, and seeing ceases to be in the Seen—attachments cut, causes dissolved, traces nullified, limits come to nothing, allusions and expressions negated. When rain arrives at the ocean, it arrives. Stars disappear in daytime. He who arrives at the Patron arrives at himself.<sup>3</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O Found and Findable! What mark is given of a drunkard but selflessness? Everyone’s tribulation is because of distance, but this poor wretch’s because of nearness. Everyone is thirsty from not finding water, but I from being quenched.

“O God, all friendship is between two, with no room for a third. In this friendship, all is You, with no room for me. If this work is from my side, I have nothing to do with it. If it is from Your side, all is You. What business have I to meddle and make claims?”

**28:56** *Surely thou dost not guide whom thou lovest, but God guides whomsoever He will.*

“O Muḥammad, guidance is one of the characteristics of lordhood, so it is not proper for anyone described by mortal nature.”<sup>4</sup>

Giving the success of felicity and the realization of guidance is a characteristic of lordhood. Human nature has no access to it, and no one is suited for this attribute other than the majestic Unity. “O Muḥammad, you have the eminence of prophethood, the rank of messengerhood, the beauty of mediation, the *praiseworthy station* [17:79], and the Visited Pool.<sup>5</sup> You are the Seal of the Prophets, the master of the messengers, the interceder for the sinners, and the candle of earth and heaven. The reins of your steed have passed beyond the heavens, and the courtyard of the Splendorous Throne was made the place for the soles of your feet. But guiding the servants and showing them the road to faith is not your work, nor is it in your hands. *Surely thou dost not guide whom thou lovest.* We drive those We want into the desert of bewilderment and We drag those We want by the chain of severity. In the beginninglessness beginning and in what preceded all precedents, We placed the crown of felicity on the heads of the folk of good fortune, and We beat this drum: ‘These are in the Garden, and I don’t care.’ We wrote the inscription of wretchedness on the foreheads of another group, and We struck this knocker: ‘These are in the Fire, and I don’t care.’”

O chevalier, no attribute of God inflicts more pain than the attribute of “I don’t care.” When the Prophet said, “Would that Muḥammad’s Lord had not created Muḥammad,” he was wailing in fear of these words. What was said by Abū Bakr—“Would that I were a tree to be lopped”—is the pain of this talk.

Beautiful words were spoken by the Pir of the Tariqah: “What does the work is not that someone has indolence and someone else has deeds. What does the work is that someone is unworthy in the Beginningless. The greatest of the abandoned ones, called Iblis, was busy in the workshop of deeds for many years. The folk of the Dominion were all beating the drum of his good fortune. They did not know that a garment of a different color had been woven for him in the workshop of the Beginningless. In the workshop of his deeds they saw scissors and silk, but from the workshop of the Beginningless appeared a black kilim: ‘*And he was one of the unbelievers*’ [2:34].”

**28:83** *That is the abode of the next world—We appoint it for those who do not desire elevation in the earth, nor corruption.*

Tomorrow in the house of the afterworld, those residing in the *seat of truthfulness* [54:55] and

2 Derived from LI 5:62.

3 This paragraph is derived largely from Anṣārī’s discussion of annihilation and subsistence in *Ṣad maydān*, nos. 99-100 (332-33).

4 LI 5:73, with much of the rest of this paragraph being a translation of Qushayrī’s comments.

5 The Visited Pool (*al-ḥawḍ al-mawrūd*) is the pool of the Prophet in the next world, to which he refers in the following hadith, which Maybudī cites under 42:1 (KA 9:15): “My pool extends from Adan to Amman. Its wine is more intensely white than milk and sweeter than honey. Anyone who takes one drink of it will never thirst again. The first to enter it will be the destitute among the Emigrants.”

those in proximity with the All-Compelling Presence will be a group who in this world did not seek to be higher and greater than others. Here they considered themselves lesser and smaller than others and never looked upon themselves with the eye of approval. Thus that chevalier of the Tariqah was returning from the halting place of Arafat. It was said to him, “How did you see the folk of the standing place?”

He replied, “I saw a people whom I would have hoped, had it not been for the fact that I was among them, God would forgive.”

O chevalier! Do not look at yourself with the eye of approval! Do not go into the road of “I,” for no one has ever seen any benefit from I-ness. What happened to Iblis happened because of I-ness, for he said, “*I am better*” [38:76].

One of the great ones of the religion saw Iblis. He said, “Give me some advice.”

He said, “Do not say I, lest you become like me.”

This indeed is the road of the wayfarers on the Tariqah and the chevaliers of the Haqiqah. Nonetheless, it is not permissible to throw away I-ness in the road of the Shariah, because things in the Shariah have been turned over to you, and that continues.

Shaykh Abū ʿAbdallāh Khafīf said, “Throwing away I-ness in the Shariah is heresy, and affirming I-ness in the Haqiqah is associationism. When you are in the station of the Shariah, say I. When you are on the road of the Haqiqah, say He. Indeed, all is He. The Shariah is the acts, the Haqiqah the states. The acts abide through you, the states are arranged by Him.”

**28:85** *He who made the Qur’an obligatory upon thee shall restore thee to a place of return.*

Outwardly, the place of return is Mecca. The Prophet often used to say, “The homeland! The homeland!” and God made his request into reality. In secret and allusion, however, the meaning is this: “He appointed for you the attributes of dispersion so that you may convey the message and spread the Shariah. He will restore you to togetherness through your realization of annihilation from creation.”<sup>6</sup>

As long as Muṣṭafā was busy conveying the message, spreading the Shariah, and laying down the foundations of the religion, he was in the station of dispersion for the sake of the people’s salvation. With this verse, he was taken from the narrow pass of dispersion to the vast plain of togetherness, the drinking place of His elect. Thus he said, “No one embraces me in my present moment save my Lord.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “When someone’s togetherness is sound, dispersion will not harm him. When someone’s lineage is sound, recalcitrance will not cut it off. Speaking of togetherness is not the work of the tongue, and expressing its reality is calumny. How can the one destroyed by the ocean of trial explain? What mark has he who has drowned in annihilation itself? This is the talk of the heart’s resurrection and the spirit’s plundering. With the onslaught of union, what can be done by heart and eyes? When someone is bewildered in the breeze of his own union, his spirit has long been in hock to beginningless love. May he be lost-hearted, for he is wailing in the tracks of the heart! May he be lost-spirited, for he regrets traveling to the Friend!”

**28:88** *Everything is perishing but His face; to Him belongs the decree, and to Him you will be returned.*

Whatever was not, then came to be, is under the sway of disappearance and the blow of annihilation. Yesterday it was not and tomorrow it will not be. But in the Essence and attributes of self-sufficiency the Unity’s majesty subsists and lasts. He is alive before all the living, the Lord of life and the living, inheritor of the world and the world’s folk, subsistent after the world’s folk and the world—the return of everything and all creatures is to Him everlastingly.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, O knower of everything, maker of every work, and keeper of all, no one is Your partner and none are without need for You. You throw down the work with wisdom, you act with gentleness. There is neither injustice nor games. O God, the servant knows

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6 This paragraph is from LI 5:83-84.

nothing of the whyness of Your work, and no one rules over You. You have made the suitable things and have wanted the riches. Not from anyone to You, not from You to anyone—all is from You in You, all is You, and that's it."

"Is not everything but God unreal?" God, and that's it—attachments cut, causes dissolved, traces nullified, creatures negated, and the one Real subsisting in His rightful due.<sup>7</sup>

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7 This last sentence is derived from *Ṣad maydān*, no. 100 (333).

## Surah 29: al-<sup>c</sup>Ankabūt

### **29:2** *Do the people reckon they will be left to say, “We have faith,” and not be tried?*

*Do the people reckon they will be left simply to claim to have faith without trial being demanded from them? That will never happen, for the worth of every man lies in his trial. So when the measure of someone’s meaning is more, the measure of his trial will be more.*<sup>1</sup>

The Prophet said, “Surely the people most severely tried are the prophets, then the next best, then the next best.” He also said, “When God desires good for a people, He tries them.”

The lordly likeness from the Presence of Lordhood is this: Trial from Our threshold is a robe of honor for the friends. Whoever seeks a level above others in the station of friendship will smell more of the rose of tribulation in the pleasure-garden of the friends.

If you want to know this, then look at the state of that master of Adam’s children, the one emulated by the folk of the Shariah, and the foremost and chieftain of the folk of the Haqiqah. When that paragon walked into this street, he was not left without heartache and grief for an hour. If he sat for a while cross-legged, the address would come, “Sit like a servant!” If once he put a ring on his finger, the whip of rebuke would come down: “*What, did you reckon that We created you aimlessly?*” [23:115]. If once he placed his foot on the ground boldly, the command would come, “*Walk not in the earth exultantly*” [17:37]. If one day he said, “I love <sup>c</sup>Ā’isha,” he would see what he saw.

When his trial reached the extreme from the words of the hypocrites, he complained inwardly to God. He was addressed: “O paragon, when someone’s heart and spirit witness Me, does he complain of trial?” All the venom in the treasuries of the Unseen was poured into one cup and put in his hand, and then a curtain was lifted from his secret core. It was said, “O Muḥammad, drink this venom while contemplating My beauty! *And be patient with thy Lord’s decree, for surely thou art in Our eyes*” [52:48].

Were the Beloved’s hand to pour poison for me,  
poison from His hand would be sweet.

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Your curse, O Friend, is my praise and laudation,  
Your iniquity my justice, Your cruelty loyalty.

### **29:5** *Whoso hopes to encounter God, God’s term is coming, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.*

When someone passes his life hoping for Our encounter, We will permit him to gaze upon Us and he will be delivered from absence and separation. *And He is the Hearing* of the moans of the yearners, *the Knowing* of the longing of the enraptured lovers.<sup>2</sup>

The price of seeing the Friend is the spirit. If you find that for one hundred thousand spirits, that is cheap. Who is more victorious than the servant who sees the Friend face-to-face? Hoping to see the Friend is the attribute of the Men.

Great is the aspiration of the eye that wants to see You—  
is it not enough for an eye that You see him who sees You?

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1 LI 5:86.

2 LI 5:88.

Wait until tomorrow, when the servant will sit at the table of everlastingness, drinking the wine of union. He will see blessedness, nearness, and the most beautiful and will arrive at hearing, drinking, and seeing. This is just what the Exalted Lord says: “*Faces that day will be radiant, gazing upon their Lord*” [75:22-23]. The faces of the faithful and the self-purifiers, the faces of the sincerely truthful and the witnesses, will be like glowing moons, shining suns, garden violets, fragrant jasmine, red anemones, flashing lightning, rising suns, the vast paradise. On whom will these faces be gazing? They will be *gazing upon their Lord*, upon their creator, upon their nurturer. What is the attribute of that day? The day of proximity and union, the day of kindness and bounteousness, the day of giving and bestowal, the day of gazing on the Possessor of Majesty. In hoping for this station the yearners dedicated their bodies, and for the sake of this way station the passionate put rings in their ears.

The recognizers will have three eyes in vision: The eye of the head will see, and that is for pleasure. The eye of the heart will see, and that is for recognition. The eye of the spirit will see, and that is for contemplation. He will fill the eye of the head with the light of bounty, the eye of the heart with the light of proximity, and the eye of the spirit with the light of finding. The servant will gaze on the Real with these three eyes. This is why the report has come, “The eyes will be filled with gazing on His face and He will speak to them as a man speaks to his sitting companion.”

The disparity in vision tomorrow will be just like the disparity in recognition today. Everyone will see Him in the measure of his own recognition and according to his own portion. It may be that the vision will dazzle him, it may be that it will bring splendor, and it may be that he will reach the Seen.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, the one who will see You saw You in the Beginningless. He will see You because the two worlds came not to be seen. He who sees You approved of the not seen.”

°Abd al-°Azīz ibn °Umayr said, “It has reached us that the Exalted Lord said, ‘I have given you the power to see Me, I have let you hear My words, and I have let you smell My scent.’ I have given you the ability to bear seeing Me, I have given you hearing so that you could bear My words, and I have breathed into you My scent so that you could become aware of Me and stay with Me.”

### **29:19 *Have they not seen how God originates creation, then makes it return?***

In terms of the outwardness, originating creation and making it return are this world and the next world. In terms of the inwardness, these allude to the changing of the moments and the recurrence of states for the possessors of hearts. Sometimes they are in contraction, sometimes expansion, sometimes awe, sometimes intimacy. For a time absence dominates over them, for a time presence; for a time intoxication, for a time sobriety; for a time subsistence, for a time annihilation.

When the servant is in contraction and awe, he manifests servanthood by craving forgiveness and fearing punishment, just as the Exalted Lord said: “*They were supplicating Us in eagerness and dread*” [21:90]. Then, when he steps into the world of expansion, he sees the marks bearing witness to intimacy. He is freed from his own power and strength and disengaged from his own desires and aims. He lives in the opening of disengagement and his aspiration’s goal and kiblah becomes *desiring His face* [6:52]. In this state his soul will be like what Shiblī said because of drunkenness and selflessness: “At the resurrection, everyone will have an antagonist, and I will be Adam’s. Why did he make my road steep so that I was held back by the mud?”

When he was in expansion he spoke like that, and when he was in contraction he used to say, “My abasement suspends the abasement of the Jews.” Once again he would be given over to expansion and intimacy such that he said, “Where are the heavens and the earths that I may carry them on one of my eyelashes?”

This then is the meaning of the recurrence of the states alluded to by originating and making return. The proof text of this in the exalted Qur’an is His words, “*You shall surely ride stage after stage*” [84:19], that is, state after state.

Part of the conduct and traveling of Muṣṭafā was that one day he would say, “I am the master of Adam’s children.” Then in the state of contraction he would say, “I do not know what He will

do with me or with you. Would that Muḥammad's Lord had not created Muḥammad!" Again, in the state of intimacy, he would say, "I am not like any of you—I spend the night at my Lord; He gives me to eat and drink."

The Pir of the Tariqah gave out this meaning with a marvelous intimation: "O God, You made me pass over a thousand steepes, but one still remains. My heart is ashamed of calling on You so much. O God, You washed me with a thousand waters till You made me familiar with love, but one thing is still to be washed: Wash me of me so that I may disappear from myself and You remain. O God, will I ever see a day without the tribulation of me? Will I ever open my eyes and not see myself?"

**29:21 *He chastises whom He will and has mercy on whom He will.***

When He wants He acts with justice toward someone and drives him away from His kindness, and when He wants He acts with bounty toward him and calls him to His gentleness. All is tied to His beginningless will, and He issues the decree without any cause. It is not that He shows bounty toward someone because of his obedience, nor that He acts with justice toward someone because of his disobedience. That is a work that was taken care of in the Beginningless, a decree that went out as God wanted.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "Alas for the apportioning that has gone before me! Alack for the words spoken by the Self-Seer! What profit if I live happily or distraught? I fear what the Powerful said in the Beginningless."

*He chastises whom He will* through abandonment and *He has mercy upon whom He will* through giving the success of beautiful doing. *He chastises whom He will* through ingratitude and *He has mercy upon whom He will* through faith. *He chastises whom He will* through dispersion of the heart and *He has mercy upon whom He will* through the togetherness of aspiration. *He chastises whom He will* by casting him into the darkness of self-governance and *He has mercy upon whom He will* by giving him to witness the flow of predetermination. *He chastises whom He will* by his love for this world and being held back from it and *He has mercy upon whom He will* by his renunciation of it and its expansion for him. *He chastises whom He will* by His turning away from him and *He has mercy upon whom He will* by His turning toward him.<sup>3</sup>

**29:22 *You will not be disablers in earth or in heaven, and you have no friend or helper apart from God.***

*You will not be disablers in earth or in heaven.* On the contrary, everything turns around in His grasp, and He brings to pass for them the decrees of His predetermination—whether they deny or voice His *tawḥīd*, whether they turn toward Him or away from Him.<sup>4</sup>

**29:23 *And those who disbelieve in the signs of God and the encounter with Him—they have lost hope in My mercy.***

In this world the punishment of the unbelievers is completed when they lose hope in God's mercy. To the faithful He says, "No matter how many foolish things you have done and how much you have sinned, *despair not of God's mercy* [39:53]."

Know that the influence of God's mercy for the servants is greater than the influence of His wrath. In the Qur'an, there are more mentions of the attributes of mercy than the attributes of wrath. In the report has come, "My mercy takes precedence over My wrath."

Mercy and wrath are both attributes of the Real, and it is not permissible for you to say that one is before and the other after, or that one is more and the other less. If you say that one is more, then the other must be decreased; if you say one is before, then the other must be newly arrived. Hence, what is meant by this is mercy's influence. In other words: "The influence of My mercy overtakes the influence of My wrath." It is because of the influence of His wrath that the unbelievers have

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3 This paragraph is mostly from LI 5:93-94.

4 LI 5:94.

despaired of His mercy, such that He says, “*they have lost hope in My mercy.*” It is because of the influence of His mercy that the faithful hope for His forgiveness and place their hearts on His mercy, such that He says, “*They hope for God’s mercy*” [2:218].

The unbeliever who has despaired of God’s mercy with his idol before him is like a spider who builds a house, frail and without outcome. It has no foundation to keep it in place, walls for refuge, or roof to cover it. It is of no use in cold or in heat. It is so frail and weak that with the slightest wind it moves up and down and is ruined. This is the likeness of the idol-worshipper. He fancies that he is doing something or that he has a refuge: *They were reckoning that they were doing beautiful artisanry* [18:104]. *They reckon that they are on to something* [58:18]. “He who hopes that the mirage is water will only remain long enough to know that it was an imagining.”

## Surah 30: al-Rūm

**30:4-5** *To God belongs the command, before and after. And on that day the faithful will rejoice in God's help.*

Here *before* is the Beginningless, and *after* is the Endless. The meaning is that the beginningless command belongs to God and the endless command belongs to God, because the beginningless Lord and the endless Master is God.<sup>1</sup>

In the Beginningless and the Endless it is God who is one and unique. In the command He is without end, in knowledge He is without limit, and in decree He is without why. He is before when and in place before place. Before us He was there for Us in the Beginningless, and without us He will be our portion in the Endless. This is the intimation that He voiced to the paragon of the world on the night of the *mi'raj*: “O Muḥammad, be for Me as if you were not, and I will be for you as I have always been.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Look at proximity so that intimacy may be born, look at tremendousness so that veneration may increase. Wait and see between this and that what indeed will be displayed by the precedent solicitude. *To God belongs the command, before and after.*”

In another place He says, “*Surely His are the creation and the command*” [7:54]. The world of the creation comes to an end, but the world of the command has no end. It is permissible for the world of the creation to disappear, but the world of the command is necessarily permanent. As long as a man does not pass beyond the world of the creation, he is not allowed to enter the world of the command. He must become naked of his own makeup and cut off the relation of createdness from the innate disposition of recognition.

If you want to pass into the world of the command, to rise up from your ungrateful makeup, and to cut away your ascription to great wrongdoing and deep ignorance, you can only do so by lingering and passing time. Just as you must linger in coming, so also you must linger in leaving. Just as the sperm-drop is held back for a while before it becomes a clot—and so on with the clot until it becomes bones, the bones until it becomes flesh, which is then kept for a time until it comes into movement—so also in the measure that a man comes up from under his own hand he becomes familiar with the command of the Real. When he passes beyond all of his own attributes, he becomes worthy of the command and reaches the maturity that is manliness. At that point this inscription will be written for him: “*Among the faithful are men*” [33:23].

*And on that day the faithful will rejoice in God's help.* Today is distress, tomorrow rejoicing; today is heedfulness, tomorrow bewilderment; today is regret, tomorrow gentleness; today is weeping, tomorrow encounter.<sup>2</sup>

Today in this house of trial and trouble, all that the friends have is pain and grief, remorse and burning, but they buy this grief and burning with spirit and heart and they sacrifice all that they know to this pain, just as that chevalier said:

“Now at least I have the hard cash of pain—  
I won't give up this pain for a hundred thousand remedies.”<sup>3</sup>

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1 This sentence is from LI 5:108.

2 LI 5:108.

3 The verse is not found in Sanā'ī's printed Divan.

When that minor slip went forth from David the prophet and he was rebuked by the Real, he never lifted his head to heaven as long as he was alive, nor did he stop pleading for one hour. With all this, he was saying happily, “O God, what a sweet confection this is, what a sweet pain this is! O God place a seed from this weeping and grief in my breast so that I may never be empty of this pain.”

Poor wretch, you have always been without pain. You know nothing of the burning of those stricken by pain, you’ve seen no mark of their weeping in happiness and their laughter in grief!

I keep on joining my tears with laughter,  
silently I weep, openly I laugh.  
O friend, don’t think I’m content,  
you’re not aware how needy I am.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, this poor wretch’s portion of this work is all pain. May it be blessed, for this pain is terribly fitting for me. The poor wretch is he who has none of this pain. In truth, anyone who does not find joy in this pain is no chevalier.”

**30:20** *And of His signs is that He created you of dust, and then you were mortal man, spreading about.*

O child of Adam! If you want to know the signs and banners of God’s Unity and recognize the marks of His Solitariness, open the eye of heedfulness, open up the insight of intellect, roam the world of your own soul, and gaze on the root of your own creation. You were a handful of dust, a dark makeup stuck in the darkness of your own unknowing, bewildered by the darkness of attributes. Then the rain of lights began to fall from the heaven of mysteries: “Then He sprinkled them with some of His light.” The dust turned into jasmine and the stone became pearls. The dense makeup became exalted by this subtle link. The dust became pure, the darkness became light.

“Yes, it is We who adorn and paint. We adorn whom We will with Our light. We adorn the Garden with Our friends, We adorn Our friends with the heart, and We adorn the heart with Our light. We do this so that if they do not reach the pavilions of Our exaltedness through the carcass of their misery, they will reach Us through the ray of the prosperity of Our majesty’s light.”

A pir was asked, “What is the mark of that light?”

He replied, “Its mark is that with that light the servant recognizes God without finding Him, loves Him without seeing Him, and turns away from his own work and the remembrance of himself toward His work and remembering Him. His ease and settledness are in His street, his secrets and joy with His friends. By day he is in the religion’s work, by night in the drunkenness of certainty’s tidings. By day he is with the people in good character and by night with the Real in the *footing of truthfulness* [10:2].”<sup>4</sup>

**30:30** *So set thy face to the religion, unswerving.*

Purify your intention for God, guard your covenant with God, act solely for God in your stillnesses and movements and in all your self-determining. *Unswerving*: going straight in His religion, inclining toward Him, and turning away from other than Him.”<sup>5</sup>

“O paragon of the world! O master of Adam’s children! Entrust yourself entirely to Me! Keep your intention and aspiration on Me! Turn your heart away from the creatures toward Me! Cease your requesting and forget about the two worlds as is worthy of Me!”

By virtue of this exalted declaration to that paragon of the world, he stepped forth on the night of the *mi‘rāj* from the Lote Tree of the Final End into the desert of all-compellingness and turned his face toward his own specific kaabah, wearing as his beautiful cloak all the capital goods of the first and the last folk and putting them into His road. He passed on and showed no favor to anything. Finally, from the side of all-compellingness came the call, “*His eyesight did not swerve*” [53:17]. He kept his eyes in courtesy and did not gaze upon anything other than the Real. *Nor did*

4 This paragraph is partly inspired by RA 172.

5 LI 5:116.

*it trespass* [53:17]. He did not covet anything beyond that limit.

Moses stepped on the mountain and went several paces beyond the limit of the Children of Israel. His mind was boiling in the hope of *show me, that I may gaze upon Thee!* [7:143], so he had to be taught courtesy with the whip of *thou shalt not see Me!* The paragon of the world, however, was taken to a station where the dust under his feet became the ointment for Gabriel's eyes. His attribute was this: *his eyesight did not swerve*. This is because Moses was traveling, but the paragon of the world was snatched away: *who took His servant by night* [17:1]. The one who comes can never be like the one who is brought.

Blessed is he who travels as the Real's companion, for in one breath he covers a thousand-year journey! "On the night when We take you, you will go farther than you could in a thousand months of going by yourself." To this He alludes with His words, "*The night of power is better than a thousand months*" [97:3].

"When you go by yourself, you will fall farther behind with every step you take. When you go with Us, your every step will make you more passionate. When you go by yourself, the highway-men will ambush you on the road. When We take you, the bandits will carry your banner."

What does the Throne do that it does not carry my saddlecloth?

In my heart I carry the saddlecloth of Your decree and approval. [DS 933]

**30:50** *So gaze on the traces of God's mercy, how He brings the earth to life after its death.*

The Real is saying, "My servant, at the time of spring open up the insight of intellect, open the eye of heedfulness, and gaze upon My artisanry. Look at the quivering of the earth and the weeping of heaven, the rising of the trees, the murmuring of the water, the yearning of the passionate, the birds like preachers, the gazelles like perfume-dealers, the nightingales like drunkards in a garden."

Reflect on the plants of the earth and gaze  
on the traces of what the King has wrought.  
Eyes of languid silver,  
their pupils cast of gold,  
On stalks of emerald, bearing witness,  
that God has no associate.

*So gaze*. Look at the earth that has put on a robe. The trees are selling perfume, the nightingales shouting on the trees, every bird seeking a companion. The Lord who works such artisanry is worthy of hearing the supplications of the servants and concealing the offenses of the disobedient.

*So gaze on the traces of God's mercy*. Look at the traces of His mercy, the marks of His artisanry, the evidence of His unity. That Lord who fills the trees with fruit in springtime, puts water into streams, makes the ocean rain pearls, brings forth perfume from the earth—that Lord who shows this artisanry is worthy for the servants to make obedience to Him their blanket and watchword.

*So gaze on the traces of God's mercy*. It has been said that springtime is three: First is the springtime of this world, which is the time of finding happiness and youth. Second is the springtime of that world, which is the subsistent bliss and everlasting kingdom. Third is a hidden springtime which, if you have it, you yourself know. If you do not have it and you fancy that you have it, you will long be in remorse.

From year to year the springtime of the earth is one month. It is the cause of the heaven's rain and the north wind. It is quick in separation and slow to bring about union, so it would be absurd to attach the heart to it. Springtime comes once a year. Roses grow from dust, water flows from stone, the spirits of the tested find ease in springtime's scent, and everyone who has lost his heart finds again the heart that has fled. You might say that the yellow rose is an ill physician healing the world but itself in need of attention. You might say that the red rose is intoxicated with vision—all are sober but it is drunk. You might say that the white rose has seen iniquity at the hand of the passing days, its youth given to the wind and its lifespan having reached the edge.

*So gaze on the traces of God's mercy, how He brings the earth to life after its death. He brings to life the souls with truthful desire after they were languishing, He brings to life the hearts with the lights of beholding after they were heedless, and He brings to life the spirits with the constancy of contemplation after they were veiled.*<sup>6</sup>

I die when I remember You, then I come to life—  
how often I live in You, how often I die!

At the time of the year's equinox, two suns arise from the rising place of the Unseen: One is the sun of the celestial beauty, the other the sun of the kingly majesty. The first shines on the parts of the earth, the second on the secret cores of the lovers. That one shines on roses so that they may bloom, and this one shines on hearts so that they may light up. When the rose blooms, the nightingale falls in love with it. When the heart lights up, the gaze of the Creator is upon it. In the end the rose falls apart and the nightingale goes into mourning at separation. The heart remains, but the Real keeps it in the embrace of gentle favors and generosity. "The heart of the faithful servant will never die."

When an eye sees You, it is relieved of pain.  
When a spirit finds You, it is exempt from death.

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6 This paragraph is from LI 5:124.

## Surah 31: Luqmān

### 31:12 *And We gave Luqmān wisdom.*

Know that wisdom is correct activity or correct speech. Correct activity is to preserve the balance of interaction with self between fear and hope, with the people between tenderness and cajolery, and with the Real between awe and intimacy. Correct speech is that you do not mix levity with the mention of the Real, you preserve reverence, and you connect the end of every talk with its beginning. The wise man is he who puts everything in its own place, does each work as is worthy of that work, and ties each thing to its equal.

This wisdom comes forth from someone who renounces this world and perseveres in worship. Muṣṭafā said, “When someone is a renunciant in this world, God will give wisdom a home in his heart and bring his tongue to speech with it.”

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib said, “Vivify the hearts and seek for them the fine qualities of wisdom, for they become weary just as bodies become weary.”

Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr said, “Wisdom is an arrow, and the hearts of the faithful are its targets. The shooter is God, so error is made nonexistent.”

It has been said, “Wisdom is God-given knowledge.”

It has also been said, “It is the light that distinguishes between inspiration and Satanic disquiet.”

It was said to one of them, “Whence is born this light in the heart?”

He said, “From reflective thought and heedfulness, and these are bequeathed by sorrow and hunger.”

### 31:34 *Surely God—He has knowledge of the Hour.*

It is a sound report that a nomad came before Muṣṭafā and said, “O Messenger of God, when is the Hour?” At that moment the nomad was burning in love for the Real and the ocean of passion was boiling in his inwardness. He knew that knowledge of the time of the resurrection was not with Muṣṭafā, for this verse had come—“*Surely God—He has knowledge of the Hour.*” But in wishing to see the Real he wanted to talk, because of his passion’s pain and burning. He said, “O Messenger of God. There is a drink that I placed in the hand of my need several years ago, and the promise has been given that it will be drunk at the resurrection. When will the time come when I will drink it down and take my ease in contemplating the perfect beauty without end and beginning?”

Muṣṭafā knew where his pain was coming from and what its remedy would be. He said, “What have you done that you ask about that way station? How is it that you hope for it?”

The nomad said, “I have not done much prayer and fasting, but I love God and the Messenger.”

Muṣṭafā said, “A man will be with the one he loves.” Tomorrow, everyone will be with the one he loves today.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The evidence of having found friendship is throwing the two worlds into the ocean. The mark of realizing friendship is turning away from other than the Real. The beginning of friendship is a wound, and its end a lamp. The beginning of friendship is distress, its middle waiting, and its end vision.”

What harm if you suffer for a hundred years  
so long as you see the Friend in vision some day?

A poet said,

Perhaps the distress with which I awoke  
will be followed by quick relief.

\*

I said to my heart, "Give it no thought  
for our work will be opened by the Opener of work."

## Surah 32: al-Sajda

**32:1-2** *Alif Lām Mīm. The sending down of the Book, wherein is no doubt, from the Lord of the Worlds.*

It has been said that when the Exalted Lord created the light of Muḥammad’s innate disposition, He kept it in the Presence of His exaltedness as long as He wanted. It remained before God one hundred thousand years.

It has also been said that for two thousand years He was gazing on it 70,000 times a day, and with each gaze He would drape it with a new light and a new generosity.

He kept the light of this disposition in His Presence for thousands of years, and each day He would look upon it with the attribute of favor. With each gaze it would gain another secret and mystery, another caress and gentleness, another knowledge and understanding.

In those gazes, the secret core of his disposition was told that the level of the Qur’an’s exaltedness would preserve the level of his sinlessness, and this awareness became firmly rooted in his disposition. When his very clay along with the secret core of his disposition was brought into this world, the revelation sent down from the Exalted Threshold turned toward him. He was saying, “I hope that this is the realization of the promise given to me at that time.”

In order to soothe his heart and confirm this thought, the Lord of the Worlds sent down this verse: “*Alif Lām Mīm.*” *Alif* alludes to God, *Lām* alludes to Gabriel, and *Mīm* alludes to Muḥammad. He is saying, “By My divinity, Gabriel’s holiness, and your splendor, O Muḥammad, this revelation is the Qur’an that We promised would be the keeper of your prophecy’s level and the miracle of your good fortune.

“*Wherein is no doubt, from the Lord of the Worlds.* There is no doubt that it is Our missive to Our servants, Our address to Our friends. In every corner We have someone burning in hope of seeing Us, in every nook someone distracted, his heart tied to Our love and his tongue busy with Our mention and remembrance. The poor are needy for Our threshold, the yearners anxious for Our vision.”

In every city You have bondsmen and servants,  
the whole world is full of Your familiars.  
Who indeed am I, what service can I render?  
You have plenty of the burnt in the world.

**32:7** *Who made beautiful everything that He created and who began the creation of man from clay.*

There was a *pir* among the great ones of the Tariqah who recited this verse and then was saying, “He created man from clay, but *He loves them, and they love Him* [5:54]. He created man from clay, but *God approves of them, and they approve of Him* [9:100]. He created man from clay, but *remember Me; I will remember you* [2:152].”

What harm was done to this pearl of honor that his makeup is of clay? For his perfection is placed in the heart. His worth is because of nurture, not dust. His eminence is from the gentleness of the divine eternity, not walking on the feet of servanthood.

The Real created the whole cosmos—spheres and angels, Throne and Footstool, Tablet and Pen, paradise and hell, heaven and earth—and He did not look at any of these created things with the gaze of affection and love. He sent them no messengers and gave them no messages. When

the turn of the dust-dwellers arrived—those lifted up by gentleness and caressed by bounty, those who are the quarries of the lights of the secrets—He made the angels their watchers, He placed burning and affection in their breasts, He threw the fire of passion into their hearts, and He wrote the inscription of faith on the pages of their hearts: *He wrote faith in their hearts* [58:22]. He inscribed love in their minds: *He loves them, and they love Him* [5:54]. The secret He has with the Adamites He does not have with the Throne or the Footstool, nor with the heavens or the angels, for all of them are servants, and the Adamites are both servants and friends: *We are your friends in this world's life and in the next world* [41:31].<sup>1</sup>

**32:11 Say: “The angel of death, who has been entrusted with you, will make you die.”**

Were it not for the hearts' heedlessness, the taking of their spirits would not have been turned over to the angel of death. Since they were heedless of witnessing the realities, He addressed them in the measure of their understandings and attached their hearts to others. He addresses each of them in the measure of what their strength and weakness can carry.<sup>2</sup>

This address is in the measure of the understanding of the lords of customs and habits, who in their heedlessness do not find the road to the Real's realities and do not perceive the subtle secrets of the Beginningless, so they are given to drink in the measure of their capacities. Otherwise, in respect of the Haqiqah and what is addressed to the chevaliers of the Tariqah, the angel of death sifts the dust of the empire, seeking mines in the dust, and gems in the mines. “People are mines, like mines of gold and silver.” He is sifting the dust to see what you have nurtured within it—a carnelian, a ruby, a turquoise. Or no—you are bitumen, or tar, or pebbles. Are you a *vile word* [14:26] or a *goodly word* [14:24]? He sifts the dust, he twists the veins, he breaks the bones. How can his hands touch the pure deposit? What does he have to do with that? For he did not put it there that he should take it back. *God takes the souls at the time of their death* [39:42].

Khayr Nassāj was ill. The angel of death wanted to take his spirit. At the time of prayer, the muezzin said, “God is greater, God is greater.” Khayr said, “O Angel of Death! Wait until I perform the obligatory night prayer. Otherwise, I will miss out on this command, but I will not miss out on your command.” When he performed the prayer, he put down his head in prostration and said, “O God, on the day when You placed this deposit, the angel of death was not there to intrude. What harm if today You take me without his intrusion?”

O Lord, if You annihilate me with the sword of friendship,  
the angel of death will have nothing to do with me.  
Whoever drinks the draft of Your passion from Your cup  
will know the pain of craving when none is left. [DS 211]

It is a sound report that on the day of the compact at the covenant of *Yes indeed* [7:172], when the specks of the prophets were pulled out from Adam's loins and presented to his overarching vision, he saw that David's lifespan was short. He said, “Lord God, let me give forty years of my lifespan to him,” and the Exalted Lord accepted that. Then, at the end of Adam's life, when the angel of death came and told him to surrender his spirit, he said, “My lifespan is my traveling on the road. If I surrender my spirit, what will happen with the road not traveled?”

The angel of death said, “You gave away the lifespan, so the road will remain not completely traveled.”

Adam said, “Let me take it back, for I am the father, and I have need of the lifespan, for I cannot go on the road without it.”

The report has come, “Adam refused, so his offspring refuse.”

When the period passed, the angel of death said, “Adam, surrender your spirit.”

Adam said, “I will not surrender it to you, for you did not put it there that you should take it away. On the day that the exalted majesty of *I have blown into him of My spirit* [15:29] came into

1 This paragraph is partly derived from RA 64.

2 LI 5:140-41.

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my frame, where were you? Today if it is wanted back, what are you doing in the midst?"

The Lord of the Worlds commanded, "O Adam, stop arguing! O Azrael, you go away and take away your intrusion! O pure spirit at ease with My gentleness and at rest in My love! *O serene soul, return to thy Lord, approving, approved!*" [89:27-28].

## Surah 33: al-Aḥzāb

**33:11** *There it was that the faithful were tried and shaken with an intense shaking.*

Muṣṭafā reported that the Real undertakes to try His friends, just as you undertake to give food and drink to the ill. He said that in the highest paradises there are many degrees and domiciles that the servants can never reach by their own effort. The trials that the Exalted Lord assigns to them in this world convey them there.

A report has come that one day God’s Messenger was gazing at the sky and laughing. He said that he was marveling at the lordly ruling and the divine decree concerning the faithful servants: If He commands blessings for them, they approve, and their good lies in that. If He commands trial, they approve, and their goods lies in that. In other words, they are patient in trial, they show gratitude for blessings, and in both they find the good.

It has been said that the Real divided Adam’s progeny into one thousand kinds and let them look at the carpet of love. The desire for love rose up in all of them. Then He adorned this world and displayed it to them. When they saw its embellishments and splendors, they became drunk and entranced and remained with this world, except for one group, who stayed on love’s carpet and stuck up their heads in their claim.

Then He divided this group into one thousand kinds and displayed the afterworld to them. When they saw the everlasting joy and bliss, the *spreading shade and pouring water* [56:30-31], the houris and the castles, they were entranced by it and stayed with it, except for one group who stayed on the carpet and sought the treasures of recognizing Him.

The address came from the side of all-compellingness, the Exalted Threshold, “What are you seeking and why are you staying?”

They said, “*Surely Thou knowest what we desire* [11:79]. O Lord! You are the tongue of the tongueless, You are the knower of the secrets and the hidden. You Yourself know what we want.”

We have a reckoning other than that of the world’s folk,  
we have an intoxicant other than wine.

The Exalted Lord took them to the top of the street of trial and showed them its deserts and perils. That one kind became a thousand kinds, and they all turned away from the kiblah of trial, saying, “This is not our work. We do not have the capacity to carry this burden.” One group, however, did not turn away and, like the passionate, entered the street of trial. They did not think of trial or suffering. They said, “It is enough good fortune for us that we carry grief for You and that we suffer the sorrow of Your trial.”

Who am I to put on the cloak of loyalty to You,  
or to have my eyes carry the burden of Your disloyalty?  
But, if You issue the decree to my body, heart, and spirit,  
I will pull all three dancing into Your love. [DS 933]

Only those who recognize Him know the measure of pain for Him. If someone does not recognize Him, how will he know the measure?

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, in pain I lament in fear that the pain will cease. Anyone who laments at the Friend’s blows is unmanly in love for the Friend.”

O chevalier, if you have the capacity and gall for this work, then set out on the road! Drink the wine of trial and call the Friend to witness. Otherwise, enjoy your well-being and stop talking. No one ever sacrificed himself by faint-heartedness or raised his head high by leaning on water and clay. You can't be a pearl-diver when you fear for your life, and you can't raise your head high by leaning on water and clay. Either take no heed of life, or don't tangle with yourself.

**33:33** *God desires only to put away from you filth, O Folk of the House, and to make you completely pure.*

The Lord of the Worlds is laying a favor on Muṣṭafā the Arab: “Our wish and Our decree is for the folk of your house to be pure of all the defilements of createdness and the stains of mortal nature so that everything in the house will be like the lord of the house: *The goodly women are for the goodly men, and the goodly men for the goodly women* [24:26].”

It has been said that here *filth* is vile acts and base character traits. Vile acts are *indecencies*, both the outward and the inward [6:151], and base character traits are caprice, innovation, niggardliness, avarice, severing blood relations, and the like. In their case the Lord of the Worlds replaced innovation with the Sunnah, niggardliness with munificence, avarice with contentment, and severance from relatives with joining and tenderness.

Then He says, “*And to make you completely pure:*” And to keep you pure from admiring yourselves, or considering yourselves pointers to God's door, or gazing upon your own obedience and deeds.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The gaze is two, the human gaze and the All-Merciful gaze. The human gaze is that you look at yourself. The All-Merciful gaze is that the Real looks at you. As long as the human gaze does not pack its bags from your makeup, the All-Merciful gaze will not descend into your heart.”

Poor wretch, why do you look at your own tainted obedience? How can you measure that against the threshold of His utter lack of needs? Are you unaware that if you gather the deeds of all the sincerely truthful in the earth and the obedient acts of all the holy ones in heaven, these will not have the weight of a gnat's wing in the scales of the majesty of the Majestic? But He, in His unneediness, approves servanthood in the servants and shows them the road. *God is gentle to His servants* [42:19]. He says, “Look at My gentleness, consider mercy as coming from Me, and ask for blessings from Me. *But ask God of His bounty* [4:32].”

**33:35** *Surely submitted men and submitted women, faithful men and faithful women, devout men and devout women, truthful men and truthful women, patient men and patient women, humble men and humble women, charitable men and charitable women, fasting men and fasting women, men who guard their private parts and women who guard, men who remember God much and women who remember—God has prepared for them forgiveness and a tremendous wage.*

In this verse, the Lord of the Worlds makes clear for His servants the way stations of traveling on the road of the religion. Then in His gentleness He praises them for their traveling and with His mercy He gives them a tremendous wage and a generous reward. He Himself shows the road, He keeps them traveling, and then He praises the servants for that. Here you have generosity and gentleness! Here you have mercy and clemency!

*Submitted men and submitted women.* They are Muslims, having placed the rulings of the Shariah on their necks and having thrown themselves into the road of the Haqiqah. *Faithful men and faithful women.* They are the faithful through attesting with the tongue, assenting to the truth from the depth of the spirit, and acting with the limbs. *Devout men and devout women.* They are those who act with obedience and observe the commands, who by day are in the work of the religion and by night drunk with the wine of certainty. *Truthful men and truthful women.* They are truthful in both speaking and acting, in both compact and covenant. *Patient men and patient women.* They are patient at the descent of trials and unexpected decrees. *Humble men and humble women.* They are the broken and the lowly, approving of the decree and standing on the feet of incapacity before the ruling power of the Haqiqah. *Charitable men and charitable women.* They

are the bestowers of their possessions and themselves; they do not put aside anyone's rightful due against them and have left the road of antagonism toward people. *Fasting men and fasting women.* They hold themselves back from the unworthy, they are silent toward what is displeasing by the decree of the Tariqah, and they keep the fast according to the Shariah. *Men who guard their private parts and women who guard.* They watch over their outwardness so that they do not fall into the forbidden, and they guard over their inwardness so that they do not see the creatures. *Men who remember much and women who remember.* They remember God with the tongue and keep Him remembered in the heart.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O remembrance of the spirits, remembered by the hearts, and mentioned by the tongues! Remember me with Your bounty and make me happy with gentle remembrance! O standing in Your own remembrance, O prior with Your remembrance to everyone who remembers! It is Your remembrance that reaches You as it should—otherwise, what comes from me that is worthy of You? O God, You are in the remembrance of Yourself, and I am in the remembrance of You. You are in Your own wish, and I am as You have made me."

*God has prepared for them forgiveness and a tremendous wage.* Today is the ease of worship and the constancy of recognition, tomorrow the realization of what was requested and reaching what is beyond what had been hoped.

**33:40** *Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but rather the messenger of God and the seal of the prophets.*

This is a reminder bestowing the recognition, and an explanation declaring the eminence, of the paragon of the world and master of the children of Adam, the pearl of felicity and the foundation of mastery, the kiblāh of prosperity and the kaabah of hopes, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, the eminence of whose messengerhood is bound to the Beginningless and the exaltation of whose good fortune is joined with the Endless. The pulpit and mihrab are adorned with his name. The pillars of the religion and the foundations of belief were laid down by his explanation and clarification. That paragon was outwardly all ease and inwardly all comeliness. His expressions were eloquence, his secret core love. His spirit was from the light of exaltedness, his curtain the divine jealousy. His customs were the Shariah, his robe of honor intercession. Although God stripped the name of fatherhood from him, he was more tender and more lovingly kind than any father. He said, "For you I am like a father toward his children."

It has been said that his tenderness toward his community is greater than that of fathers, but God did not call him the father of the community because of what preceded in the beginningless decree, the lordly judgment, and the divine predetermination. This is the fact that on the Day of Resurrection—in that greatest gathering place and most tremendous exposure, when the pavilion of all-subjugatingness is pitched, the carpet of tremendousness spread, the scales of justice hung, the prison of chastisement brought out from the veil, spirits come to the throat, eloquent tongues become dumb, all excuses nullified, and all relationships cut—it is then that all fathers will flee from their children, as the Exalted Lord said: "*On the day a man will flee from his brother, his mother, his father*" [80:34]. Adam, who is the father of all, will come forth and say, "Lord God, let Adam go, and as for his children, You know what You will do." Noah will say the same, Abraham the same; Moses, Jesus, and the other prophets the same. All will tremble from the harshness of the rising and the terror of the resurrection. They will be helpless for themselves and will not attend to their children. They will say, "'My soul, my soul!' O Lord, release me, and do what You want with the children." In that gathering place of the resurrection, Muṣṭafā the Arab will put his face in the dust, his musky locks falling on his hands, and let loose the tongue of mercy and tenderness: "Lord God, my community is a handful of the weak and hapless. They do not have the capacity for Your chastisement and punishment. Forgive them and have mercy, and do with Muḥammad whatever You want."

Because of the decree made in the Beginningless that fathers would flee from their children, He did not call him a father, lest on that day he flee from them and not intercede for them.

Listen to another subtle point: He was not called father because, if he had been a father, his

testimony as a father against his son would not be accepted by the Shariah. Tomorrow at the resurrection he will testify as to the justice of the community. That is in His words, “*That you may be witnesses against the people and the Messenger may be a witness against them*” [2:143].

**33:41** *O you who have faith, remember God with much remembrance!*

In terms of allusion what is understood from this verse is calling people to love the Real, for Muṣṭafā said, “When someone loves something, he remembers it much.” The mark of friendship is plentiful remembrance. Friendship does not let the tongue be at ease from remembrance or the heart be empty of remembrance.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The remembrance of the Friend is the portion of the yearners. It is the brightness of the eyes, the good fortune of the spirit, and the adornment of the world. An iota’s increase in friendship is better than the two worlds. One breath in companionship with the Friend is the everlasting kingdom—exalted is the servant who is worthy of that! What is this work? For it has no name and no mark. It is the servant’s occupation, but hidden from the servant. The servant is unable to bear it but stretches out to reach it. By God, he who seeks it is joyful in the midst of fire.”

Though Your hand be fire, it is my bed of roses.

All that comes from You is sweet, whether healing or pain.

**33:44** *Their greeting on the day they encounter Him will be “Peace.”*

Wait until this poor man reaches the house of good fortune in the Endless. Delay and lingering will let loose the foot of compassion. The clouds of gentleness will rain down generosity, the sun of union will shine from the rising place of finding, and the eyes, heart, and spirit, all three, will gaze upon the Friend.

In the report has come, “The eyes will be filled with gazing on His face and He will speak to them as a man speaks to his sitting companion.” When an eye has seen Him, how will it busy itself with glancing at others? When a spirit has found companionship with Him, how will it make do with water and dust? When someone has become accustomed to the Exalted Presence, how will he put up with the abasement of the veil? How will the ruler of his own city spend his life in exile?

In this world of exile, you become weary because

you must say, “Give us ease, O Bilāl,” for the crowd. [DS 34]

*Their greeting on the day they encounter Him will be “Peace.”* Tomorrow this caress and rank, this endless good fortune, will be suited for someone who today is separate from the attributes of his own being. All attributes of selfhood are bonds, every bond is a color, and the chevaliers disdain every color.

He who painted a thousand worlds with color—

why would He buy my color or yours, O bankrupt man!

Why do you paint yourself, poor wretch! Self-painting has no worth. Why do you adorn yourself? Self-adornment has no value. Let it go, so that *He adorned it in your hearts* [49:7] may adorn you without you. Let it go, and then *He loves them, and they love Him* [5:54] will approve of you without you.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Look from Him to Him, not from self to Him, for the eyes belong to what they saw at first and the heart to the first Friend. Everyone with a chamber in this street knows that this is so. Seeing the Friend is the spirit’s law and throwing away life in the Shariah of Friendship is its religion.”

**33:45-46** *O Prophet! Surely We sent thee as a witness, a good-news bringer, and a warner, inviting to God by His leave, and a light-giving lamp.*

“O paragon of the world! O master of the children of Adam! O pride of the Arabs and the Per-

sians! O caressed by the gentleness of eternity! O foremost in earth and honored in heaven! You are a paragon whose explications are the arrangement of the necklace of salvation, whose proofs are the untying of the knots of difficulties, whose sayings are the edict of felicities, whose doings are the guidebook of generous acts, whose utterances are the capital of noble qualities, whose glances are the adornment of beautiful deeds”—upon him be the most excellent of prayers and the most ample of felicitations!

*Surely We sent thee with the truth* [2:119]. “We, who are unique in divinity and peerless in unity, separate from creation in Essence and attributes, qualified by magnificence, creator of earth and heaven, shelter of every beggar and comfort of everyone familiar, knower of the secrets of creation and witness of the deeds of all, *We sent thee as a witness, a good-news bringer, and a warner*. We sent you to the creatures to give news of Our gentleness to the familiar, for they are worthy of caresses, and to warn the strangers, for they are worthy of being melted. Give good news to the friends that the house of felicity has been decorated for them and warn the enemies that the prison of hell has been heated up for them.”

*And a light-giving lamp*. “O paragon! The sun is the lamp of heaven, and you are the lamp of earth. The sun is the lamp of this world, and you are the lamp of the religion. The sun is the lamp of the spheres, and you are the lamp of the kingdom. The sun is the lamp of water and clay, and you are the lamp of spirit and heart. The sun is the lamp of this world, and you are the lamp of both this world and that world.

“O Adam, though you are the chieftain in the register of the chosen and the title-page of the book of the prophets, how can you be on the same road with Muḥammad? For you were struck by the pain of the address of *Fall down from it, all together* [2:38], and he is celebrating the joy of *who took His servant by night* [17:1].

“O Noah, though you are the elder of the prophets and your prayers are answered in the prophetic covenant, how can you have the capacity to be Muḥammad’s companion? You were distracted by the wound of *ask Me not for that of which thou hast no knowledge* [11:46], and he was taught by the gentle hand of *thy Lord shall bestow upon thee so that thou shalt approve* [93:5].

“O Abraham, though you are the leader of the creed and the embroidery on the robe of bosom friendship, you cannot be equal to Muḥammad, for you hid yourself with the accusation of *no, it was the large one of them that did it* [21:63], and he was in the rank of the sinlessness of *to make him prevail over every religion* [9:33].

“O Moses the speaking companion, though you are the confidant of the All-Merciful and made for the divine gentleness, how can you compete with Muḥammad? You were deprived by the blow of *thou shalt not see Me* [7:143], and he is intoxicated with the wine of *dost thou not see thy Lord?* [25:45].”

### **33:47** *And give good news to the faithful that they will have a great bounty from God.*

“O Muḥammad! Give good news to the faithful that they will have a beautiful caress from Me, an endless generosity, a complete bounty—response for the supplicator, bestowal for the asker, help for the striver, increase for the grateful, reward for the obedient. Give them the good news that when I chose them, I saw the faults. I did not approve before I had examined the hidden things. With My own unneediness I chose the servants as they are. Give them the good news that what was there at first is today the same—a cloud raining down everlasting kindness for the faithful, bounty without end, favor without bounds. Give them the good news that even if a servant has many offenses, the bounty of the Patron is more than that, for every deed of a doer in every state is worthy of himself.”

All this that you have heard comes from the *great bounty*, but it is not the *great bounty* itself, for the *great bounty* is indeed another state and another caress—a spiritual life of delight with a hundred thousand hidden drums, an everlasting resurrection. The soul is mixed with companionship, the spirit clinging to its desire, the heart drowned in the light of finding. Because of the drowning, the servant does not discern the seeking from the finding. Because of the radiance of finding, it cannot be expressed. He burns in the fire of love and does not turn back from joy. With

the tongue of his state he keeps on saying,

“I keep on throwing the spirit-incense on the fire of passion.  
The spirit is Your servant—it is not that I am generous.  
When passion for You has burned away my spirit,  
I will contrive to find a hundred spirits more.”

**33:54** *If you show something or hide it, surely God is knower of everything.*

Since you know that the Real is aware of your deeds and states, that He knows and sees both what you hide and what you show, well then, always be at His threshold. Keep your activity rectified by following knowledge, eating permitted food, and constant devotions. Discipline your words by recitation of the Qur’an, constant apology, and giving good advice. Keep your character traits pure from everything that is dust on the religion’s road and blockage of the well-trodden path of the Tariqah, such as niggardliness, eye-service, rancor, avarice, and covetousness.

A great man was asked, “What is the precondition of servanthood?”

He said, “Purity and truthfulness. Purity from every defilement, and truthfulness in every adornment.”

The defilements are niggardliness, eye-service, and craving. The adornments are generosity, trust, and contentment. The sentence, “*No god but God*,” includes both statements. *No god* is the negation of defilement, *but God* is the affirmation of adornment. When the servant says “*No god*,” he uproots every defilement and every veil of the road. Then the beauty of the words “*but God*” shows its face and adorns the servant with the attributes of adornment. Then he is taken, adorned and trimmed, before Muṣṭafā so that he may receive him with “My community!”

If the influence of *No god* does not appear to Muṣṭafā and if he does not see the beauty of the robe of *but God*, he will not receive him with “My community!” Rather, he will say, “Away with you, away!”

**33:70** *O you who have faith, be wary of God and speak proper words.*

Proper words are the words of *tawḥīd*. *Tawḥīd* is the basis of the religion and the greatest pillar of the submission. The beginning of all the sciences is *tawḥīd*, the basis of all the recognitions is *tawḥīd*. The partition between enemy and friend is *tawḥīd*, the fixity of the seven heavens and the seven earths is through *tawḥīd*. The light of the two realms of being and the two worlds comes from the light of *tawḥīd*. The first pearl from the oyster shell of recognition is *tawḥīd*, the first mark of finding the Haqiqah *tawḥīd*.

When you put *tawḥīd* in place, your gaze takes on the form of heedfulness, your tongue becomes the treasury of wisdom, your hearing the oyster shell of the pearl of the Trust, your heart the center point of contemplation, your secret core the place where passion puts down its saddlebags.

Muṣṭafā said, “*Tawḥīd* is the fee to the Garden, and *tawḥīd* is sufficient as worship”: *Tawḥīd* is the price of the Garden and *tawḥīd* suffices for all acts of worship.

*Tawḥīd* is not that you say that He is one. True *tawḥīd* is that you be one for Him. He—majestic is His majesty—is solitary and unique. He wants the servant solitary and unique.

The unique man has no use for middling passion;  
middling passion is not fit for the unique man.  
Either passion, or blame, or the road of safety—  
the arrow of trial has no target but man’s spirit.  
If you are passionate, toss your shield into the ocean—  
otherwise, stick to the shore, or your grief will have no end.

**33:72** *Surely We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and feared it, and man carried it. Surely he was a great wrongdoer, deeply ignorant.*

For a time Adam the Chosen—that first wayfarer, that wellspring of beginningless gentleness, that coffer of the wonders of omnipotence, that jewel-box of the gentleness of the Haqiqah, that shoot

in the garden of generosity—was kept between Mecca and Taif in the cradle of the covenant of recognitions. The ill-fortuned, ill-eyed Iblis passed by. With the hand of envy he shook Adam’s makeup and found it empty. He said, “This creature will not be self-possessed. He is empty, and nothing comes forth from something empty.”

Beginningless good fortune replied on behalf of Adam: “Wait a few days until the falcon of his mystery takes flight! The first prey it hunts will be you.”

The abandoned and accursed Iblis saw Adam’s clay, but he did not see his heart. He saw the form, but he did not see the attribute. He saw his outwardness but did not see his inwardness.

No one can put a seal on fire. You can put a seal on dust, because dust is receptive to seals. “When We brought Adam into existence from dust and clay, the wisdom was to place the seal of the Trust on the clay of his heart, for *We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth.*”

He brought a handful of dust into existence and burned it with the fire of love. He gave it a place on the carpet of expansiveness. Then He offered the Trust to the world of form. The heavens, the earths, and the mountains refused. Adam came forth like a man and put out his hand. It was said, “O Adam, it is not being offered to you. Why do you want to receive it?”

He said, “Because I am burnt, and someone burnt can only receive.”

On the day when fire was deposited in stone, the stone was made to promise not to submit its head until it saw someone burnt. Do you fancy that this fire is going to come out into the open with the strength of your forearm? No, no, don’t suppose that. It will only come out with the intercession of someone burnt.

*We offered the Trust:* O chevalier! Strive to preserve that first covenant with that first seal. Then the angels will praise you: *The angels will descend upon them saying, “Fear not! Grieve not!”* [41:30].

It is people’s custom when they leave a precious trust with someone to put a seal on it. On the day they want it back, they examine the seal. If the seal is in place, they praise him.

A trust was placed with you at the Covenant of Lordhood—*Am I not your Lord?* Upon that was put the seal of *Yes indeed*. When your life reaches its end, you will be taken to the domicile of dust. The angel will come and say, “Who is your Lord?” This is an examination to see whether or not the seal of the First Day is in place.

“O poor man! A seal was put on you, from the top of your head to your feet. That was the seal [*muhr*] of love [*mihir*]. A seal was put on the place of love. O Riḍwān, paradise is yours! O Mālik, hell is yours! O cherubim, the Throne is yours! O burnt heart upon which is the seal of love, you are Mine, and I am yours.”<sup>1</sup>

*We offered the Trust.* The mountains did not have the capacity for this burden of the Trust, nor did the earth, the Throne, or the Footstool. Do you not see that the Exalted Lord reports about the incapacity of the mountains? “*If We had sent this Qur’an down on a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, split apart by the fear of God*” [59:21]. You see an angel, one of whose wings spread out would bring the two horizons beneath it, but it does not have the capacity to carry this meaning. Then you see the poor wretch of an Adamite, skin stretched across bones. Like a fearless warrior he drinks down the wine of trial in the goblet of friendship, and no change appears in him. Why is that? Because he is the possessor of the heart, and the heart carries what the body does not.<sup>2</sup>

When Adam the Chosen, who was the marvel of creation and unique in the Desire, saw that the heaven and the earth would not carry the burden of the Trust, he came forth like a man and lifted that burden. He said, “They looked at the tremendousness of the burden and refused it. I looked at the generosity of Him who was placing the Trust.”

The burden of the Trust of the Generous is carried by aspiration, not strength. When Adam lifted the burden, he was addressed with the words, “*We carried them on land and sea*” [17:70]. “*Is the recompense of beautiful doing anything but beautiful doing?*” [55:60].

1 The discussion of 33:72 to this point is from RA 597-98.

2 This paragraph is derived from RA 203-4.

There is a likeness for this in the outward realm. When trees have sturdier roots and more branches, their fruit is smaller and lighter. Trees that are weaker and softer have thicker and larger fruit, like melon and squash. Here, however, there is a subtle point: When a tree's fruit is thicker and larger and it does not have the capacity to carry it, they say to it, "Take the heavy burden from your shoulders and put it on top of the earth." This is so that the world's folk will know that wherever there is someone frail, he is being nurtured by the gentleness of the Exalted Presence.<sup>3</sup> This is the secret of *We carried them on land and sea*.

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<sup>3</sup> These three paragraphs are from RA 205.

## Surah 34: Saba<sup>o</sup>

### **34:10** *We gave David bounty from Us.*

In the reports about David, it has come that he used to read the Psalms, and the name of sinners came up a great deal. Because of jealousy and solidity in the religion, he said, “O God, do not forgive those who misstep!” Lord God, do not forgive the sinners!

It was said to him, “O David, such lack of tenderness toward the sinners! Wait, until Muḥammad the Arab sets foot into the circle of existence and asks forgiveness for the only one of his community not to sin: ‘Forgive me for what I did before and what I will do after!’”

Then the tongue of destiny said to David, “O David, you have remained in the bonds of your own purity. Wait until you are slapped by the hand of the decree and destiny. Then you will know what you said and where you stood.”

Gabriel came to the road and said, “O David, the arrow of the decree has been loosed from the bow of destiny. Be careful, watch out for yourself if you can!”

David sat in the prayer-niche in bewilderment and regret, his eyes fixed on the Psalms, busy with remembrance and worship, until the episode happened with the bird and his eyes fell on the wife of Uriah. This story will be given in detail in the Surah of Sād [38], God willing.<sup>1</sup> In the end, David was saying, “O God, forgive the sinners—perhaps You will forgive David along with them.”

### **34:12** *And the wind was Solomon’s, its morning course a month and its evening course a month.*

Solomon had beautiful, faultless horses, like birds without wings. When the tale of missing the prayer took place, he drew his sword and cut their necks. It was said to him, “Now that you have done away with them, We will make the wind your mount.”

“When someone belongs to God, God belongs to him.” Whenever someone abandons his own gaze, it is replaced by God’s gaze. No one has ever abandoned something for God without being given something better in return. Muṣṭafā sent Ja°far to battle and made him the head of the army, so the banner of Islam was in his hand. The unbelievers attacked and cut off his hand, so he took up the banner with the other hand. They struck him again and cut off his other hand, and after that he received seventy-some wounds. He left this world as a martyr. He was seen in a dream and asked, “What did God do with you?”

He said, “God gave me two wings in place of the hands and with them I fly in the Garden wherever I want with Gabriel and Michael.”

Asmā° bint °Amīs said. God’s Messenger was standing and suddenly said, “And upon you be peace.”

I said, “To whom were you returning the greeting, O Messenger of God, for I do not see anyone with you.”

He said, “That was Ja°far ibn Abī Ṭālib. He just passed by with Gabriel and Michael.”

“O Ja°far, you gave your hands. Here are wings. O Solomon, you gave your horses. Here is the wind, your porter on land and sea.”

“O truthful lover, if by virtue of your discipline you sacrifice your eyes and throw away your body, then here: Our gentleness is your eyes, Our bounty is your ears, Our generosity your lamp and candle. ‘When I love him, I am his hearing and he hears through Me, his eyesight and he sees

1 Maybudī tells the story in Stages Two and Three of his commentary on 38:21 (KA 8:334-5, 341-43).

through Me, his hand and he grasps through Me.’ First a man becomes a speaker, then a knower, then a traveler, then a flier.<sup>2</sup>

O poor man, have you never wished that one day the bird of your heart would be delivered from the cage of your misfortune and fly in the air of the Real’s approval? By the majesty of the Lord God! Nothing will welcome you but the caress of “I come near to him by a cubit.”<sup>3</sup>

Why do you stay in this low place like crows looking for carrion?

Break the cage and fly at once like peacocks to the heights. [DS 52]

The cage is the bodily frame, and the divine Trust is the bird’s spirit. It is a bird whose wings are passion, whose flying is desire, whose horizon is the Unseen, and whose domicile is pain. Whenever the bird of the Trust flies from this cage of mortal nature to the horizon of the Unseen, the cherubim of the world of holiness put their hands over their eyes. Otherwise, the lightning of its beauty would burn their eyes.

**34:14 When We decreed death for him....**

Death is of two sorts: outward death and inward death. Outward death is obvious to everyone. Friend and enemy follow the road that leads to it, the common people and the elect are the same in it. *Every soul shall taste death* [3:185].

Inward death is that a man dies in himself from himself without himself and comes to life from the Real in the Real with the Real. It is the same as that chevalier said:

“Die, O friend, before your death, if you want to live—  
long ago, by such a death, Idris went up to paradise.” [DS 52]

True life is that given by the opening of faith, not what is put in place by the animal spirit. Abu’l-Ḥasan Kharāqānī said, “It is twenty years since they brought my shroud from heaven. What is strange is that He keeps me with the people in the form of the living, but He has wrapped me in a shroud in His own Presence.”

Don’t think of that talk, put on the shroud,  
then clap your hands like a man.  
Say, “Either You or me in the city”—  
A realm with two heads is in turmoil.

O chevalier! One drop of sperm that comes out from inside a man establishes his pollution, but this outward pollution is made pure with water. What is difficult is that if one iota of the sperm of self-seing takes up residence inside you, a pollutedness will come that cannot be eliminated with all the world’s oceans.<sup>4</sup>

Quit being the companion of self-nurturing habit-worshippers!  
Kiss the dust beneath the feet of those who have disowned self! [DS 972]

At this threshold, self-seeing has no reason, self-painting no worth. There is no reason whatsoever to take anything other than incapacity, need, poverty, and want. The sons of Jacob went to Joseph and took poverty and want, saying, “*We came with scant goods*” [12:88]. Hence Joseph lifted the mask from beauty and came forward with the tongue of generosity: “*No reproof is upon you today*” [12:92]. You do the same thing, O man with ruined life, indigent of the times! At the moment of dawn, when He lets down the carpet of descent and opens up the arms of generosity, go again to His door like the indigent and the incapable. With a heart full of pain, a spirit full of regret, eyes full of water, and a liver full of fire, say,

2 Up until here, the commentary on this verse is derived from RA 498-99, with a good deal of rearrangement.

3 From the hadith cited under 2:152, 2:186, and 20:82.

4 Beginning with the saying of Kharāqānī, this passage up to this point, as well as the reference to Joseph and his brothers in the next paragraph, are derived from RA 518-19. Two of the sentences at the beginning of the passage are from RA 484.

“My two eyes full of water, my liver full of fire,  
my hands full of wind, my head full of dust!”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “I know not Your measure and am incapable of what is worthy of You. I wander in my misery, day by day in loss. How then is someone like me?! But such am I. I lament at gazing into the darkness—will anything remain of me? I do not know. My eyes look to a day when You remain and I am not. Who will be like me if I see that day? And if I see it, I will sacrifice my spirit to it.”

Joseph had such generosity that when his brothers came back to him in incapacity and poverty, he said to them, “*No reproof is upon you today.*” Hence the Most Generous of the Generous and Most Merciful of the Merciful is more worthy of saying to the servants when they weep to Him with incapacity and need, “*No fear is upon you today, neither will you sorrow*” [43:68].

**34:46 Say: “I admonish you in but one thing: that you stand up for God.”**

It is said that standing up for God is the center point of the compass of the Tariqah and the pivot of the secrets of the Haqiqah. Whoever leaves self-governance behind and places his work with the Real will reap the fruit of the *goodly life* [16:97]. Do you not see that the chevaliers who were the Companions of the Cave left themselves behind, put aside self-governance, and turned their faces toward the threshold of lordhood, as the Exalted Lord says: “*We placed a tie on their hearts when they stood up*” [18:14]. Look how He gave them a place in the cave of jealousy with the shade of kind favor and the embrace of friendship. The sunlight of form and its shining had not the gall to circle around their cave of jealousy. The light of the sun was incapable in relation to the lights of their secret cores, for the light of the sun is for brightening creation, and the lights of their secret cores were for recognizing the Real.

Let go of the moons, dimming or brightening—  
we have a full moon to which all full moons are abased.

The light of the sun is the light of form, and the light of their hearts was the light of the secret core. When the radiance of the sunlight of form reached them, it pulled back its skirt from the shining radiance of their secret core’s light. The Lord of the Worlds says, “*Thou wouldst have thought them awake, but they were sleeping*” [18:18]. This is the attribute of the Folk of the Tariqah. When you look at their outwardness, you see them busy in the playing fields of deeds. When you look at their secret cores, you see them detached in the gardens of the gentleness of the Possessor of Majesty. Outwardly active, inwardly they gaze on the gentleness of the Beginningless. With *Thee alone we worship* [1:5] they have bound the belt of struggle. With *and Thee alone we ask for help* [1:5] they have placed the crown of contemplation on their heads. On the inside they wear the undershirt of surrender, and on the outside they have covered themselves with the caftan of deeds.

Singling out the Companions of the Cave is the clearest evidence and the most lucid path to show that chosenness has no cause and being specified is not achieved by any means. A dog that took a few steps in the tracks of the Real’s friends will be read about until the Resurrection: *And their dog was stretching its paws at the doorstep* [18:18]. So, when a Muslim becomes the companion of the Real’s friends for seventy years, with burning and faith, and he takes the blackness of youth to the whiteness of old age, why do you have the opinion that the Real will make him despair on the Day of Resurrection? No, never, He will not do that.<sup>5</sup>

**34:49 Say: “The truth has come, and falsehood does not originate, nor make return.”**

On the day God’s Messenger put his blessed foot inside the Kaabah—when ‘Umar Khaṭṭāb had arrived at the exaltedness of submission, and the faithful were happy at his submission, though he had placed many idols inside the Kaabah—the Messenger had a stick in his hand with which he was striking the chests of the idols, saying, “*The truth has come and falsehood has vanished away* [17:81], *The truth has come, and falsehood does not originate, nor make return.*” ‘Umar was say-

<sup>5</sup> These three paragraphs are summarized from RA 446-48.

ing, “O idols, this is Aḥmad. This is God’s messenger in truth, so bear witness. If what he says is true, then prostrate yourselves!” The idols all at once fell down in prostration.

O chevalier! Which day will it be when the messenger of realization along with the °Umar of assent enters the Kaabah of your breast at the instruction of success-giving? It will topple the idols of caprice and avarice, and they will call out, “*The truth has come, and falsehood does not originate, nor make return.*”

“*So the sorcerers were cast down in prostration* [7:120]. What do you say? Did they come and prostrate themselves? Or did We bring them into prostration?”

A serving boy was walking with his master. The boy went into a mosque, said his prayers, and remained for a long time in the pleasure of whispered prayer. The master said, “Come out, boy!”

He said, “He won’t let me.”

He said, “Who won’t let you come out?”

He said, “The same one who won’t let you come in.”

It is no wonder that a hearing, speaking, knowing person should prostrate himself. The wonder is that °Umar said, “O unhearing, unspeaking idols, if Muḥammad’s religion is the truth, prostrate yourselves,” and at once all of them prostrated themselves.

O pure Lord! Two improper, ugly things were placed before °Umar: enmity toward the Messenger and coveting this world. Then there appeared such a beautiful state from their midst, for °Umar was adorned with the ornament of submission. In the same way, two improper things were placed before Pharaoh’s sorcerers: one enmity toward Moses and the other Pharaoh’s rulership. Then from the midst an exalted secret appeared, *so the sorcerers were cast down in prostration*. Two arduous tribulations were placed before Joseph: one the well and the other the prison. Then from their midst Joseph’s rulership and ruling authority appeared: *Thus did We establish Joseph in the earth* [12:56]. Two feeble drops were brought together in the womb. Then from their midst such a lovely form appeared: *And He formed you, so He made your forms beautiful* [40:64]. Two impurities were brought together in the makeup of the animal, one feces and the other blood. Then from their midst pure milk appeared: *between feces and blood, pure milk* [16:66]. Two difficult tasks were combined for the servant: one disobedience, the other shortcoming in obedience. Then from their midst mercy and forgiveness appeared: *He will make your deeds wholesome for you and forgive you your sins* [33:71].<sup>6</sup>

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6 The commentary on this verse is drawn from RA 485-86.

## Surah 35: al-Fāṭir

**35:1** *Praise belongs to God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, who appointed the angels as messengers having wings, two, three, and four. He adds to creation as He wills.*

“The *praise belongs to God*; that which belongs to Me is the praise by which I praise Myself, not your praise. The praise that is worthy of Me is the praise that comes from Me, not that which comes from you. What would come from water and dust worthy of My exalted majesty and everlasting beauty? How can the description of newly arrived things find access to the Eternal? How can that which undergoes annihilation reach the subsistent Real? How can that which was not, then came to be, praise Him who always was and always will be? O Adamite, your praise is defective because of your request for pardon and forgiveness. How can the defective be suited for the Presence of Exalted Majesty? A majesty that is incomparable with defect and hallowed beyond infirmity must have the praise of the Haqiqah, and that is nothing other than praise by Me, who am the Lord. For I am the Real, and My attributes are the Haqiqah. My servant, now I bring forth praise that is worthy of Myself. You also, bring forth praise of Me worthy of yourself, in the measure of your possibility. Then I will take your metaphor and through My generosity make it accord with the Haqiqah. I will make its ruling property the ruling property of the Haqiqah. If you say ‘Amen’ and your words conform with My saying ‘Amen,’ I will forgive you your sins. So when you praise Me and your praise of Me conforms with My praise of Me, how can any imagination carry and how can any mind contain the caress and robe of honor that I will bestow upon you?”<sup>1</sup>

Listen while I confirm these words with their like: The Exalted Lord says, “*God bears witness that there is no god but He*” [3:18]. Before you bore witness, He Himself bore witness, for your bearing witness is defective because of the request to attain the promise of paradise and to safeguard against the threat of hell. Moreover, your bearing witness is temporal, but His attributes are beginningless and everlasting. The temporal will never be suited for the beginningless. So He Himself bore witness, and His bearing witness is beginningless. Thus when you do so, the temporal will follow the beginningless and its ruling property will become that of the beginningless. Because of that following, He will give you an endless reward.

*Who appointed the angels as messengers having wings, two, three, and four.* He made Himself recognized to the servants by His acts and He charged them to learn lessons from them. Part of this is what they come to know face-to-face, like heaven, earth, and so on. Part is what is affirmed by way of reports and transmission, for it is not known by self-evidence or the proofs of intellect, and this includes the angels. Hence we do not come to realize the quality of their forms and their wings and how they fly with their three or four wings. But, in short, we know the perfection of His power and the truthfulness of His words.<sup>2</sup>

The angels are those proximate to the Exalted Threshold, the peacocks of the Divine Presence kept in veils of awesomeness. They wear the belt of acquiescence, their heads placed on the line of the command, for *they do not disobey God in what He commands them and they do as they are commanded* [66:6]. In another place He says, “*Nay, but they are honored servants* [21:26]. Despite this rank and level, the faithful dust-dwellers and wholesome children of Adam have eminence and superiority over them. Do you not see that the Prophet said, “The man of faith is nobler

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is based on RA 468.

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is from LI 5:190.

in God's eyes than the angels who are with Him?"

‘Ā’isha said, "I said, 'O Messenger of God, who are the noblest of creatures in God's eyes?'"

"He said, 'O ‘Ā’isha, have you not recited, "Surely those who have faith and do wholesome deeds—those are the best of the creatures" [98:7]?"'

It has been narrated that the angels said, "Our Lord, surely You have given the children of Adam this world, and they eat of it and enjoy it. But You have not given it to us, so give us the next world."

He said, "By My exaltedness, I will not make the wholesome progeny of him whom I created with My own two hands like those to whom I said, 'Be,' so they came to be."

The Prophet said, "Surely the man of faith is recognized in heaven just as a man is recognized by his family, and surely he is nobler in God's eyes than a proximate angel."

In the traditions it has come that at the beginning of the creation of Adam, when the Exalted Lord spread the carpet of Adam's dignity and smoothed the foundations of his sinlessness, He addressed the angels by saying, "Surely I am setting in the earth a vicegerent." By way of asking for information they said, "What, wilt Thou set therein one who will work corruption there?" The Exalted Lord answered them by saying, "Surely I know what you do not know" [2:30]. They regretted what they had said and began to plead, striving to seek the Real's approval. They said, "Our God, we have heard Your address, we fear Your punishment, and we will obey those who obey You, so approve of us. O Lord, may our listening be the ransom for Your eternal address, our makeup the ransom for Your severity and rebuke, and our worship and hallowing the largesse at the feet of those who are faithful to Your threshold. Our desire is that the presence of Your approval may accept us with beginningless favor!"

The address came, "Our approval lies in this: you who are the noble and proximate should circumambulate the Throne and ask forgiveness for the not-yet-done offenses of Adam's offspring, for they are still in the concealment of nonexistence." This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, "The angels are glorifying the praise of their Lord and asking forgiveness for those in the earth" [42:5].

"O you who are in charge of the veils, weep for the folk of heedlessness among Adam's offspring so that We may conceal their disobedience with Our forgiveness because of your weeping!" Concerning this it has been narrated that the Prophet said, "When I was carried up to heaven, I heard a droning. I asked Gabriel what it was and he said, 'This is the weeping of the cherubim for the sinners in your community.'"

*He adds to creation as He wills.* The folk of realization say that He means the highness of aspiration. He gives a high aspiration to whomsoever He wants.

The possessors of aspiration are three: The aspiration of one is this world—it is the furthest limit of his hope and the spindle of his effort's mill. According to the report, "When someone comes to the point where this world is his greatest aspiration, he does not belong to God. His heart will be inseparable from four traits: an aspiration that will never be cut off from him, an occupation in which he will never take comfort, a poverty in which he will never attain wealth, and a hope that will never reach its object."

On the night of the *mi'raj* Muṣṭafā saw a person adorned in the form of a bride. He said, "Gabriel, who is that?"

He said, "This world, which adorns herself to the eyes of those with low aspiration. Of your community, only one in 70,000 will buy back his spirit from love for her beauty by seeking God."

When someone's aspiration is only this world, the scent of severance comes from him. We seek refuge in God from him!

The aspiration of the second reaches the afterworld. The gardens and meadows, the bliss of the colorful things, the houris and palaces, the serving boys, the *women good and beautiful* [55:70], keep on attracting his heart, as is shown by his passing days. This is the state of the wage-earner who stays attached to the reward and is held back from the realities of the unveilings and the seclusion of whispered prayer.

The third person has a high aspiration and a hidden mystery in the heart. His heart is captive

to love and his spirit drowned in face-to-face vision. He has no news of this world and no mark of the afterworld. With the tongue of bewilderment he keeps on saying, “O Unique and One from the beginningless and forever, O One and Alone in name and mark! Bring me to life with the life of the friends! Keep me alive in togetherness itself! Make me flourish in the light of proximity! Lift up duality from the midst! Settle me down with the proximate in the station of *tawḥīd!*!”

**35:2** *Whatever mercy God opens up to the people, none shall hold it back.*

In terms of understanding in the tongue of the Tariqah, this verse alludes to the opening of the folk of faith and recognition. Opening is a name for what comes from the Unseen unsought and unasked for. It is of two sorts: One is the influxes of provision and delightful life, unsought and unearned. The other is God-given knowledge, unlearned, conforming to the Shariah, never before heard, but familiar to the heart.<sup>3</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Alas for this unlearned knowledge! Sometimes I’m drowned in it, sometimes burnt by it.”

In respect of this knowledge the speaker is the ocean, sometimes in flow, sometimes in ebb. When he stands in the station of expansiveness, he fills the world with limpidness. When he stands in the station of awe, he fills the world with human nature.

Among the sorts of opening are beautiful dreams, the supplications of good people, and the acceptance of hearts. According to a report, “When God loves a servant, the folk of the heavens and the earth love him, and acceptance is placed for him in the earth.”

**35:12** *Not equal are the two oceans, this one sweet, satisfying, delicious to drink, that one salty, bitter.*

This verse alludes to two states: turning toward God and turning away from God. Those who turn toward God are occupied with obeying Him and recognizing Him. Those who turn away from Him are shut off from worshiping Him and protest against His apportioning and decree. The former is the cause of union, and the latter the cause of deprivation and separation.

These are two different oceans, one delicious and the other bitter, standing between the servant and God. One is the ocean of destruction, the other the ocean of salvation. This is their likeness:

Five ships are traveling in the ocean of destruction: avarice, eye-service, persistence in acts of disobedience, heedlessness, and despair. Whoever sits in the ship of avarice will reach the shore of love for this world. Whoever sits in the ship of eye-service will reach the shore of hypocrisy. Whoever sits in the ship of persistence in acts of disobedience will reach the shore of wretchedness. Whoever sits in the ship of heedlessness will reach the shore of remorse. Whoever sits in the ship of despair will reach the shore of unbelief.

As for the ocean of salvation, five ships are traveling on it: fear, hope, renunciation, recognition, and *tawḥīd*. Whoever sits in the ship of fear will reach the shore of security. Whoever sits in the ship of hope will reach the shore of bestowal. Whoever sits in the ship of renunciation will reach the shore of proximity. Whoever sits in the ship of recognition will reach the shore of intimacy. Whoever sits in the ship of *tawḥīd* will reach the shore of contemplation.

The Pir of the Tariqah gave an eloquent admonition to his companions and friends. He said, “Dear friends, it is time to seek salvation from this ocean of destruction and rise up from this pit of lassitude. Do not sell subsistent bliss for this evanescent house!

“A soul without service is estranged. Do not nurture the estranged! A heart without wakefulness is a ghoul. Do not be the companion of a ghoul! A soul without awareness is wind. Do not live in the wind! Do not be satisfied with name and description in place of meaning and reality! Do not feel secure from hidden deception! Always be careful about the outcome of the work at the last breath!”

That poet spoke sweet words in fine verses:

O heart, if you want the afterworld, keep your claws back from this world!

Trade in gambling away life and choosing religion’s road!

<sup>3</sup> The definition is derived from *Ṣad maydān*, no. 62 (303).

Put your foot on this world and sew up the eye of name and reputation,  
seize hold of the afterworld and close down the road of pride and honor.  
How long will you sit like a woman in hope of color and scent?  
Fix your aspiration on the road and set out like a man!  
The eyes of a fool fall in love with the oyster's shell.  
By God, his eyes will never see the royal pearl! [DS 204-5]

Concerning His words, “*Not equal are the two oceans,*” one of the folk of recognition said, “This means that two present moments are not equal. One is expansion, and its owner dwells in repose. The other is contraction, and its owner laments. One is separation, and its owner has the attribute of servanthood. The other is togetherness, and its owner witnesses the Lordhood.”<sup>4</sup>

According to the tasting of the recognizers, these two oceans allude to the contraction and expansion of the wayfarers. The contraction and expansion of the advanced is like the fear and hope of the beginners.

At the beginning of his desire during the moments of service, the desirer has no escape from fear and hope. In the same way, at the end of the state with perfect recognition, no one is empty of contraction and expansion.

When someone is in fear and hope, his gaze is all towards the Endless: “What will be done with me tomorrow?” When someone is in contraction and expansion, his gaze is all towards the Beginningless: “What was done with me, what was decreed for me, in the Beginningless?”

This is why the Pir of the Tariqah said, “Alas for the apportioning gone before me! Alack for the words spoken by the Self-Seer! I do not know if I should live happy or distraught. My dread is what the Powerful said in the Beginningless.”

As long as the servant is in contraction, his sleep is like the sleep of the drowning, his food like the food of the ill, his life like the life of prisoners. He lives as is suited to his need. He follows the road in lowliness and misery and says with the tongue of abasement,

“My two eyes full of water, my liver full of fire,  
my hands full of wind, my head full of dust!”

When his misery and lowliness reach their extreme and his abasement and incapacity become manifest, the Exalted Lord attends to his heart and opens the door of expansion and elation in his heart. His present moment becomes sweet, his heart is joined with the Protector, and his secret core is adorned with awareness of the Real. He says with the tongue of gratitude, “O God, You were my tribulation, You became my good fortune! You were my sorrow, You became my ease! You were my burning brand, You became my lamp! You were my wound, You became my balm!”

**35:15 *O people, you are the poor toward God, and God is the Unneedy, the Praiseworthy.***

Know that poverty is of two sorts: the poverty of created nature and the poverty of attributes. The poverty of created nature is general, belonging to every newly arrived thing that has come into existence from nonexistence. The meaning of poverty is need. Every created thing needs the Creator—first for creation and second for nurture. Thus you know that God has no needs or requirements, and everything else has needs and requirements. This is why the Exalted Lord says, “*God is the Unneedy, and you are the poor*” [47:38].

As for the poverty of attributes, that is what the Lord of the Worlds said: “*the poor emigrants*” [59:8]. He specified the Messenger’s Companions for this poverty and praised them for it, as He said: “*For the poor, who are constrained in the path of God*” [2:273]. He named them *poor* to disguise the wealth of their state and so that no one would know of their wealth. This is as they say: “Call me Arsalan so that no one will know who I am.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Friendship is built on disguise. The name ‘king’ for Solomon is the disguise of poverty. ‘Disobedience’ for Adam is the disguise of being chosen. The blessings that clothed Abraham disguised bosom friendship. This is because the stipulation of love is jeal-

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4 LI 5:197.

ousy. Friends do not show their state to just anyone.”

Someone without an iota of being, who never gazes on the two worlds and who always keeps God’s gaze before his eyes is called poor, for he lacks everything and is wealthy through the Real. One must have wealth in the breast, not in the storehouse. The poor man is he who sees no handhold in the two worlds other than the Real and does not gaze upon himself. He has recited the prayer of the dead over his own essence and attributes—as that chevalier said:

“Endless passion has nothing to do with a heart  
that stays firm in its own attributes.  
When someone steps into the field of passion for the beautiful,  
night and day will recite for him the prayer of the dead.” [DS 209-10]

**35:32** *Then We gave the inheritance of the Book to the ones We chose from among Our servants. Among them are wrongdoers to themselves, among them are moderate, and among them are preceders in good deeds by God’s leave. That is the great bounty.*

In this verse the Lord of the world, the lovingly kind enactor, the caresser of the servants, gives eminence to the community of Aḥmad with seven generousities—a complete eminence, a great honor, and an infinite caress. None of the children of Adam received these seven generousities together except this community. Three of the seven are at the beginning of the verse: First *We gave the inheritance*, second, *We chose*, and third *Our servants*.

*We gave the inheritance*: He called them inheritors. *We chose*: He called them the chosen. *Our servants*: He called them servants. “They are My inheritors, My chosen, and My accepted servants.”

Since He called them inheritors, in reality He will not take back the inheritance. Since He called them chosen and His knowledge makes no mistakes, He will not reject them. Since He called them accepted, He will not put them together with faults.

“*We gave the inheritance*: The light of guidance, the good fortune of the religion, the exaltedness of knowledge, the adornment of recognition, the splendor of faith, the blessing of the Sunnah, the fruit of wisdom—to whom did We give all these? To the ones *We chose*: We gave these to those whom We chose. Since We chose them, We saw the faults. In Our unneediness We chose the servants as they are.

“O Muḥammad! On the day We chose your community, We saw those long-lived angels with all that obedience. On the day We placed honey in that frail bee, We saw those mighty falcons. On the day We gave silk to that frail little worm, We saw those awesome serpents. On the day We gave musk to the musk-deer, We saw those mighty lions. On the day We gave ambergris to the whale, We saw those tremendous elephants. On the day We placed pearls in the oyster, We saw those fierce crocodiles. On the day We gave sweet songs to the nightingale, We saw those decorated peacocks. On the day We praised and lauded Muḥammad’s community and wrote out the inscription of chosenness, We saw those long-lived angels and obedient proximate ones at the threshold of service.”

Before you asked I asked for you,  
all the world I adorned for you.  
Thousands in the city are in love with Me—  
live in joy, I rose up for you.<sup>5</sup>

Of the seven generousities, three have been mentioned. Three more are these: *Among them are wrongdoers to themselves, among them are moderate, and among them are preceders in good deeds by God’s leave*. This is a subtle classification and a tremendous generosity. No one received this eminence and generosity from the Patron except this community. He wrote the inscription of chosenness for everyone, and then in His generosity He began with wrongdoers

5 The poem and the previous paragraph are derived from RA 625-26.

so that the wrongdoers would not be ashamed, but rather take heart and renew hope. In is the same way He says in another place: “*The repenters, the worshipers...*” [9:112]. He mentions the grades of the chosen and presents the sequential arrangement of the good people of this community, beginning with the least of them: *The repenters*. Even though they are sinners, they regret what they did; they are broken in body and sorrowful in heart. These are those who apologize and ask for pardon. Muṣṭafā said, “The sins of my community were presented to me along with the wrongdoing of some of them done to others. I asked God for intercession, and He gave it to me.”

*Among them are wrongdoers to themselves*. These are the hangers-on. *Among them are moderate*. These are the called. *Among them are preceders in good deeds*. These are given access.

“The wrongdoer is the offender, and My pardon is for him. The moderate is the seeker, and My help is for him. The preceder is given access, and My bounty is for him.

“The wrongdoer is struck by the whip of heedlessness, killed by the sword of impurity, thrown down at the threshold of the Will, and puts his hope in mercy. The moderate is not tormented by a whip, but he is killed by the sword of shame, thrown down at the threshold of seeking, and sits in hope of nearness. The preceder is struck by the whip of familiarity, killed by the sword of friendship, burned at the threshold of desire, and puts his hope in vision.

“O wrongdoer! Pardon is yours until gentleness appears. O moderate! Help is yours until bounty appears. O preceder! Proximity is yours until kindness and beautiful doing appear.

“O wrongdoer! Curtaining is yours, and there is no disgrace. O moderate! Acceptance is yours, and there is no fear. O preceder! Proximity is yours, and there is no niggardliness.

“If you are a wrongdoer, I am merciful. If you are moderate, I am knowing. If you are a preceder, I am gazing. If you are a wrongdoer, apologizing is enough. If you are moderate, trying is enough. If you are a preceder, aiming is enough. The wrongdoing of the wrongdoer is under My curtain. The effort of the moderate is under my help. The precedence of the preceder is under My gentleness. All of this is My magnificent bounty.”

He mentions three groups and three levels. He separates them by deeds, and He brings them together with bounty: *That is the great bounty*. This *great bounty* is the seventh generosity that He showed to this community. O friend, when bounty lifts something up, it throws off the defects. Justice will never be able to overcome bounty.

Ibn al-Aʿrābī said, “Whenever chastisement or mercy is mentioned in the Qur’an, look carefully. If mercy is mentioned before chastisement, that is a threat. If chastisement is mentioned after mercy, the chastisement is abrogated. If both are mentioned together, the ruling property belongs to mercy, because, although the Wise bases Himself on His rightful due, He would never put aside someone else’s rightful due. In His Godhood, the Lord of the Worlds has no need for creation or the service of the creatures, nor is He harmed by the creatures’ disobedience. He is forbearing, vast in bounty, and lovingly kind toward the creatures.”

The folk of recognition have said, “Each of these three mentioned groups has a portion of water from the drinking place of *tawhīd* in the measure of their own traveling. Some are drinkers, some cup-bearers, some grazers. The drinkers are the preceders, the cup-bearers the moderate, and the grazers the wrongdoers. The drinkers are the realizers, the cup-bearers the dust-dwellers, and the grazers the protesters. He alludes to this with His words, ‘*Of it you have to drink, and of it are trees to graze your herds*’ [16:10]. The drinkers drink from the cup of face-to-face vision; they gaze upon the Pourer as they drink the wine. Although the cup-bearers do not find what they heard, they reach a portion of what they heard. The grazers neither hear nor see, but they are not without a portion, for they do not choose to deny. The drinkers are at the front, the pourers are companions in the seeking, the grazers remain at the gate. He keeps each of them in that for which he is worthy. He does not give the unworthy more, nor does He decrease what is worthy from those who are worthy.”

*That is the great bounty*. In other words, it is the bounty in which the wrongdoer is mentioned along with the preceder.

It has been said that the wrongdoer is more excellent, because He means him who has wronged

himself by the great amount of obedience he has imposed on himself.

It has been said that these were mentioned with the word “*gave inheritance.*” In dealing with inheritance, one begins with the obligatory, then the rest goes to relatives, even if those for whom it is obligatory have less worthiness for it. Thus He says, “*Among them are wrongdoers to themselves,*” placing them before the preceders.

It has been said that the wrongdoers are those who abandon disobedience, the moderate are those who abandon ambiguity, and the preceders are those who abandon bounty altogether.

It has been said that the wrongdoers have the knowledge of certainty, the moderate have the eye of certainty, and the preceders have the truth of certainty.

It has been said that the wrongdoers have affection, the moderate have bosom friendship, and the preceders have love.

It has been said that the wrongdoers have generosity, the moderate have munificence, and the preceders have largesse.

It has been said the wrongdoers have fear, the moderate have dread, and the preceders have awe.

It has been said that the wrongdoers seek this world, the moderate seek the afterworld, and the preceders seek the Patron.

It has been said that the wrongdoers are trying for ecstasy, the moderate have ecstasy, and the preceders have finding.

It has been said that the wrongdoers have presence, the moderate have unveiling, and the preceders have contemplation.

It has been said that the wrongdoers will see Him in the next world, in the measure of the days of this world, once every Friday. The moderate will see Him once every day. The preceders will of course never be veiled from Him. *That is the great bounty.*<sup>6</sup>

### **35:33 *Gardens of Eden that they will enter.***

When He mentioned their sorts, He arranged them in levels. Now that He mentions the Garden, He mentions them together. He says, “*Gardens of Eden that they will enter,*” pointing out that their entrance into the Garden is not because of worthiness, but because of bounty, and in bounty there is no differentiation.

### **35:34 *And they shall say, “Praise belongs to God, who has put away sorrow from us.”***

O chevalier! The worth of the antidote is known by the snake-bitten, the worth of burning fire is known by the moth, the worth of Joseph’s shirt is known by grieving Jacob. When someone is deluded by his own safety and is given the antidote, how will he know its worth? If you want someone to know the worth and gravity of the antidote, you need him whose spirit has reached his lips.<sup>7</sup>

A poor man is needed, broken-hearted, suffering pain, and burdened with grief to know the worth of this caress and the exaltedness of this address: “*Praise belongs to God, who has put away sorrow from us.*” Wait until tomorrow when that wounded-hearted poor man is placed on the throne of joy in the palisade of holiness while the serving boys and servants act like his slaves to spread the carpet before the seat of his good fortune. The night of tribulation will have come to an end, the sun of felicity will have risen from the horizon of generous giving, and the Exalted Presence will set forth for him the gentle favors of generosity. With the tongue of joy and coquetry he will say, “*Praise belongs to God, who has put away sorrow from us.*”

O indigent man! This world is the world of metaphor. It is clear what realities can be unveiled in the world of metaphor. It is obvious what can be painted on a gnat’s wing. This world is a prison. What marks of prisoners can be given but sorrow, grief, and longing? For these grief-stricken ones the day of the bazaar and the time of access will be tomorrow, when the concealed gentleness and treasuries stored in the Unseen will come out from the covering of jealousy unscathed

<sup>6</sup> These short explanations, beginning with “*That is the great bounty,*” are taken from LI 204-6.

<sup>7</sup> This paragraph is from RA 591.

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by hands and untouched by minds. A vast capacity will be given to the poor ones so that they may drink the wine of vision cup by cup, or rather, ocean by ocean. They will be shouting out, “*Is there any more?*” [50:30].<sup>8</sup> And praise belongs to God alone.

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<sup>8</sup> This paragraph is based largely on RA 612 and 613.

## Surah 36: Yāsīn

### **36:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

This is the exalted name of Him whose encounter, when someone yearns for it, will make the trials that He casts down on him seem sweet; and when someone seeks an intimate in this world or the afterworld and calls on other than Him, he will go astray.

In the name of Him to whom intelligence has no road, for no one is aware of the reality of His majesty. In the name of Him other than whose Presence the indigent have no refuge, for the disobedient have no gate other than His gate. In the name of Him like whom the world's folk have no king, for in heaven and earth He alone is God.

O Lord, the signet of Your majesty is the only handhold of the helpless! O Lovingly Kind, the edict of Your mercy is the only guide for the bewildered! O Generous, the Presence of Your beauty and gentleness is the only ease for the burnt! O Exalted, the cup of Your sweet wine and draft alone throws the drunkards of passion into uproar! O Gentle, waiting for Your vision and approval gives the only intimacy to the yearners' spirits! And God is the success-giver and helper.

Though my impotent feet are not seeking You,  
don't ever think my heart is not Your captive.  
If I don't come, it is not because the spirit does not want You—  
my eyes, after all, are not privy to Your vision.

### **36:1-4** *Yā' Sīn. By the Wise Qur'an, surely thou art one of the envoys, upon a straight path.*

It has been said that the name of the surah is Yāsīn because of the report in which Muṣṭafā said, "God recited Ṭāhā and Yāsīn two thousand years before He created Adam. When the angels of the Dominion heard it, they said, 'Happy is the community upon which this pure speech descends! Happy are the tongues that recite it! Happy are the breasts that are the oyster for this hidden pearl!'"

It is reported that when the friends and the faithful go into that scented garden of felicity and arrive at the joy and bliss of paradise, a call will come from the Compeller: "You have heard much from others. Now is the time to hear from Me." Then He will make them hear the surahs al-Fāṭiḥa, Ṭāhā, and Yāsīn. Muṣṭafā said, "When the people listen to the Qur'an recited by the All-Merciful, it will be as if they had never heard it before." You must take the rose from its own bush to catch its scent correctly.

Hear it from Him who spoke it and increase thereby  
in burning love, for the sweetness of the rose is in its branches.<sup>1</sup>

It has also been said that it means "O man [yā insān]!" and is addressed to Muṣṭafā's form and mortal nature, just as He said elsewhere: "Say: 'I am but a mortal like you'" [18:110], for his human nature and genus are similar to that of the people. This address, "O man!," accords with that. But, in respect of the eminence of prophethood and the specification for messengerhood, he is addressed, "O Prophet!" and "O Messenger!" He is addressed in terms of form and mortal nature as jealousy's mask, so that not just anyone will be privy to and be aware of his beauty and perfection. This is as they say, "Call me Arsalan so that no one will know who I am." It would be a shame for such beauty and perfection to be touched by the eyes of Abū Jahl, °Ataba, and Shayba. *Thou seest*

<sup>1</sup> The two paragraphs and the poem are from RA 612.

them looking at thee, but they do not see [7:198]. The eyes of Abū Jahl, which were dazzled by denial, saw only his human and mortal nature. One needs the eyes of Abū Bakr, cleansed by asking forgiveness, so as to see the beauty of his prophethood and the perfection of his messengerhood. The eyes of °Ataba and Shayba, which were veiled by the night of rejection in the Beginningless, saw only his relation to °Abd al-Muṭṭalib. The eyes of Abū Bakr and °Umar, brightened by the morning of acceptance in the Beginningless, are needed to see the eminence and caresses given to Muḥammad, God's messenger.

Indeed, there is no stipulation to show the private quarters to the non-privy. It wants someone who has become privy to the Shariah and the Tariqah. When the medicine of following the Master has been placed in the eyes of someone's seeking and has become the eye-strengthenener of veneration, he will be qualified to see that beauty.

It has also been said that the Yā' of Yāsīn alludes to the Day of the Compact [*mīthāq*], and the Sīn alludes to His secret [*sirr*] with the lovers. It is as if He is saying, "By the rightful due of the Day of the Compact, by My secret with the lovers, and by the Wise Qur'an, surely thou art one of the envoys, upon a straight path."<sup>2</sup>

### **36:5 *The sending down of the Exalted, the Ever-Merciful.***

This Qur'an has been sent down by a Lord whose name is *the Exalted* and *the Ever-Merciful*. *The Exalted* is He whom it is difficult to perceive. God is exalted in the sense that there is no perceiving Him; understandings and imaginations do not reach the core of His majesty.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O found without being perceived and O face-to-face without being seen! O apparent in hiddenness and hidden in apparentness! Finding You is a day that comes forth suddenly by itself. He who finds You busies himself with neither happiness nor grief. Complete for us the work that cannot be expressed!"

*The sending down of the Exalted, the Ever-Merciful.* He is both exalted and ever-merciful—exalted for the estranged and ever-merciful toward the faithful. Were He exalted and not ever-merciful, no one would ever find Him, and were He ever-merciful and not exalted, everyone would find Him. He is the exalted so that the unbelievers will not know Him in this world and the ever-merciful so that the faithful will see Him in the afterworld.

### **36:6 *That thou mayest warn a people whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless.***

The heedless are two. First are those who are heedless of the work of the religion and unaware of seeking for their own wholesomeness. They have applied their heads to this world and become drunk with appetite. They have shut the eyes of reflective thought and heedfulness. The result for them is as the Exalted Lord says: "*Those who are heedless of Our signs, it is they whose refuge will be the Fire for what they were earning*" [10:7-8]. A report has come: "I wonder at him who is heedless though he is not unheeded."

Second are the admirable heedless. They are heedless of this world's work and of arranging their livelihood. The ruling power of the Haqiqah has gained mastery over their inwardness. They are so consumed by the unveiling of the majesty of Unity that they are absent from themselves. They have no news of this world, nor of the afterworld. With the tongue of their state they say,

This world is in the hand of intellect, that world in the hand of the spirit—  
put the foot of your aspiration on the neck of both headmen. [DS 719]

### **36:31 *Have they not seen how many generations We destroyed before them?***

Do they not look with the eyes of the head to see the wonders of the artifacts? Do they not look with the eyes of the secret core to see the subtleties of the duties?

Do they not look with the eyes of the head to see the signs of the horizons? Do they not look with the eyes of the secret core to see the signs of the souls?

Do they not look with the eyes of the heart to see the lights of guidance? Do they not look with

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<sup>2</sup> This last paragraph is from LI 5:211.

the eyes of the spirit to see the secrets of solicitude? Do they not look with the eyes of witnessing to see the Presence of the Witnessed? Do they not look with the eyes of ecstasy to see the banner of finding? Do they not look with the eyes of selflessness to see the Friend face-to-face? Do they not look with the eyes of annihilation to see a world without shore?

How long will you let this prison deceive you with this and that?  
 It's time to come out of this dark well and see the world—  
 A world in which every heart you find is king,  
 a world in which every spirit you see is joyous! [DS 704-5]

O indigent man! How long will you look at the artifacts? Look once at the Artisan! How long will you be distracted by wonders? Look once at the Wonder-Worker! How long will you be a man of every door? A man of every door will never see wholesomeness and deliverance: “Be not a weathercock, lest you perish.”<sup>3</sup> Tearing up a thousand bronze fortresses from the ground is easier than bringing a man of every door back to one door.

Abū Yazīd Basṭāmī was asked about the heart. He said, “The heart is that which does not contain the measure of one speck of desire for the creatures.”

*Have they not seen how many generations We destroyed before them?* Whenever Salmān Fārsī passed by a ruins he would stop and weep miserably. He would remember those who left that domicile and say, “Where are they, those who set down these foundations and built these houses? They gave their hearts and they tossed away their wealth and lives to adorn these rooms. Once they attached their hearts to them and blossomed like roses on a wall, they fell from the wall and slept in the clay.”

Ask the lofty palace about its inhabitant  
 whom it saved from the hard and soft of life.  
 He established his kingdom and enslaved the people,  
 then death's messenger threw him on his face.

**36:36** *Glory be to Him who created the pairs, all of them, from what the earth grows and from themselves and from what they do not know!*

Purity and faultlessness belong to the God who shows all these wonders of artisanry in the earth, from one water, one dust, and one air, and who makes the banners of power appear in order to make the servants see! He displays the marks so that those who have not seen may see, and those who have not perceived may perceive, that all of this is the deed of an Enactor and the making of a Maker. These adornments have an Adorner and these growing things have a Grower. All testify to the being of God and mark His oneness, even though the testifiers have no intelligence and the markers have no tongue.

And in each thing He has a sign  
 showing that He is one.

**36:37** *A sign for them is the night; We strip from it the day.*

A great man was asked, “Is night more excellent, or day?”

He answered, “Night is more excellent, because at night all is ease and comfort, and comfort belongs to paradise. In day all is trouble and difficulty in the seeking of livelihood, and suffering and difficulty belong to hell.”

He also said, “Night is the portion of the self-purifiers, who worship with self-purification and without eye-service. Day is the portion of the duplicitous, who worship with eye-service and without self-purification. Night is the time of seclusion for friends, the time of meeting for seekers of peace, the solace of the yearners, the moment for the mystery of lovers.” Revelation came to one of the prophets, “He who claims to love Me is a liar if night comes, and he goes to sleep on

3 Part of the hadith, “When you go out in the morning, be a knower or a learner; and be not a weathercock, lest you perish.”

Me. Does not every lover love to be secluded with his beloved? Here I am, aware of you, *I hear and I see* [20:46].”

It has also been said that night and day are the mark of the contraction and expansion of the recognizers. The time of night is contraction for them and the time of day expansion. In the night of contraction, they see everything in lassitude and awe. In the day or expansion, they find all as gentleness and mercy. In the night of contraction the cold wind of severity comes, the marks bearing witness to majesty appear, and the servant weeps and enters into pleading. In the day of expansion the breeze of gentleness blows and brings the scent of union, the marks bearing witness to beauty appear, and the servant delights and enters into ease.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Sometimes I say that I am in constant contraction—there is so much covering! Sometimes a light shines, next to which mortal nature disappears. A light, and what a light! It is the mark of beginningless love, the title-page of the scroll of life. It is the ease of the spirit, the delight of the spirit, and the pain of the spirit.”

You are the pain in my heart and the ease of my spirit.

You stir up tumult and You make it still.

**36:39** *And the moon, We have determined way stations for it, till it returns like the old palm branch.*

It has been said that the wisdom in the waxing and waning of the moon is that at the beginning of creation, the moon’s light was in perfection. It gazed upon itself and self-admiration appeared in it. The Exalted Lord commanded Gabriel to strike the moon’s face with his wing, and that took away the light. Ibn ʿAbbās said, “The lines you see on the face of the moon are the mark of Gabriel’s wing.”

He took away the light, but the imprint stayed in place. It is the imprint of the words of *tawḥīd* written on the moon’s forehead: “There is no god but God; Muḥammad is God’s messenger.”

When the light was taken from the moon, it was prevented from serving at the Threshold. The moon asked for help from the angels so that they would intercede for it. They said, “Lord God, the moon has become accustomed to serving at the Exalted Threshold. Is there no way for You not to deprive it totally?”

The Exalted Lord accepted their intercession and commanded it to prostrate itself once a month on the fourteenth night. Now every night when it comes up and the time of service comes closer, its light increases, until the fourteenth night, the time of prostration, and its light reaches perfection. Then when the fourteenth passes, every night its light diminishes because it is becoming farther from the carpet of service.

It has also been said, “What is similar to the sun is a servant who is forever in the radiance of recognition. He is the possessor of stability, not undergoing variegation. The sun of his recognition constantly shines from the mansions of his felicity. It is not taken by eclipse, nor curtained by clouds.

“What is similar to the moon is a servant whose states are constantly undergoing transition. He is the possessor of variegation. He has an expansion that lifts him up to the boundary of union, and then he is pushed back into lassitude and falls into contraction in the limpidness of his state. Thus he diminishes and returns to deficiency in his affair, until his heart is lifted up from his present moment. Then the Real is munificent toward him and gives him the success to return from his lassitude, bringing him back from his intoxicatedness. His state continues becoming more limpid until he is near to union and he climbs up to the peak of perfection.”<sup>4</sup> At that point he says with the tongue of his state,

“In Your love I descended to a station  
whose descendedness bewilders the mind.”

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4 These two paragraphs are taken from LI 5:217-18.

**36:55 Surely the companions of the Garden today are in an occupation, rejoicing.**

Wakī° ibn al-Jarrāh said, “Their occupation in paradise is listening.” This is exactly what He says elsewhere: “*They will be made happy in a garden*” [30:15]. “*You and your spouses, made happy*” [43:70]. These are reports about listening in the Garden.

In paradise, the faithful servant will delight in listening. The Exalted Lord will send Seraphiel, who will stand on his right hand and recite the Qur’an, and David, who will stand on his left hand and recite the Psalms. The servant will keep on listening until he becomes happy. His spirit will come to the listening, his heart to elation, and his secret core to the work. Of the body the tongue will remain, and that’s it. Of the heart the mark will remain, and that’s it. Of the spirit face-to-face vision will remain, and that’s it. The body will be distracted by ecstasy, the heart consumed by witnessing, the spirit drowned in finding. The eyes will hope to see the Possessor of Majesty, the heart will hope for *a pure wine* [76:21], the spirit will hope for listening to the Real. The Exalted Lord will lift up the curtain of majesty and show the vision. He will caress the servant with cups of wine and begin to recite Ṭāhā and Yāsīn, and then the servant’s spirit will begin to listen in reality.

O chevalier! The body is not able to listen because it is attached to having the upper hand. The heart is not able to listen because it is a passer-by. “Listening” is the listening of the spirit, for it does not belong here. The body does not listen because it suffers pain from itself. The heart does not listen because it is passing the days. The spirit listens because it is solitary for the Solitary.

Your seeker must be solitary like You—  
he must be free of every defect and pain.

It has also been said that the occupation of the paradise-dwellers is ten things: a kingdom without dismissal, youth without old age, constant health without sickness, continued exaltation without abasement, ease without hardship, blessing without tribulation, subsistence without annihilation, life without death, approval without anger, and intimacy without estrangement.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “This is the occupation of the generality of the faithful, concerning whom Muṣṭafā said, ‘Most of the folk of the Garden are simpletons.’ As for the proximate of the empire and the elect of the presence of contemplation, they will not turn toward the bliss of paradise and away from observation through witnessing and immersion through finding for one instant. With the tongue of their state they will be saying,

“On the day I reach union with You  
I will disdain the state of the paradise-dwellers.

“When all the people go forth from the courtyards of the Resurrection, this group will stay right there and will not go. The command will come, ‘You also, go to paradise, and see its joy and bliss.’

“They will say, ‘Why should we go? What we want is right here now.’”

Pir Bū °Alī Siyāh said, “If certain people had to be without Him for one instant, their gall-bladders would melt and their limbs would fall apart joint by joint.”

The Commander of the Faithful °Alī said, “Were I to be veiled from Him for an hour, I would die.”

## Surah 37: al-Şāffāt

### 37:1 *By the row-keepers in rows!*

The lords of realization have said various things about which rows of angels these are. One group has said that what is meant is all the rows of the angels adorning the celestial world, through which the seven heavens have become luminous. In each heaven there is one sort and in each class one description. Some are in the station of service with the watchword of veneration, some in the station of awe with the blanket of watchfulness, some in the state of striving while sniffing the scents of contemplation, some in delight at being attracted by passion for the Friend, some in the market of yearning while whispering secretly with the Friend, some in the dice of love while melting in separation. The chanting of their glorification has deafened the ears of the spheres, their glorifying and hallowing have perfumed the world of holiness, and their flashing words have illumined the courtyard of the Throne. All are sitting in the celestial sky in the gardens of approval, all have bound their belts for the Exalted Threshold within the veils of awe. There is no shortcoming in their worship, no fatigue in their obedience, no slackening in their service. *They do not disobey God in what He commands them and they do as they are commanded* [66:6].

Another group has said that what is meant by these rows is the angels of the Inhabited House specifically, who are in the fourth heaven. They are like the Adamites in this dusty center, who visit the house of the Kaabah every year for one day. The master of the empire, the lord of the Shariah, the foremost of the prophets, said, “On the night of proximity and honor, the night of nearness and familiarity, the night of the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj*, when we were strolling in that towering garden, we reached the fourth heaven and we went to visit the Inhabited House. We saw several thousand of those given proximity next to the Inhabited House. They were all drunk and intoxicated from the wine of union. They were coming from the right and passing to the left, circumambulating and saying ‘Here I am,’ constantly passing to the left. You would say that their number was more than the stars and greater than the number of leaves on the trees. I could not imagine their number, nor could my understanding perceive how to count them. I said, ‘O Gabriel who are they and whence do they come?’

“Gabriel said, ‘O Master, “*None knows the hosts of thy Lord but He*” [74:31]. It has been fifty thousand years that I have seen it just like this. They do not rest for an hour. Thousands come from that direction and pass by. I have not seen before those who come, and I never again see those who pass by. I do not know whence they come or where they go. I do not know the beginning of their state, nor do I recognize the end of their work.”

Yes, friend, this is a marvelous business and a wondrous state! The heaven-dwellers set their faces toward a stone, and the earth-dwellers set their faces toward a stone. What do the helpless passionate ones have in their hands other than rushing and running? May the chevaliers who will settle for nothing but the face of the object of passion and play dice in nothing but love for the Friend subsist in a thousand happinesses!

O He to whose face is my hajj and my umrah,  
the people make their hajj to dust and stones.  
“Here I am, here I am” in proximity or distance,  
a secret to a secret, a thought to a thought.

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In this world and that world and all that is,  
 the passionate turn to the Beloved's face, and that's it.  
 Even if the world's kiblah is not mine,  
 my kiblah is the Beloved's street—and that's it.

**37:5 *The Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between the two, and the Lord of the easts.***

It is God who is the creator and keeper of the seven heavens and the seven earths. He is the form-giver to every form and the embellisher of every picture. He is without associate, without likeness, without equal, and without helper. He is loyal to the friends and lover of the faithful: *God is the friend of those who have faith* [2:257]. He is generous to the recognizers and gentle and beautiful doing toward the servants: *God is gentle to His servants* [42:19].

In terms of allusion He is saying, “The creator without cause am I, the enactor without tool am I, the all-subjugating without artifice am I, the all-forgiving without delay am I, the all-curtaining of every slip am I. I created so that you would see power, I show you hell so that you will see punishment, I keep you on the path so that you will see solicitude, I forgive your sins so that you will see bounty and mercy, I convey you to the Garden so that you will see generosity, I place you on the throne so that you will see exaltedness, I give you wine so that you will see pleasure, I greet you with ‘Peace’ so that you will see felicitations, I lift up the veil of majesty so that you will see encounter and vision.”

**37:24 *And halt them. Surely they will be questioned.***

One group will be questioned by way of rebuke, and another group will be questioned because of chastisement. Those who are the folk of chastisement will be kept on the bridge of the Narrow Path and will be questioned before witnesses, while God is angry toward them. It will be said to them, “Today I have thrown your judgment back to you: *Thy soul suffices thee today as a reckoner against thee* [17:14].” Their black register and bad deeds will be held before their faces. It will be said, “When these are someone's works, what is his recompense?” Unwillingly they will say, “His recompense is the Fire.” Then the call will come, “Enter it by your own judgment!”

It has been reported that when Pharaoh claimed Godhood and said, “*I am your Lord the most high*” [79:24], Gabriel came into his road in the form of a mortal man and asked him, “What do you say about a chieftain who pulls up his slave, gives him possessions, position, and blessings, and then makes him the headman and paragon for others, but the slave wants to be the paragon over his own chieftain. What is his recompense?”

Pharaoh said, “His recompense is that he be drowned in water so that others may take heed of him.”

From the Exalted Presence the command came, “O Gabriel, remember this fatwa on the day when I pull him into the sea and drown him by his own fatwa.”

As for the group who are questioned by way of rebuke and not because of chastisement, they are those who are faithful in belief, *tawhīd*-voicers through the affection in their hearts and the truthfulness of their love, but they are sinners and have fallen short in their deeds. The Real will question them, but He will conceal their defects from the people. He will remind them of their sins, but He will not hold back His pardon and forgiveness from them, and He will question them in seclusion. A sound report says, “God will bring the person of faith close, then place His wing over him and curtain him. He will say, ‘Do you recognize this sin? Do you recognize that sin?’

“He will say, ‘Yes, my Lord,’ until he confirms his sins and sees in himself that he will perish.

“He will say, ‘I curtained them for you in the world, and I forgive you for them today.’”

Once Abū ‘Uthmān Ḥirī was talking about love. A youth stood up and said, “What is the path to His love?” What shall I do to reach His friendship?

Abū ‘Uthmān said, “Let go of your opposition!”

The youth said, “How can I claim to love Him if I have not let go of my opposition?” Then he stood up, shouted out, and wept.

Abū ‘Uthmān said, “Truthful in love for Him, falling short in His rightfully due!” Outwardly

he is among those who fall short, inwardly among the ranks of the friends.

O chevalier! If you are such that you fall short in your effort and deeds, strive not to fall short in the truthfulness of love and the pain of yearning, for truthfulness in love makes up for shortcoming in deeds, but fully performing deeds does not make up for shortcoming in love.

When the angels counted out the defects of the Adamites, He said to them, “*Surely I know what you do not know* [2:30]. O angels, why do you look at the disloyalty in their deeds? Look at the limpidness of Our knowledge. O Iblis, why do you look at the *fetid mud* [15:26]? Look at the robe of Our attributes. Even if Our friends should slip and the hard cash of their practice should be adulterated by disobedience, I hold out the crucible of repentance: *the repenters, the worshipers* [9:112]. The wisdom in the slip is that when the servant looks at himself from the slip, he brings forth poverty. When he looks at Us from obedience, he brings forth boasting.<sup>1</sup> The servant must always be traveling between poverty and boasting, he must be passing back and forth between fear and hope. In fear he weeps in expiation of sins, and in hope he is joyful at finding everlasting bliss.”

This is why the Pir of the Tariqah said, “With reports I went forth seeking certainty, fear my resource, hope my companion. The goal was hidden from me and I was striving in the religion. All at once the lightning of self-disclosure flashed from ambush. With thought they see days like that, with the Friend like this.”

When someone has this state and his traveling has this attribute, the final outcome of his work and the fruit of his passing days will be what the Exalted Lord says:

**37:41-42** *They will have a known provision; fruits—and they will be honored.*

In the Garden they will have a known provision for their outer skins at designated moments, morning and evening, and they will have a known provision for their secret cores at every moment.<sup>2</sup>

Yahyā Mu‘ādh was asked, “Does the Beloved ever turn His face toward the lover?”

He said, “When does the Beloved ever turn His face away from the lover?”

May a thousand spirits be sacrificed to the chevalier who knows the intimations of passion!

God nurtures those who have the collar of love around their necks in the lap of bounty, the cradle of the Covenant, and the dome of proximity. He unveils to them His Essence and addresses them through His attributes. The Throne has the attribute of elevation, and elevation is enough for it. The Footstool has the attribute of tremendousness, and tremendousness is enough for it. Heaven has adornment and ornamentation, and adornment and ornamentation are enough for it. The soul has the claim to egoism, and the claim to egoism is enough for it. As for the heart, it does not have the elevation of the Throne, nor does it have the tremendousness of the Footstool, nor does it have the ornamentation of the heaven, nor does it have the expanse of the earth, nor does it have the claim to being and egoism—all it has is brokenness and poverty. “My bounty and mercy are enough for it. *Say: ‘In the bounty of God and His mercy—in that let them rejoice’* [10:58].”<sup>3</sup>

**37:61** *For the like of this, then, let the doers do.*

If it is suitable to say to the faithful about the hope for joy, the bliss of paradise, and the vision of the serving-boys and youths, “*For the like of this, then, let the doers do,*” then it is more suitable that the recognizers have hope for seeing the majesty of the Unity and finding the realities of proximity and the good news of union, and that they sacrifice their eyes and heart and expend their lives and spirits for the sake of this good news.

For the likes of Salmā a man would kill himself,  
and fixed in despair for Salmā, he would starve.

1 Beginning with the mention of Abū ‘Uthmān Ḥirī, the passage is derived from RA 622-24.

2 Inspired by LI 5:232.

3 Beginning with the saying of Yahyā Mu‘ādh, the passage is taken from RA 619-20.

**37:83 And surely among his party was Abraham.**

Abraham was of the party of Noah in the principles of *tawhīd*, even if they disagreed in the branches of the religion and the shari'ite details. In the shariahs, all the prophets are the same in *tawhīd* and the principles of the religion, and there is no disagreement in that. This is exactly what He says: “*He has set down for you as the religion that with which He counseled Noah*” and so on [42:13]. The disagreement is in the Shariahs and the rulings. This disagreement is a mercy from the Lord so that the work of the religion will not become tight for the people. *God desires for you ease and does not desire for you hardship* [2:185]. They are like a group who are heading toward a way station, and each of them takes a different road, though the last way station is the same. Some roads are nearer, some farther.

No road is nearer to the felicity of the afterlife than the road of Muṣṭafā and his Shariah. This is why his Shariah abrogated the shariahs and his pact abolished the pacts—a revealed shariah, not newly arrived; a firm pact, not faulty; a holy shariah, not foolish; a confirmed pact, not temporary; a known shariah, not ignored; an expanded pact, not curtailed; a shariah that is as bright as the daytime sun and lights up the hearts of the friends. Muṣṭafā said, “How is it that you are with your religion like the moon when it is full, but only the seeing see it?”

**37:84 When he came to his Lord with a sound heart.**

Abraham turned his face toward the threshold of the Exalted Lord with a sound heart, without any blight or any discord, released from attachments and having turned away from the share of his soul. This is just what He says:

**37:99 He said, “Surely I am going to my Lord; He will guide me.”**

That fact that he was going in God necessitated his going to God. He went forth well in God’s work so he went straight in God’s road.

About Abraham the Real says, “*Surely I am going to my Lord,*” reporting his words. Concerning Moses He says, “*Moses came to Our appointed time*” [7:143], reporting his attribute. About Muṣṭafā He says, “*Who took His servant by night*” [17:1], reporting His attribute for his sake. Abraham was in the station of dispersion, Moses in togetherness itself, and Muṣṭafā in the togetherness of togetherness. The mark of Abraham’s dispersion is *Surely I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth* [6:79]. The mark of Moses’ togetherness is *We brought him near as a confidant* [19:52]. The mark of Muṣṭafā’s togetherness of togetherness is *Then He drew close, and He came down* [53:8].

In the tasting of the folk of recognition, *Surely I am going to my Lord* alludes to the disentanglement of the servant. The meaning of disentanglement is to be cut off from all along with the Real, in the beginning through effort and in the end totally. In the beginning, the body is striving, the tongue is in remembrance, and one’s lifespan is in effort. At the end, one is on loan to the people, estranged from oneself, and at ease from attachment. For one hundred years the sun will rise in the east and set in the west before a disentangled man is given the eyes to discern the station of creation from the station of the Real and know the difference between the beginning and the end.

Wāsiṭī said, “Abraham was going from creation to the Real, and Muḥammad was coming from the Real to creation. Someone who goes from creation to the Real recognizes the Real through evidence, and someone who goes from the Real to creation recognizes the evidence through the Real. Do you not see that Abraham came by way of the evidence? When he arrived at a bit of evidence, he would say, ‘*This is my Lord*’ [6:76]. This was the beginning of his state. When he reached the end, he saw the beauty of *tawhīd* with the eyes of face-to-face vision and said, ‘*I am going to my Lord; He will guide me.*’”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, he who seeks the Real from the evidence worships in hope and fear, he who loves the Real for His beautiful doing will turn back on the day of tribulation, and he who seeks the Real through himself will fancy that the not found is found. O God, the recognizer knows You through light, but he cannot express the radiance of Finding. He burns in the fire of love and does not turn away from the fire.”

**37:102** *And when he reached the age of striving with him, he said “O my son! I see in a dream that I will sacrifice thee. Look, what dost thou see?” He said, “O my father! Do as thou art commanded. Thou shalt find me, God willing, one of the patient.”*

Ishmael was a child increasing day by day. He grew up noble and stood up exalted. He was the extract of bosom friendship and the oyster shell for the pearl of Muḥammad the emissary. The corner of Abraham’s heart became attached to him and looked upon him while deeming him beautiful. A rebuke came from the threshold of Exaltedness: “O Bosom Friend, I did not preserve you from Azar’s idols so that you could attach your heart to passion for Ishmael. Whatever veils the road of bosom friendship—whether Azarite idol or passion for Ishmael!”

Any talk that keeps you back from the road—let it be unbelief or faith.

Any picture that holds you back from the Friend—let it be ugly or beautiful. [DS 51]

“O Bosom Friend, you claimed friendship with Me and like a desirer you came into the road of desire: ‘*Surely I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth*’ [6:79]. You disowned creatures and attachments: *Surely they are an enemy to me, save the Lord of the Worlds* [26:77]. Now you have come with a heart that is dedicated to love for My majesty and beauty and you have turned it toward him, placing love’s seal on him. Make a sacrifice of him for Me, and sever yourself completely for Me! If you want Me, apply the remedy to your pain.”

As long as your heart has not done away with attachments,  
not one of your arrows will reach its mark.

As long as you have not removed both worlds from the midst,  
the ship will not reach the shore of safety.

At the beginning of desire, the pirs of the Tariqah have the desirers keep their eyes down so that they will not look at anything, for whenever they look at something, that thing will become their bond and the basis of tribulation. One day Jacob gazed at Joseph’s beauty with an eye that deemed him beautiful—look at the tribulation he suffered and how he was afflicted by separation from Joseph! One day Muṣṭafā said, “I love °Ā’isha” He suffered what he suffered and saw what he saw because of the words and calumny of the hypocrites! The same state occurred for Abraham. He gave the corner of his heart over to love for Ishmael. He fell into trial and threw Ishmael into tribulation as well. He told him the story of his dream, saying, “*I see in a dream that I will sacrifice thee.*”

Ishmael himself was brave, noble in nature, and beautiful in character. He answered, “*O my father, do as thou art commanded. Thou shalt find me, God willing, one of the patient.* O father, bring to pass what you have been commanded. The road of your bosom friendship must be pure and approved. As for me, whether I have a head—or not.”

They spoke to see which of them was more generous—he who was sacrificing his son, or he who was sacrificing his life and body. Abraham said, “My work is more wondrous, for I am sacrificing my precious child.”

Ishmael said, “My generosity is more tremendous, for I am sacrificing my dear life and my precious body.”

Abraham said, “For you, it is not more than an hour’s pain, and for me it will be pain with every breath and grief at every instant—that I sacrificed my own child with my own hand.”

It is as if the Exalted Lord said to them, “I am more munificent and more generous than both of you, for I will take the unslain as slain, and I will send a sacrifice unasked for. ‘*And We ransomed him with a tremendous sacrifice*’ [37:107].” Why should the sacrifice sent by God not be greater and more tremendous? Gabriel brought it, Abraham accepted it, and it became Ishmael’s ransom.<sup>4</sup>

**37:139** *Jonah too was one of the envoys.*

When the generous, lovingly kind Lord, gentle and merciful to the servants, imprisoned Jonah

<sup>4</sup> Maybudī explains in Stage Two (KA 8:293) that the “tremendous sacrifice” was a white ram brought by Gabriel.

in the belly of the fish, He made His remembrance and name his intimate, so he kept on saying, “*There is no god but Thou! Glory be to Thee!*” [21:87]. God’s remembrance was his intimate in his trouble and God’s love was the cause of his comfort. Whenever someone’s heart is inscribed with God’s love,

Though he be in water or fire,  
his life will be sweet with God’s love.  
Your name became the lamp of Jonah’s darkness,  
the adornment of every session in the world.

Although outwardly the fish’s belly was Jonah’s trial, in terms of inwardness, it was his place of seclusion. He wanted to talk secretly with the Friend without the intrusion of others. Just as the fish’s belly was made into Jonah’s place of retreat, so also the middle of Nimrod’s fire was made into Abraham’s retreat, and the corner of that cave was made into Abū Bakr’s place of retreat with the paragon of the world. In the same way, wherever there is a person of faith, a *tawhīd*-voicer, he has a place of retreat in his own exalted breast. The cave of his secret core is the descending place of the divine gentleness and the site of the lordly gaze.

O *tawhīd*-voicing man of faith, if you are delighted, that is fitting, and if you revel, that is fitting, for He Himself says, “The cave of the faithful man’s heart is the place made ready for Our divine secrets. On the tree of the faithful man’s faith is the nest of the bird of Our good fortune. In the meadow of the faithful man’s heart is the wellspring of the effusion of Our majesty’s gaze. Here is your blessed place of retreat! Here is your garden of pleasure! Here is your springhead of pure water without blight! When We make a cave in your breast, that is not the devil’s place of refuge. When We plant a tree in your inwardness, the bird of Satanic disquiet will not take it as a nesting place. When We make a wellspring from the courtyard of your breast, nothing will gush forth but the water of bounteousness. A cave that We made in your breast—We are its attendant. A tree that We planted in your breast—We are its nursery man. The pearl of recognition that We put into the oyster shell of the heart—We are the guardian of that pearl.”

In the stories it has come that after Jonah was delivered from the darkness and released from tribulation, he went back among his people. Revelation came to him saying, “Tell so-and-so, the potter, to take all the pots and utensils that he has made over the past year and to break and destroy them.”

Jonah became sorrowful at this command and had pity on the potter. He said, “Lord God, I feel mercy for that man, for You want to destroy and bring to nothing one year of his work.”

God said, “O Jonah! You show pity for a man whose one year of work will be destroyed and come to nothing, but you showed no pity for one hundred thousand of My servants and you asked for their destruction and chastisement. O Jonah, you did not create them. Had you created them, you would have had mercy on them.”

Bishr Ḥāfī was seen in a dream and asked, “What did the Real do with you?”

He said, “He rebuked me. He said, ‘O Bishr, what was all your fear and dread in the world all about? Did you not know that mercy and generosity are My attribute?’”

Tomorrow, Muṣṭafā the Arab will intercede in the work of the community’s sinners to the point that he will say, “O Lord, let me intercede for those who never did any good.”

God will say, “O Muḥammad, this belongs to Me.” This one is mine—what is appropriate and fitting for Me. Then the address will come forth, “Anyone who mentioned Me once in any station or feared Me once at any moment, come out of the Fire!”

This is the mercy in which asking is lost. This is the gentleness in which thought ceases to be. This is the generosity in which imagination is bewildered. This is the bounty whose limit passes beyond the furthest measure. “My servant, if you obey, acceptance is on Me. If you ask, bestowal is on Me. If you sin, pardon is on Me. The water is in My stream, the comfort in My street, the rejoicing in My seeking, the intimacy with My beauty, the joy with My subsistence, the happiness in My encounter.”<sup>5</sup>

5 Beginning with the anecdote about Bishr, the passage is taken from RA 560-61.

**37:164 None of us there is but has a known station.**

In the tongue of the Tariqah this verse alludes to the states of encounter and the unveilings of the masters of the Haqiqah. One is gratitude for ecstasies, another the lightning of unveiling, another the bewilderment of witnessing, another the light of proximity, another the friendship of finding, another the splendor of togetherness, and another the reality of solitariness.

These are seven oceans placed at the top of *tawhīd*'s street. As long as the traveler in the road does not pass over these seven oceans, he will not be allowed to reach the end of the street. He must seek water from these oceans through the seven thresholds of the Qur'an, about which Muṣṭafā reported: "The Qur'an was sent down according to seven letters, each of which is a sufficiency and a healing. Every verse has an outwardness and an inwardness, and each letter has a limit and an overview."

The sincerely truthful and the wayfarers on the road have said that you must pass over these oceans to reach *tawhīd*. Concerning these seven oceans, the command has come: "Pass through the gate of the message brought by that paragon of the world. From every wave, take a signet from his Shariah, and from every drop, seek the help of his covenant. Then you will be worthy for the way stations of Our friends."

This is what the Pir of the Tariqah intimated with his words, "When any reality sticks up its head from the recognizer's breast, it is not acceptable to the Real until two witnesses from the Shariah bear witness to its correctness."

**37:171 Already Our word has preceded to the envoys.**

*Word* here comprises three roots: knowledge, desire, and wisdom. First is the precedence of knowledge: Before the doing, He knew what He must do. Second is the precedence of desire: What He knew He must do, He wanted to do. Third is the precedence of wisdom: What He did He did rightly and properly.

Know also that God has no need of duration, for duration is a cause, and His doing has no cause. For Him the not-yet-come is hard cash and the past is retained. It is you who must think about the not-yet-come, you who must remember what is past, and you who must preserve what is present.

He has no need to remember the past, for it is in His knowledge. He has no need to think about the not-yet-come, for it is in His decree. He has no need to preserve what it is present, for it is in His kingdom. For Him, from the Beginningless to the Endless is less than one breath, and one hundred years is less than one instant. With Him there is neither yesterday nor tomorrow. He is constant in exaltedness and abides in His measure. This is the secret of the words of ʿAbdallāh ibn Masʿūd, "With your Lord is neither day nor night."

For the equivalent of this verse, recite "*those to whom the most beautiful has preceded from Us*" [21:101]: "My servant, before you said that you are My servant, I said that I am your Lord: *Your god is only God, other than whom there is no god* [20:98]. Before you said that you are My friend, I said that I am your friend: *He loves them, and they love Him* [5:54]. My servant, you were not, but I was there for you. I was there for Myself in exaltedness, and I was there for you in mercy. 'Belong to Me as you always were, and I will belong to you as I have always been.'"

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "Where will I find again the day when You belonged to me and I was not? Until I reach that day again, I will be in the midst of fire and smoke. If I find that day again in the two worlds, I will profit. If I find Your Being, I will be pleased with my own nonbeing."

## Surah 38: Ṣād

### 38:0 *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

This is an exalted name, the incapacity to perceive which has been acknowledged by the recognitions. It is a majestic name, in desiring to comprehend which the knowledges have become veiled in shame. It is a generous name, in face of the expanse of whose munificence all needs are paltry. It is an all-merciful name, in the clashing waves of whose mercy the drops of His servants' slips come to nothing.<sup>1</sup>

In the name of Him through whose solicitude is our existence and through whose guidance is our prostration. In the name of Him through whose friendship is our wholesomeness and through whose kind favor is our deliverance. In the name of Him through whose blessings is our life and through whose mercy is our salvation. He is the Lord who has no end, whose threshold cannot be passed, whose beautiful doing allows for no danger in disobedience, whose solicitude allows for no trace of sin. No one is more merciful and more generous toward the disobedient and the indigent.

O Lord, You who in Your divinity are one and in Your unity are without peer! In Your Essence and attributes You are separate from creation, qualified by elevation, united with magnificence, the basis of all seeing, the refuge of every beggar. You are God for all—whose friend are You?

You are in my eyes—will You not show Your face to me?

You are in my heart—will You not gaze upon me?

### 38:1 *Ṣād*

The word *ṣād* is the key to His name Self-Sufficient [*ṣamad*]. The Self-Sufficient is He who is hallowed beyond encompassment by the knowledge of the created thing and incomparable with comprehension by the recognitions.

He is saying, “I am the Self-Sufficient and have no need for anyone. I am the One and have no associate. I am the Compeller, and no one has the color of union with Me. I am the Owner of the kingdom, and no matter what I do, no one has the gall to protest or a way to fight.”

Abu'l-Ḥasan Kharaqānī said, “He cut up the hearts of the sincerely truthful and turned their livers to water through waiting, but He gave Himself to no one.”<sup>2</sup>

Whence do water and dust become privy to talk of union with that which has no beginning and no end? What access do the attributes of the newly arrived things have to eternity? How can that which was not, then was, then was not, perceive the majestic presence of the Possessor of Majesty? That chevalier said it beautifully:

“They opened a door to the garden of union with You  
so that people would fall into coveting You.  
They plundered so many of the spirits of the great ones,  
but not one put his foot at the top of Your street.”<sup>3</sup>

It has been said that the Real is the Self-Sufficient, and the meaning of the name is that the servants

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1 LI 5:245.

2 These two paragraphs are taken from RA 574.

3 The poem is not found in Sanāʿī's printed divan.

should lift up their needs to Him, consign their occupations to Him, and entrust themselves to Him; and He, in His unneediness, will look upon the needs of everyone and be sufficient for their every occupation.

When the *tawḥīd*-voicing, faithful servant has this belief, He will take as his shelter nothing but His threshold and will not disgrace himself at the door of any poor and paltry thing. “A created thing seeking aid from a created thing is like a prisoner seeking aid from a prisoner.”

It has come in the traditions that tomorrow a man of this community will be brought forward, and many sashes of unbelief will be removed from his waist—I mean sashes of the heart, not outward sashes, for anyone who attaches his heart to a creature has bound a sash around his heart.

O chevalier! There is no mount quicker than the mount of Muḥammad the Arab, and no playing field vaster than his playing field. Heaven and earth were made from the dust beneath his feet, God’s spirit was made to sit like a chamberlain at the edge of his carpet, and the Holy Spirit carried the banner of his sultanate on its shoulders. Despite all the greatness, status, and rank that were his, it was said to him, “O Muḥammad, beat the drum of your own incapacity! Say: ‘I do not own benefit for myself, or harm’ [7:188]. Say, ‘There is nothing in the hands of Muḥammad. The benefit and loss of the servants is only by the decree of the divine predetermination.’ Thus will it be known to the friends that the drink of *tawḥīd* cannot be mixed with mortal nature.”

“If anyone was worshiping Muḥammad, surely Muḥammad is dead. If anyone was worshiping God, surely He is the Living who does not die.”<sup>4</sup>

It has also been said that *ṣād* is an oath sworn by the limpidness [*ṣafāʾ*] of the friends’ love: How exalted is the individual and how great the servant by the limpidness of whose love the Exalted Lord swears an oath! This is the broken-hearted and indigence-colored soul before whose indigence all the wealthy of the world are one speck. All the obedient acts of the obedient and all the beautiful deeds of the proximate are ransom to one instant of the burning of his indigence. He has no water on his liver and no utensils in his house; all he has is a burnt heart. His work in this world has not been taken care of, but how will that harm him? For the throne of his good fortune is placed in the garden of proximity, and the majesty of the Unity swears an oath by the limpidness of his love: “*Ṣād!*”

°Abdallāh Bustī was one of the great shaykhs. At the beginning of his desire when he was accepted by this talk, he held many title deeds against the people, but he gave them all back and absolved them of all liability. Then the thought of Mecca occurred to him. He consulted with his pir and asked for counsel. The desirer must have a pir, for it is impossible to walk on the road without a pir. The pir must be such that if the desirer should go ten times a day to the tavern, the pir should have no fear but should go after him and bring him out and be tender to him.

When °Abdallāh Bustī spoke of his thought about going to Mecca, the pir said, “That’s good, but be careful not to feel secure from your own soul.” °Abdallāh wrote this advice on his heart and set out on foot. He went from his house as far as Kufah, and then his soul wanted lawful fish. He made a pact with his soul that, if he should fulfill this desire, the soul would have no other wish until he reached Mecca.

In Kufah there was a donkey mill, and a man was sitting there. He said to him, “How much do you pay for this animal?” He said so much. °Abdallāh said, “Be a good man and let this animal out for a day and tie me in its place.” He gave himself for the wage of one silver dirham and went into the donkey mill and did the work of an animal. He took the dirham, bought bread and fish, and ate. Then he said to his soul, “For every wish you have, you must work one day in a donkey mill so that you may have the wish.”

O chevalier! You must put all the tools of your ability to work so that incapacity appears. When incapacity appears, all work will itself turn its face to you, for “The incapacity to perceive is perception.”<sup>5</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Alas the Friend who keeps on stirring up the dust of trial! Water is pouring from the springhead of my eyes. He is a fire who burns the spirit and heart, a teacher

4 The saying is by Abū Bakr (see under 3:79 and 3:144). It and the preceding three paragraphs are taken from RA 497.

5 These four paragraphs are from RA 492-93.

who teaches nothing but trial and iniquity. His hands are always bloody from killing lovers, for His room is not inside the street of well-being. Wherever He takes up residence, He wants the spirit as repast. Safety becomes lost in trial, detachment in preoccupation.”

**38:35** *He said, “My Lord, forgive me and give me a kingdom such as no one after me will have.”*

Solomon did not seek the outward kingdom. Rather, he desired only to be king over his own soul, for the king in truth is he who is king over his own soul. Whoever is king over his own soul will not follow his caprice.<sup>6</sup>

Solomon said, “Lord God, just as You put the world’s creatures under my hand, so also put this soul under my hand so that I will not be obedient to it and will not go after its caprice. Obeying the soul and obeying the Real are opposites, and opposites do not come together.” That chevalier said it beautifully:

“With two kiblāhs you can’t walk straight on the road of *tawḥīd*—  
either the Friend’s approval, or your own caprice.” [DS 488]

Muṣṭafā always used to say, “O God, do not entrust us to our souls for the blink of an eye, or less than that.” All sorts of trial reached Joseph the Truthful from the well, the prison, and so on, but he never began to lament as he did from the commanding soul, when it was said, “*Surely the soul commands to ugliness, except as my Lord has mercy*” [12:53]. When Joseph said, “*Receive me as a submitter*” [12:101], he said so in fear of the commanding soul, not in fear of Satan. For, although Satan is the adversary, he wants disobedience from the person of faith, not unbelief. It is the soul that wants unbelief, so it strives for it and calls him to all sorts of caprice and innovation, trying to pull him into unbelief.

In the Qur’an, the Lord of the Worlds mentions two things without saying what they are. He mentions the soul, but He does not say what it is. He mentions this world, but He does not say what it is. The ulama of the religion explain this world with these words: “What blocks you from your Patron—that is your ‘this world.’” Whatever holds you back from God is this world. If you do not have tonight’s bread but you admire yourself, your self-admiration is this world. If you possess the kingdom of the East and the West and are occupied with God, that is not this world, but rather the afterworld.

As for the soul, it is what Muṣṭafā said: “Your worst enemy is your soul between your two sides.” The soul wants caprice, and the heart wants trial. The soul is Satan’s gazing place, the heart the All-Merciful’s gazing place. The soul is the devil’s tavern, the heart the storehouse of recognition. He placed the storehouse of recognition next to the enemy, but He kept it under His own guard and preserved it from the enemy.

He brought forth Moses and the Children of Israel and preserved them such that no one’s skirt became wet. He put Abraham into the fire but it did not burn one thread of his robe. In the same way, He placed the heart, which is the storehouse of recognition, next to the soul. Then He guarded and favored it so that the enemy could not touch it.

It has been narrated that ʿĀmir ibn ʿAbd Qays was one of the most excellent of worshipers. He made obligatory upon himself one thousand cycles of prayer every day. He would stand in prayer at the rising of the sun and keep on standing until late afternoon. Then he would turn away, his legs and feet swollen. He would say, “O soul, you were created either to worship or to command to ugliness. By God, I will not do any deed with you in which a bed takes a share of you.”

In his words, “*such as no one after me may have,*” he did not begrudge it to the prophets but to *no one* among the kings *after me*. He asked for a kingdom so as to rule over the people and make them be equitable one to another in order to put into effect the rightful due of God. He did not ask for it because of inclining toward this world. This is like the words of Joseph: “*Set me over the storehouses of the earth*” [12:55].<sup>7</sup>

6 LI 5:256.

7 This paragraph is derived from LI 5:256.

**38:71** *When thy Lord said to the angels, “I am creating a mortal of clay.”*

From here to this surah’s end is the story of Adam and Iblis. A great deal has been said about the two, which I summarize here:

In terms of outwardness, a slip appeared from Adam and an act of disobedience from Iblis. It was said to Adam, “Do not eat the wheat,” and he ate it. It was said to Iblis, “Prostrate yourself,” and he did not do so. The capital of rejection and of acceptance, however, did not arise from their acts. It arose from the flow of the Pen and the decrees of Eternity. The Pen wrote felicity for Adam as a consequence of the eternal will. A support was found for that in his makeup, and his sin was consigned to that by way of excuse: *He forgot, and We found in him no resoluteness* [20:115].

In the case of Iblis, the Pen had written rejection and expulsion by the decree of the eternal will, so an ambushade was made from his own makeup and his sin was consigned to himself: *He refused and claimed to be great; he was one of the unbelievers* [2:34]. A collar was made for the sake of cursing and, by the decree of beginningless rejection, it was fastened to the neck of his days. Thus, whenever a gem appeared from the crucible of his deeds, it turned out to be a discard from the hand of the assayer of knowledge. His deeds were discards and his worship became the cause of the curse. His obedience became the motivation for being driven out, and concerning the reality of his work, this expression was given: “No one stands up to the decree and no one contends with the Beginningless.”

Which lover of Yours do I not copy  
and which night for You do I not weep?  
Though the Adamite does not please You,  
he has given You permission to shed his blood.<sup>8</sup>

In the world of acceptance Adam was like Iblis in the world of rejection. Wherever there are greetings and felicitations, they are turned toward Adam, and wherever there are cursing and expulsion, they are turned toward Iblis. The forelock of that cursed one is fastened to the hem of the resurrection not because of any bestowal of eminence. Rather, the divine goal is that whenever a child’s fingers should pick up a stone, he should throw the stone of cursing at his head: “A curse upon Iblis.”<sup>9</sup>

The pure ones of the empire and those given proximity to the Threshold were addressed by the All-Compelling Presence: “I have written the edict of dismissal and stamped the signet of rejection for one of you.” All of them turned into sorrow and burning.

Gabriel went before °Azāzīl, who today is called Iblis, and said, “If such a state appears, place your hand on my head.” He was saying, “Write this work for me.” He was giving an assurance to all of them and saying, “Let your hearts be at ease, for I will stand up for you.”

Then the permit came from the Exalted Threshold: “*Prostrate yourselves before Adam!*” [2:34]. That accursed one pulled back the reins of chieftainship, for he had the arrogance of *I am better* in his head:

**38:76** *I am better than he: Thou hast created me of fire and Thou hast created him of clay.*

Iblis came forth with chieftainship and said that he was better than he. He reasoned but he went by the road of error in his reasoning. O accursed one! How do you say that fire is better than dust? Do you not know that fire is the cause of separation and dust the cause of union? Fire is the means of cutting off and dust the means of joining. Adam was of dust, so he joined, such that it was said about him, “*Then his Lord chose him*” [20:122]. Iblis was of fire, so he cut off, such that it was said to him, “*Upon thee shall be My curse until the Day of Doom*” [38:78].

When dust becomes wet, it accepts imprints. When fire shoots up, it burns all the imprints. Thus the imprint of Iblis’s recognition was burnt away, and the imprint of recognition flamed up in the heart of Adam and the Adamites. *Those—He wrote faith in their hearts* [58:22].

<sup>8</sup> Up to this point, this passage is drawn from RA 459-60.

<sup>9</sup> This paragraph is inspired by RA 81, but the discussion there is about Muḥammad and Iblis, not Adam and Iblis.

A dervish, who was pain-stricken, disorderly, and having lost his head and feet, went to see Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī. He came like a traveler, and because of his ecstasy said, “O Bāyazīd, what would it matter if there was none of this impudent dust?”

Abū Yazīd let go of himself and shouted at the dervish: “Were there no dust, the breast would have no burning! Were there no dust, the religion would have no sorrow and joy! Were there no dust, the fire of passion would not flame up! Were there no dust, who would smell the scent of beginningless love? Were there no dust, who would be the familiar of the Endless?”

“O dervish, Iblis’s curse is a trace of the perfection of the majesty of dust. Seraphiel’s trumpet was prepared for the sake of the yearning of dust. The questioning by Nakīr and Munkar is passion’s deputy in the breast of dust. Ridwān with all the serving boys and servants is but dust under the feet of dust. Beginningless welcome is a gift and robe for dust. The request from the Unseen was prepared in the name of dust. The lordly attributes are the hairdresser of the beauty of dust. The divine love is the food of the secret cores of dust. The attributes of Eternity are the supplies and provisions for the road of dust. The pure, incomparable Essence is witnessed by the hearts of dust.”<sup>10</sup>

Before you asked I asked for you,  
all the world I adorned for you.  
Thousands in the city are in love with Me—  
live in joy, I rose up for you.

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10 The words ascribed here to Abū Yazīd are abbreviated from RA 292-93, where Abū Yazīd is not mentioned.

## Surah 39: al-Zumar

**39:2** *Surely We have sent the Book down to thee with the truth, so worship God, purifying the religion for Him.*

“O Muḥammad, We sent this Qur’an down to you so that you may call the lost to the road of salvation, bring the deprived from the intrusion of deprivation to the comfort of union, bring the suffering from the darkness of misfortune to the courtyard of prosperity, complete the noble character traits with this Qur’an, and arrange the Shariah in accordance with it. O Muḥammad, when a place does not have the light of your creed, all will be the darkness of associationism. When a place does not have the intimacy of your Shariah, all will be the intrusion of doubt. O Muḥammad, We have joined your exalted good fortune and your eminent messengerhood to the Endless.

“*So worship God, purifying the religion for Him.* Now belong fully to Me, turning your secret core toward Me, your heart lifted up from all others, released from the bonds of yourself and your own controlling power.”

With this command, the Messenger became so courteous that Gabriel came and said, “O Muḥammad! Have you chosen to be a prophet king, or a prophet servant?”

He said, “O Lord, I want servanthood. I do not want kingship, for kingship is entirely turned over to You, and servanthood is entirely turned over to me. I have no refuge but Your gentleness and no shelter but Your exalted presence. If I were to choose kingship, I would stay with the kingship and boast of my kingship. Rather, I choose servanthood so that I may be under Your kingship and boast of Your kingship.”

This is why he said, “I am the master of Adam’s children without boasting’: The boasting that I have is of the Friend, not of other than Him. When someone boasts, he boasts of something that is above him, not below him. In the two worlds, no one is above me except Him. If I were to boast of other than Him, I would have looked at other than Him and left aside the command, ‘*So worship God, purifying!*’ But there is no command to leave it aside, and no stipulation to look at other than Him. Hence there is no boasting in other than Him.”

You name me “master,” but my master is the one You know.

If You examine my heart, You will see Your remembrance in my breast.

**39:3** *Does not the pure religion belong to God?*

What is worthy of God is pure worship without hypocrisy and obedience along with self-purification and without eye-service. When the pearl of self-purification is found, it is found in the oyster shell of the heart and the ocean of the breast. This is why Ḥudhayfa said, “I asked that paragon of the engendered beings what self-purification is. He said that he asked Gabriel what self-purification is. Gabriel said that he asked the Exalted Lord what self-purification is. He replied, ‘One of My secrets that I deposit in the hearts of those whom I love among My servants.’” He said, “It is a pearl that I have brought out from the treasury of My secrets and deposited in the core of the hearts of My friends.” This self-purification is the result of friendship and the trace of servanthood. When someone puts on the garment of love and takes off the robe of servanthood, he does whatever he does from the midst of the heart.

Friendship for the Real does not come together with scattered desires in one heart. The obligatory acts of the body are prayer and fasting, and the obligatory act of the heart is friendship for the

Real. The mark of friendship is that when something comes from the Friend that is disliked by your nature and makeup, you place it upon your very eyes.

Were the Beloved's hand to pour poison for me,  
poison from His hand would be sweet.

\*

The heart that You burn thanks You,  
the blood that You shed boasts.

\*

The blood that You spill thanks You,  
the heart that You scare praises You.

\*

The poison I drink in remembrance of You is sweet,  
the mad man who sees You comes to his senses.<sup>1</sup>

**39:6** *He created you from one soul and then made from it its mate.*

He created heaven and earth and day and night to show the creatures the attribute of His power. They come to know that He is perfectly powerful, an artisan without contrivance, and they take His artisanship as evidence of His unity. He created Adam and the Adamites to make them the treasury of the secrets of Eternity and the target of the gentle favors of generosity. "I was a hidden treasure, so I loved to be recognized."

"I had an incomparable Essence and attributes, so there had to be recognizer. I had infinite majesty and beauty, so there had to be a lover. I was an ocean of mercy and forgiveness beating its waves, so there had to be an object of mercy."

The other created things had nothing to do with love, for they never saw in themselves a high aspiration. The one with high aspiration is you. The angels have straight and orderly work because there was no talk of love with them. The treasures and intimations put into the Adamic makeup were not placed in them. The ups and downs of the Adamites, their bewilderment and confoundedness, contraction and expansion, sorrow and joy, absence and presence, togetherness and dispersion; the drafts mixed with poison in their hands, the swords hanging over their necks—they have all these because a whiff of love's rose reached their nostrils.

Passion for You turned me into a tavern-goer like this—  
otherwise I was safe and orderly.<sup>2</sup>

Abū Yazīd Basṭāmī said, "Once I was craving the wine of passion in the seclusion of 'I am the sitting companion of those who remember Me.' I was bold, and I carried a heavy load of trials for my boldness. I had tasted many drops of tribulation. I said, 'O God, Your stream is flowing—how long will I be thirsty? What sort of thirst is this that I see one cup after another?"

"Who has ever had a state rarer than this?  
I'm thirsty and clear water is flowing before me.

"Exalted of the two worlds! How often will you become hidden, how often apparent? The heart is bewildered, the spirit distracted. How long this curtaining and self-disclosing? When at last will there be the everlasting self-disclosure? O God, how long will You call and drive away? I have melted in wanting the day in which You stay. How long will You throw down and pick up? What is this promise so drawn out and late?"<sup>3</sup>

He said, "I received inspiration in my secret core: 'O Abū Yazīd! Do you not know that they

1 The four lines of poetry and the previous paragraph are taken from RA 462. For a more complete version of the passage, see under 43:67.

2 This line is taken from RA 464, and the two previous paragraphs are rewritings of the discussion there.

3 This saying, ascribed here to Abū Yazīd, is more likely by the Pir of the Tariqah, as Maybudī says under 13:1 and 18:14.

don't sell meat without liver to this group? In the gathering place of friendship, they wear only the garment of trial. Flee if you have no stomach for trial. Otherwise, they're going to spill your blood."

Abū Yazid said, "I increased my boldness and said in selflessness, 'O God, I fled, but Your bounty hung on to me. Your generosity stirred up the fire of finding on top of the light of recognition. Your love stirred up the breeze of proximity from the garden of union. You poured down the rain of solitariness on the dust of human nature.'"<sup>4</sup>

First You began this talk of passion,  
so take care of our work as is worthy of You.  
How can we find room in the pavilion of mystery?  
We have nothing in hand but bragging and the edict of need.

He said, "At last a call came to my secret core and the rain of kindness fell from the heaven of gentleness. The tree of hope began to fruit and the instances of triumph began to come out: 'O stuck in clay, put forth your hands!'"

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "Not apparent are the many sorts of generosity that the exaltedness of Eternity has readied for the servant. First He gives the servant an intention from the Unseen so as to lift him up from the world. Then He gives him a bright light to lift him up from the world's folk. Then He gives him a pull of proximity to lift him up from water and life. When he becomes solitary, he is worthy of union with the Solitary."

Your seeker must be solitary like You—  
he must be free of every defect and pain.  
No one reaches union with You—  
it wants a man worthy of suffering for You.

**39:9** *Is one who does devotions throughout the night, prostrating himself and standing, cautious about the next world and hoping for the mercy of his Lord? Say: "Are they equal, those who know and those who know not?"*

"Devotion" is undertaking the courteous acts of service outwardly and inwardly without slackening or shortcoming, being cautious because of the threatened chastisement and hoping for the promised reward.<sup>5</sup>

This is the attribute of a group who are constantly at God's threshold in the station of service. Their makeup at the time of prayer becomes entirely reverence itself, and they are always burning in remorse because of shame for sin. One of the great ones of the religion said, "You must show reverence for God's commands, for it is not apparent which command brings proximity to God. You must avoid all prohibited things, for it is not apparent which prohibition brings distance from God."

It has been said that putting God's commands into practice is of two sorts, one according to the property of servanthood, the other according to the property of love. The property of love is higher than the property of servanthood, because the lover's constant wish is for the Friend to command a service. Hence his service is all voluntary and nothing of it is coerced. He acknowledges the favors done to him, and he never lays favors on God, nor does he look for recompense.

In contrast, a service that is done because of servanthood has both free choice and coercion. The person is seeking a reward and expecting recompense.

The latter is the station of the worshipers and the common faithful, and the former is the attribute of the recognizers and the sincerely truthful. The two groups can never be equal. The worshipers are satisfied with the blessings and held back from the Beneficent, but the recognizers have reached the Presence and take ease in contemplating the Friend.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "How should I have known that reward is a freckle on the face of

<sup>4</sup> Maybudī attributes parts of this saying to the Pir of the Tariqah under 9:60 and 12:52-53.

<sup>5</sup> LI 5:271.

friendship? I always fancied that the greatest robe of honor was the reward. Now I have found out that in finding friendship all found things are nothing.”

Say: “*Are they equal, those who know and those who know not?*” Knowledge is three: reported knowledge, inspired knowledge, and knowledge of the Unseen. Reported knowledge is heard by ears, inspired knowledge is heard by hearts, and knowledge of the Unseen is heard by spirits.

Reported knowledge comes to outwardness so that the tongue may speak of it, inspired knowledge comes to the heart so that explication may speak of it, and knowledge of the Unseen comes to the spirit so that the present moment may speak of it. Reported knowledge comes from narration, inspired knowledge comes from guidance, and knowledge of the Unseen comes from solicitude.

Concerning reported knowledge He said, “*Know that there is no god but God*” [47:19]. Concerning inspired knowledge He said, “*Surely those who were given knowledge before it*” [17:107]. Concerning knowledge of the Unseen He said, “*We taught him knowledge from Us*” [18:65].

Beyond all these is a knowledge never reached by the Adamite’s imagination or grasped by his understanding. It is God’s knowledge of Himself in keeping with His reality. God says, “*They encompass Him not in knowledge*” [20:110].

Someone said to Junayd, “From where do you speak of this knowledge?”

He said, “If it were ‘from where,’ would you have asked?”

**39:22** *Is he whose breast God has expanded for the submission, so he is upon a light from his Lord? Woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of God.*

Know that the Adamite’s heart has four curtains: The first curtain is the breast, the lodging place of the submission’s covenant, in accordance with His words, “*Is he whose breast God has expanded for the submission?*” The second curtain is the heart, which is the locus of the light of faith, in accordance with His words, “*He wrote faith in their hearts*” [58:22]. The third curtain is the mindful heart, the pavilion of contemplating the Real, in accordance with His words, “*His mindful heart did not lie about what he saw*” [53:11]. The fourth curtain is the smitten heart, the place of putting down the saddle-bags of love, in accordance with His words, “*He smote her heart with love*” [12:30].

Each of these four curtains has a characteristic, and the Real gazes upon each. When the Lord of the Worlds desires to pull one who has fled from Him with the lasso of gentleness into the road of His religion, He first gazes upon his breast, so that it may become pure of caprice and innovation and so that his feet may go straight on the avenue of the Sunnah.

Then He turns His gaze to his heart so that it may become pure of this world’s defilements and of blameworthy character traits, such as self-admiration, envy, pride, eye-service, greed, enmity, and frivolity. Then he may go forth on the road of scrupulosity.

Then He gazes on his mindful heart and keeps him back from attachments and created things. He opens the fountainhead of knowledge and wisdom in his heart. He bestows the light of guidance on his heart’s center point, as He said, “*so he is upon a light from his Lord.*”

Then He gazes on his smitten heart—a gaze, and what a gaze! A gaze that embellishes the spirit, brings the tree of joy to fruit, and awakens the eye of revelry; a gaze that is a tree whose shadow is companionship with the Friend, a gaze that is a wine whose cup is the recognizer’s heart.

When this gaze reaches the smitten heart, it lifts it up from water and clay, and the lover steps into the street of annihilation. Three things cease to be in three things: Seeking ceases to be in the Found, recognition ceases to be in the Recognized, and friendship ceases to be in the Friend.<sup>6</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The two worlds were lost in friendship, and friendship lost in the Friend. Now I dare not say that I am, nor can I say that He is.”

I have an eye, all of it filled with the form of the Friend.

Happy am I with my eye so long as the Friend is within it.

Separating the eye from the Friend is not good—

either He’s in place of the eye, or the eye itself is He.

<sup>6</sup> The description of annihilation is partly from Anṣārī’s *Ṣad maydān*, no. 99 (332).

So he is upon a light from his Lord. Know that lights are of three sorts: of the tongue, of the heart, and of the body. The light of the tongue is *tawhīd* and bearing witness, the light of the body is service and obedience, and the light of the heart is yearning and love. The light of the tongue conveys to the Garden, in accordance with His words, “*God rewarded them for what they said with Gardens*” [5:85]. The light of the body conveys to Firdaws, in accordance with His words, “*Those who have faith and do wholesome deeds—the Gardens of Firdaws shall be theirs as hospitality*” [18:107]. The light of the heart conveys to the encounter with the Friend, in accordance with His words, “*Faces that day will be radiant, gazing upon their Lord*” [75:22-23]. When someone finds these three lights in this world, he will be given three robes of honor already in this world: First dignity, so people will see splendor from him without fearing him; second sweetness, so they will seek him out without having any tie to him; third love, so they will love him without being his relative.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “This dignity, sweetness, and love are because he has the light of proximity shining in his heart, and seeing the Friend is face-to-face with his heart’s eye.”

*Woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of God.* Know that this hardness of heart rises up from much disobedience, much disobedience rises up from many appetites, and many appetites rise up because of the fullness of the stomach. °Ā’isha the sincerely truthful said, “After God’s Messenger, the first innovation that arose among the people was eating their fill. They gave their souls repletion such that the inward and outward appetites stuck up their heads and began to rebel.”

Dhu’l-Nūn Miṣrī said, “I never ate my fill without doing a disobedient act.”

Abū Sulaymān Dārānī said, “If anyone eats his fill, six bad traits will appear in him: First, the sweetness of worship will not come. Second, his memory in recalling wisdom will be bad. Third, he will be deprived of tenderness toward the creatures, for he will fancy that they are full like him. Fourth, appetites will force themselves upon him and increase. Fifth, obedience and worship of God will become heavy for him. Sixth, when the faithful are going to the mosque and the prayer-niche, he will be looking for the privy.”

A report has come that Muḥammad said, “Bring your heart to life by eating little and make it pure by hunger so that it will become limpid and beautiful.” He also said, “When someone keeps himself hungry, his heart becomes clever and his thoughts great.”

Shibli said, “I never sat down hungry without finding a new wisdom and heedfulness in my heart.”

The Prophet said, “The most excellent of you with God are those of you who go longest in hunger and reflection, and the most hated of you to God are those who eat, drink, and sleep. You should eat and drink to the middle of your stomachs, for that is one part of prophethood.”

### **39:33 *And he who brought truthfulness and he who assented to it, those are the godwary.***

Know that truthfulness [*ṣidq*] means truthfulness [*rāstī*]. There is truthfulness in four things: words, promises, resoluteness, and deeds. Truthfulness in words is what the Real says about Muṣṭafā: “*And he who brought truthfulness.*” Truthfulness in promises is what He says about Ishmael the prophet: “*Surely he was truthful in the promise*” [19:54]. Truthfulness in resoluteness is what He says about the Messenger’s companions: “*Men truthful in the covenant they made with God*” [33:23]. Truthfulness in deeds is what He says about the faithful: “*It is they who have been truthful*” [2:177].

When these traits are brought together in someone, he is called “sincerely truthful.” Abraham was in this station, for the Exalted Lord said concerning him, “*Surely he was sincerely truthful, a prophet*” [19:41].

Muṣṭafā was asked, “What is the perfection of the religion?”

He said, “Speaking with truth and acting with truthfulness.”

A pir was asked, “What is truthfulness?”

He said, “You do what you say, you have what you show, and you are whence you call out.”<sup>7</sup>

Truthfulness in words is that the servant in whispered prayer with the Real seeks truthfulness

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7 *Ṣad maydān*, no. 65 (305).

from himself. If his face is turned toward this world in the state when he says, “Surely I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth” [6:79], then that is a lie. When he says, “Thee alone we worship” [1:5], if he is in bondage to this world and to appetite, then he has spoken a lie, for a man is the servant of that to which he is in bondage. This is why Muṣṭafā said, “Miserable is the servant of dirhams, miserable the servant of dinars!” He called him the servant of gold and silver because he is in bondage to gold and silver. The servant must be free of this world and appetites as well as himself if servanthood to the Real is to be set right for him.

Abū Yazīd Bastāmī said, “The Real made me stand before Him in one thousand standing places. In each standing place He offered me the empire. I said, ‘I do not desire it.’

“He said to me in the last standing place, ‘O Abū Yazīd, what do you desire?’

“I said, ‘I desire not to desire.’

“He said, ‘You are My servant in truth.’”

Abū Yazīd is saying, “The Real made me advance in the World of Realities by way of inspiration and kept me in one thousand standing places. In each of the standing places, He offered me the empire of the two worlds. By the divine success-giving I saw that I was free of bondage to all of that. I said, ‘I want nothing of these treasuries and these pearls of the Unseen that You have poured out before me.’ Then, in the last standing place, He said, ‘So what do you want?’ I said, ‘I want not to want. Who am I that I should have a want? Who am I that I should have an I?’ The soul is an idol, the heart a ghoul, knowledge an adversary, allusion associationism, expression a cause. So what remains? One, and that’s it. The rest is folly.”

As for truthfulness in loyalty to resoluteness, it is that a man be solid in the religion, have jealousy for the command, and be straight in the present moment. Thus the Companions of the Messenger were loyal to their resoluteness, and in fighting the enemy they made their bodies the path and sacrificed their lives. Then the Exalted Lord praised them in that loyalty to resoluteness and that realization of the covenant: “*Men truthful in the covenant they made with God*” [33:23].

There was also the hypocrite who made a covenant with God and had resoluteness in his heart—“If He gives me possessions, I will spend them freely and I will make them into a mount on the road of godwariness”—but then he broke his resoluteness and was not loyal to the covenant. The Exalted Lord said about him, “*And among them is he who made a covenant with God: ‘If He gives us of His bounty, we will surely give charity and we will surely be among the wholesome’*” [9:75]. The passage continues to where He says, “*for having failed God in what they promised Him and for having lied*” [9:77]. He called him a speaker of lies and named him a liar because of his failure in the promise and his breaking the covenant that had gone before.

As for the truthfulness of the truthful in traveling the road of the religion and in their deeds, it is that they seek from themselves the reality of each one of the stations of the religion—like repentance, patience, renunciation, fear, hope, and so on. They are not satisfied with the outward aspects and beginnings. Do you not see what the Exalted Lord says in describing the faithful? “*The faithful are only those who have faith in God and His Messenger, then do not doubt, and who struggle in the path of God with their property and themselves; it is they who are the truthful*” [49:15]. In another place He says, “*Piety is not that you turn your faces.*” Then, at the end of the verse, He says “*It is they who have been truthful*” [2:177]. If the stipulations of faith had not been brought together in them, He would not have called them truthful.

For example, when someone fears something, the mark of his truthfulness is that his body trembles, his face is yellow, and he is held back from food and drink. Thus a minor slip happened to David the prophet. For forty days he put his head on the ground in the manner of prostrators. He wept to the point that plants grew up in the earth from his tears. A call came, “O David, why are you weeping? If you are hungry, let Me give you food. If you are thirsty, let Me give you water. If you are naked, let Me clothe you.” David was so burnt that when he moaned in his weeping, wood caught fire from his breath. He said, “Lord God, have mercy on my weeping and engrave my sin on the palm of my hand so that I will never forget.” The Lord of the Worlds recognized his truthfulness in his practice and accepted his repentance and answered his prayer.

It has also come in the reports about David that when he wanted to mourn because of his sin,

first he did not eat anything for seven days, nor did he go around women, and then he went out into the desert. He said to Solomon that he should announce in the gathering of the Children of Israel that anyone who wanted to hear the mourning of David should be present. Many people gathered, as well as the birds of the air and the beasts of the desert. David began by glorifying and lauding God. Then he continued by describing paradise and hell, and finally he mourned for his own sin. He spoke about fear such that many people gave up their spirits from listening to that. Finally Solomon stood up next to him and said, “O father, enough, for a great multitude have perished.” It is said that on one day forty thousand were present, and of those thirty thousand perished. This is the mark of truthfulness in the varieties of practice.

Among the reports from Muṣṭafā is this: “Gabriel never came down to me from heaven when I did not see him fearful and trembling in fear of the Real.”

°Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn was seen, having finished with purity, standing at the door of the mosque, his face yellow and his body trembling. He was asked about his state. He said, “Do you not know before whom I am going and in whose presence I will be standing?”

Dāwūd Ṭāʾī was the scholar of the time, the unique one of the era in jurisprudence. In the station of truthfulness he was such that on the night when he left the world, a call came from the middle of heaven: “O folk of the earth! Surely Dāwūd Ṭāʾī has stepped forth to his Lord, and He approves of him.”

Abū Bakr °Ayyāsh recounts, “I went to Dāwūd’s chamber and saw him sitting and weeping with a piece of dry bread in his hand. I asked him what was wrong and he said, ‘I desire to eat this, but I do not know if it is permitted or forbidden.’”

In truth, when someone recognizes the exaltedness of the religion, the caprice of mortal nature will never reap its fruit from him. If one of the sincerely truthful were to show his head from beneath the cloak of his attributes and look down on us, he would see nothing but the worthlessness of our description.<sup>8</sup>

**39:53 Say: “O My servants who have been immoderate against yourselves, despair not of God’s mercy. Surely God forgives the sins altogether.”**

Know that among God’s creatures, perfect honor belongs to two groups: angels and Adamites. This is why He appointed prophets and messengers from among these two groups rather than any others. Their utmost eminence lies in two things: servanthood and love. Sheer servanthood is the attribute of the angels, and servanthood and love are both attributes of the Adamites.

He gave the angels sheer servanthood, which is the attribute of creation. Along with servanthood He gave the Adamites the robe of love, which is the attribute of the Real. Thus He says concerning this community, “*He loves them, and they love Him*” [5:54]. He also gave the Adamites superiority over the angels in servanthood, for He said that servanthood is the angels’ attribute, but without ascription to Himself: “*Nay, but they are honored servants*” [21:26]. He ascribed the Adamites’ servanthood to Himself: “*O My servants!*”<sup>9</sup>

Then, according to the requirement of love, He completed His bounty on them. He concealed their defects and disobedient acts with the lights of love and did not tear away their curtain. Do you not see that He decreed slips for them, yet, despite all those slips, He did not remove the name servant from them? Despite mentioning the slips and disobedience, He did not take away the eminence of ascription? He said, “*O My servants who have been immoderate against yourselves, despair not of God’s mercy.*”

Then He kept the curtain over them and did not make the sins manifest, instead mentioning them in sum, with the lid on. He concealed them and said, “*who have been immoderate.*” They were immoderate, they were extravagant. But He desired to forgive them, so He did not tear away the curtain, nor did He throw away the name servant. Glory be to Him—how clement He is to His servants!<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> These last three paragraphs are from RA 581.

<sup>9</sup> These two paragraphs are derived from RA 469.

<sup>10</sup> These two paragraphs are partly inspired by RA 370.

It has been related that Moses said, “‘O God, You desire disobedience from the servants, but You hate it.’ The servants disobey because of Your desire, but then You hate it and You make the servant Your enemy because of the disobedience.”

The Real said, “‘O Moses, that is the foundation of My pardon.’ That is to lay the foundation of My pardon and generosity. The treasury of My mercy is full. If no one is disobedient, it will go to waste.”

The report has come: “If you did not sin, God would bring a people who did sin, and then He would forgive them.”

Wait until tomorrow at the Resurrection. The command of the Real will come as a plaintiff against the servant, but the bounty of the Real will shelter him. The Shariah will seize his skirt, but mercy will intercede.

It has been reported that the servant will be given his book in his hand and he will see his acts of disobedience. He will be ashamed to read them out. The Real will address him and say, “On the day when you were doing that and you had no shame, I did not disgrace you but instead concealed it. Today when you are ashamed, how could I disgrace you?” This is what the Prophet said: “God does not curtain a servant’s sin in this world to reproach him with it on the Day of Resurrection.”

The emperor of Persia had prepared a tremendous feast. A chamberlain pocketed a gold goblet and no one saw him but the emperor, who was sitting alone in that chamber. As much as they looked for it they could not find it. The emperor said, “Stop searching, because the one who found it will not give it back, and the one who saw him will not tell.”

Then one day the chamberlain was standing next to the emperor pouring water for him and wearing beautiful clothes. The emperor said, “Is this from that?” He replied, “This and a hundred times more are from that.”<sup>11</sup>

**39:54** *Be penitent toward your Lord and submit to Him before the chastisement comes to you—then you will not be helped.*

Penitence is of three sorts: one is the penitence of the prophets. He says about Abraham, “*Surely Abraham was clement, a sinner, penitent*” [11:75]. He says about David, “*He sank down, bowing, and was penitent*” [38:24]. He says quoting Shu<sup>‘</sup>ayb, “*In Him I trust and toward Him I am penitent*” [11:88]. The mark of the penitence of the prophets is three things: having fear along with the good news of freedom, serving along with the eminence of prophethood, and bearing burdens in the heart along with happiness. Other than the prophets, no one has the capacity for this penitence.

Another is the penitence of the recognizers. It is to turn toward God in every state with the whole heart. God says, “*None will remember but those who are penitent*” [40:13]. The mark of the penitence of the recognizers is three things: being in pain from disobedience, being ashamed of obedience, and being intimate with the Real in seclusion. Rābi<sup>‘</sup>a<sup>‘</sup> Adawiyya reached the point in the state of intimacy where she said, “‘Enough for me in this world is remembering You and in the next world seeing You.’ O Lord, in this world Your remembrance is enough for me, and in the afterworld Your vision is enough for me.”

O chevalier, when someone is intimate with the mystery of the Patron of Blessings, how could he be quenched by seeing the blessings and bliss of paradise?

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, how could I be joyful with paradise and houris? If You give me one breath, from that breath I will build a paradise!”

By God, the sun has never risen or set  
 unless Your remembrance was linked to my breaths.  
 I never sat with people talking to them  
 unless You were my talk with my companions.

O Majestic One! When someone turns his face to Your Presence, all the motes of the world make the dust under his feet the collyrium of their eyes. Whenever someone seeks shelter in the thresh-

11 Beginning with the hadith, “If you did not sin,” the paragraphs are from RA 560.

old of Your exaltedness, all creatures attach themselves to the saddle-straps of his good fortune. From his own state of intimacy a dear one advises,

“If you are given access one day to the palace of the yearning,  
what will you have to do with the grief of passion for this sorcery?  
If you see one hue from the rose-garden of His talk,  
all the roses of the garden will be thorns in your eyes.”

The third sort is the penitence of *tawḥīd*, to which He calls the enemies and the estranged by saying, “*Be penitent toward your Lord and submit to Him.*” The mark of the penitence of *tawḥīd* is that someone considers God as one by the attestation of the tongue and the self-purification of the heart—that He is one and unique, without similar in Essence, without equal in measure, and without peer in attributes.<sup>12</sup>

It has been said that *tawḥīd* is of two sorts, the *tawḥīd* of attestation and the *tawḥīd* of recognition. The *tawḥīd* of attestation belongs to the generality of the faithful and the *tawḥīd* of recognition belongs to the recognizers and the sincerely truthful. The *tawḥīd* of attestation comes into outwardness so that the tongue may report of it, and the *tawḥīd* of recognition comes to the spirit so that the present moment and state may report of it. When someone reports of the *tawḥīd* of attestation, this world is his domicile and he is seeking paradise. When someone reports of the *tawḥīd* of recognition, paradise is his domicile and he is seeking the Patron.

The people become drunk with the passing of the cup  
but I became drunk with the one who passed it.

When someone has business with the roses, he smells the roses. When someone has business with the gardener, he kisses the thorns. In the same way, that chevalier said,

“The rose is the student of the color of His face—  
if you have a thousand kisses, give them to a thorn.” [DS 720]

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12 The discussion of three sorts of penitence is partly derived from *Ṣad maydān*, no. 3 (260-61).

## Surah 40: al-Mu<sup>o</sup>minūn

### 40:0 *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

In the name of Him whose measure is without limit and whose companionship with the friends is without price, who is hidden in measure and evident in artisanry. In the name of Him who is far from resemblance and separate from imaginations, who is apparent to the heart through friendship and to intelligence through being. In the name of Him in whose attributes there is no how and in whose decree there is no why, who is one in hearing, knowing, and seeing.

That exalted one said in whispered prayer, “O God, in the heart of Your friends the light of solicitude is apparent. Spirits are bewildered and distracted in wishing for union with You. Who has a patron like You? Where is a friend like You? What You have given is the mark, and the celebration is tomorrow. What we have found is the message, and the robe of honor is in place. Your mark is the unsettledness of the heart and the plundering of the spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

On the day You put Your head outside the curtain,  
I know You will bring down the realm of time.  
If You’ll be adding to this adornment and beauty,  
O Lord, what will You do to our livers!?

### 40:1 *Hā<sup>o</sup> Mīm*

*Hā<sup>o</sup>* is an allusion to love [*maḥabba*] and *Mīm* is an allusion to favor [*minna*]. He is saying, “O you who have become a friend through the *Hā<sup>o</sup>* of My love, not through your own excellence! O you have found Me through the *Mīm* of My favor, not through your obedience! O you whom I took as My friend when you did not recognize Me! O you whom I wanted when you did not know Me! O you to whom I belonged when you did not belong to Me! A hundred thousand were standing at My threshold wanting Me and making their supplications. I paid no attention to them and I said to you without your asking, ‘O community of Aḥmad, I bestowed upon you before you asked from Me, I responded to you before you called upon Me, and I forgave you before you asked Me to forgive you.’<sup>2</sup>

“The previous prophets were eager and yearning for you. Abraham said, ‘*Make for me a tongue of truthfulness among the later folk*’ [26:84], and Moses said, ‘*Make me one of the community of Aḥmad.*’ This was not because We explained your acts to them, for if We had talked about your acts to them, all would have pulled back from you. It was because I explained My bounteousness and beneficence toward you. Before you, I chose everyone I chose one by one. Thus, ‘*Surely God chose Adam and Noah and the House of Abraham and the House of Imran*’ [3:33]. When your turn came, I spoke generally and inclusively: ‘*You are the best community*’ [3:110]. All of you are My chosen ones.” In another place He says, “*The ones We chose from among Our servants*” [35:32]. Included in this address are worshippers, wrongdoers, and disobedient.<sup>3</sup>

1 Much of this prayer is attributed to the Pir of the Tariqah under 2:277 and 9:111.

2 This paragraph is derived from RA 549.

3 This paragraph is summarized from RA 551. Sam<sup>o</sup>ānī explains there that the meaning of the verse, “*Make for me a tongue of truthfulness among the later folk*,” is “Keep my mention alive on the tongue of Muḥammad’s community.” In Stage Two of his commentary on this verse, Maybudī remarks that most of the commentators interpret it to mean, “Make for me comely praise and beautiful supplication on people’s tongues until the Day of Resurrection” (7:119).

**40:3 *Forgiver of sins and Acceptor of repentance, Intense in punishment, Possessor of boons.***

Bounty and generosity demanded that repentance be posterior and forgiveness prior: “If I had said that I accept repentance, then I forgive sins, people would fancy that God would not forgive until the servant repented. But first I forgive, then I accept repentance, so that the world’s folk will know that just as I forgive through repentance, so also I forgive without repentance. If repentance were prior, forgiveness would be posterior and repentance would be the cause of forgiveness. But Our forgiveness has no cause and Our act has no contrivance. First I forgive and make the servant pure with the clear water of bounteousness so that, when he steps onto My carpet, he will step with purity. When he comes to Us, he comes with the attribute of purity.” This is just what He says in another place: “*Then He turned toward them so that they would repent*” [9:118].

“I am *Forgiver* of those disobedient acts of which he did not repent, and I am *Acceptor* of him who repents.” What is meant by forgiveness of sins here is the forgiveness of the sins of those who have not repented, because He brought the conjunction “and” in the middle. The first phrase is one thing, and the phrase added to it is something else, though they have the same ruling property. Thus you say, “Zayd and °Amr came to me.” Zayd is one person, and °Amr is someone else, but the two have the same ruling property in their coming. If the ruling property were different, that conjunction would be a mistake, and if the two were identical, mentioning both would be a mistake.

Listen to a beautiful subtlety concerning the forgiveness of sins and the acceptance of repentance: First He mentioned His own attributes and said, “*Forgiver of sins and Acceptor of repentance.*” His attributes are not the locus of intervention, nor do they accept change and alteration. Then, when He spoke of punishment, He said “*Intense in punishment.*” He made *intense* the attribute of *punishment*, and punishment is a locus of modification, so it accepts change and alteration. He is saying: “I am hard in punishment, but if I want to be, I am soft and I change it, for it has room for modification and it accepts change and alteration.”

It has also been said that *Intense in punishment* alludes to the kingdom. If He should eliminate the entire kingdom of the cosmos, His majesty and perfection would receive no deficiency or incapacity. *Forgiver of sins and Acceptor of repentance* alludes to the attributes, and there is never any change or alteration in His attributes.<sup>4</sup>

It has also been said that *Forgiver of sins* is for the wrongdoers, *Acceptor of repentance* is for the moderate, *Intense in punishment* is for the associaters, and *Possessor of boons* is for the preceders.<sup>5</sup>

The Lord’s custom is to strike fear into the servants through verses of threat so that the servants therein will be broken and pounded and will show burning and need in servanthood and put weeping and lowliness into themselves. Then the Exalted Lord, in the attribute of clemency and mercy, attends to their hearts with verses of promise and gives news to them of His bounty and mercy. Do you not see that He says *Intense in punishment* so that the servants will come to weeping and pleading, and He joins it with *Possessor of boons* to bring the servants to joy and rest? The servants burn and melt when they hear *Intense in punishment* and say with the tongue of brokenness,

“My eyes full of water, my liver full of fire,  
my hands full of wind, my head full of dust!”

Then, when they hear *Possessor of boons*, they become joyful and their hearts light up. They say with the tongue of boasting,

“What does the Throne do that it does not carry my saddlecloth?  
In my heart I carry the saddlecloth of Your ruling and decree.” [DS 933]

One day Abū Bakr Shiblī was walking like a strutting warrior and saying, “‘If there were between You and me oceans of fire, I would dive into them.’ If in this road there were a hundred thousand

<sup>4</sup> These four paragraphs are a rewriting of RA 548-49.

<sup>5</sup> LI 5:295.

oceans of fire, I would pass them over my eyes and have no fear.” The next day he was seen coming with his head cast down like one helpless and deprived and saying softly, “‘Help from You in You!’ I lament at Your decree, I ask protection from Your severity! I have no repose with You, and my work has no order without You. I have neither the cheek to return to You, nor the gall to flee.

“If I return, I see no status,  
if I flee, I have no road.”

It was said to him, “O Shibli! What was that yesterday, and what is this today?”

He said, “Yes, when an owl has never seen a peacock, it brags about beauty. But an owl is an owl, and a peacock a peacock.”

#### **40:15 Uplifter of degrees is He, Possessor of the Throne.**

He uplifts the degrees of the disobedient to salvation, of the obedient to rewards, of the possessors of needs to sufficiency, of the friends to charismatic gifts, and of the recognizers to states of watchfulness and encounter.<sup>6</sup>

He lifts up the degrees of the servants. He keeps each in a station and gives to each of them what is suitable for him. To the disobedient He gives salvation, to the obedient rewards, to the requesters sufficiencies, to the friends charismatic gifts, to the recognizers states of watchfulness and encounter.

The degrees of the faithful and the friends are first today and then tomorrow. Today they are in knowledge and faith, as He says, “*He will lift up in degrees those among you who have faith and those who have been given knowledge*” [58:11]. Tomorrow they will be in the garden of approval with *repose and ease* [56:89] in the neighborhood of the All-Merciful, as He says: “*They are degrees with God*” [3:163].

As for the degrees of the folk of form tomorrow in paradise, they are one thing, and the degrees of the folk of attributes are another thing, for the folk of form are one thing and the folk of attributes are another. The folk of form are in the valley of dispersion, the folk of attributes in the center point of togetherness. “*The faithful indeed are siblings*” [49:10]; this is in the world of form. As for what Muṣṭafā said, “The faithful are like one soul,” that is in the world of attributes.

One of the nomad leaders came before Muṣṭafā and asked, “What has been put away for us in paradise, and how high will be our degrees?” This man was one of the folk of form.

God’s Messenger replied, “*Therein are rivers of water unstaling*’ [47:15], and therein are such and such and so on.” He counted out the flowing water, the roasted fowl, the various sorts of fruit, just as the Qur’an speaks of them.

Someone else, one of the folk of attributes, asked him about this meaning. God’s Messenger knew he was a man of attributes, not a man of form, so he said, “Within it are what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what has never passed into the heart of any mortal.”

Wait, O heart-rent dervish, until this bodily mold is broken apart by death and is turned into specks in the dust of the grave. It will be placed in the crucible of hell, from there taken to the River of Life and made pure, and from there to Firdaws and perfumed. It will be clothed in seventy robes. That robe will have one collar and seventy skirts, like a hundred-petalled rose. From it will come forth an emerald box. The collar will be one, the skirt one-hundred. Then the exalted embroidery of subsistence will be pulled over the clothing of your exaltedness. Sometimes the drink of *ginger* [76:17] will be given, sometimes the drink of *camphor* [76:5], sometimes the drink of *Tasnīm* [83:27]. The outward will have become the inward, and the inward the outward. The form will have become the heart, and the heart the form. Just as you know the Real today without suspicion, tomorrow you will see without ambiguity.<sup>7</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Little remains before what has been reported becomes face-to-face vision. The sun of union will shine from the rising place of finding, the water of contempla-

<sup>6</sup> Derived mostly from LI 5:300.

<sup>7</sup> Derived from RA 570.

tion will flow in the stream of gentle favor, the story of water and clay will be concealed, the beginningless Friend will appear face-to-face, and the eyes, heart, and spirit, all three, will gaze upon Him.”

It has also been said that *Uplifter of degrees is He* means that He is high in attributes and majestic in measure. No one reaches His core, no one recognizes His measure, and no one perceives His extent. He took away His measure and kept His attributes in the veils of exaltedness so that no one exalted would reach His exaltation, no understanding would perceive His extent, no knower would know His measure, no one’s attribute would be placed next to His attributes, no one would know His knowledge, no one would have His ability, and no one would reach His measure: *They measured not God with the rightful due of His measure* [22:74], which is to say that they did not show reverence with the rightful due of His reverence.

What familiarity has water and dust with Him who always was and always will be? What affinity has eternity with new arrival? How can the subsistent Real join with the trace of what undergoes annihilation? How can the prisoner of variegation reach the guise of stability? When He gives vision tomorrow, He will give it as a bestowal, not as is worthy. No eye is worthy of seeing Him, no ear is worthy of His speech, no heart is worthy of His recognition, no foot is worthy of His road, and no one is worthy of His path.

My eyes always want to see You,  
my ears always want Your speech—  
Both have high aspirations  
but they are not worthy of You.

**40:64** *God is He who made the earth for you a settledness and the heaven a building. And He formed you, so He made your forms beautiful, and He provided you with the goodly things.*

This is another blessing and gentleness of which He reminds the servants, thus making the road of servanthood clear for them, showing them the traces of generosity and the indications of power, and placing a favor upon them. He is saying: “When I created heaven and earth, I created them for your sake. I made the earth your settledness, I built the heaven as your gazing place.”

If from time to time there were no gazing on heaven, how would heaven have received this bestowal of eminence? *We adorned the lowest heaven with lamps* [41:12]. If earth were not the encampment of your majestic ruling authority, how would it have seen this caress? *And earth, We laid it out—what excellent spreaders!* [51:48]. The light of the moon, the brightness of the sun, the adornment of the stars—all is for you. The sun is your cook, the moon is your candle, the stars are your guideposts, heaven your roof, earth your carpet. Tomorrow when you are not there, the roof will be taken down, the carpet rolled up, and the stars will fall. When a carpet is spread for a friend and then the friend goes, the carpet will surely be taken away. “My servant, I created heaven to be your cupbearer: *And We sent down from heaven pure water* [25:48]. For today is the day of the veil, and there is no escape from the intermediary. But tomorrow will be the day of contemplation, and the intermediary will be of no use. The cupbearer will be My gentleness: *And their Lord will pour for them a pure wine* [76:21]. I built the earth as an intermediary to give you food: *And therein We made grains grow, and vines and herbs, and olives and date-palms* [80:27-29]. Tomorrow will be the day of contemplation, and the intermediary will be of no use. I Myself will say, ‘*Eat and drink pleasantly*’ [69:24]. I created the sun to give you light, for today in the world of form the light of recognition is hidden within the curtains of the secret cores of the lovers’ hearts. Tomorrow in the world of attributes the light of recognition will be apparent. Of what use will be the sun of form? What place will it have? Proof is needed when there is no face-to-face vision. When face-to-face vision has come, what can the proof do?”<sup>8</sup>

*And He formed you, so He made your forms beautiful.* In another place He says, “*We created man in the most beautiful stature*” [95:4]. None of the existent things and creatures was given the form and the beauty that was given to the Adamites. No other creature had the secret that the

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<sup>8</sup> This paragraph is derived from RA 481-82.

Adamites had—not the Throne or the Footstool, not the spheres or the angels, for all of them are mere servants, but the Adamites are both servants and friends. About them He says, “*Surely God is watcher over you*” [4:1]. A possessor of beauty is wanted before a watcher is appointed over him. The Real did not say, “I am watcher over heaven and earth.” He did not say, “I am watcher over the Throne and the Footstool.” Concerning the Adamites He said, “I am watcher over you.” This is because a watcher is the precondition for a possessor of beauty, and no created thing has the beauty of the Adamites.<sup>9</sup>

He raised up the seven domes and painted them with the stars and planets. He spread out the seven dusty circles, He set up the firmly rooted, unshakeable mountains. He brought a hundred thousand wonders and artifacts out from the concealment of nonexistence into existence. He set in rotation the universe-decorating sun, He gave form to the heaven-traversing moon, and He illuminated the realm of being with their beauty. He addressed no existent thing and bestowed upon none of them the eminence of *He formed you*—except this handful of dust.

Of all the beauties and lovelies of the army,  
you are fitting for belt and cap.<sup>10</sup>

*And He provided you with the goodly things.* Since you know that the Real set out your provision before your existence, that He made its secondary causes, and that He Himself gave the assurance that He would convey it, it is not beautiful for you to debase yourself before the wishes of just anyone and to lift up your need to created things. Thus they say, “A created thing seeking aid from a created thing is like a prisoner seeking aid from a prisoner.”

Bishr Ḥāfī said, “I saw the Commander of the Faithful °Alī in a dream and asked him for advice. He said, ‘How beautiful it is for the rich to show tenderness toward the poor in seeking God’s reward! And more beautiful than that is for the poor to be haughty toward the rich by relying on God.’”<sup>11</sup>

The master Abū °Alī Daqqāq said to someone, “Your belief is that you have no escape from your daily provision, but my belief is that your daily provision has no escape from you.”

Ah, where is a dervish!—bound with the turban of disengagement, wearing the cloak of solitariness, breast cleansed of the dust of the others, quit of the realm of being, taken as friend by the Creator of being. Then, from beneath the feet of his togetherness, by virtue of the eternal gentleness, the springhead of the goodly things of provision will boil up. He will lift up these spirit-increasing drafts and drink them to the vision of the Friend.<sup>12</sup>

#### **40:65 *He is the Living, there is no god but He.***

Who is the painter of the forms of the Adamites, the shower of powers in earth and heaven, the conveyer of daily provisions to the servants? *He is the Living*: That living, lasting one who has always been, is, and will be. His being has no first, His existence no last, He subsists after the world and the world’s folk. The creatures’ work goes back to Him forever.

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9 This paragraph is mostly from RA 375.

10 The previous paragraph and the poem are from RA 79-80.

11 These two paragraphs are based on RA 101 and 100.

12 These two paragraphs are derived from RA 102.

## Surah 41: Fuṣillat

### **41:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

*In the name of God* reports of the existence of the Real in the attribute of eternity, and *the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful* reports of His subsistence in the description of highness and generosity. The spirits are confounded in the unveiling of His majesty and the souls are thirsty for the gentleness of His beauty.

Hearing the name *God* yields awe, and awe is the cause of annihilation and absence. Hearing the name *All-Merciful* yields presence with the Presence, and presence is the cause of subsistence and proximity. Hearing the name *God*, one person is confounded by the unveiling of majesty. Hearing the name *All-Merciful*, another is stunned by the expansion of beauty.

*God* reports of His power over origination, *the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful* reports of His aid in giving pleasure. What He desires exists through His power, and His servants voice *tawhīd* through His aid.<sup>1</sup>

### **41:1** *Hā' Mīm*

In other words, all that will come to be has been decreed [*humm*]. God is saying: “Whatever is be-able has come to be, whatever is doable I have done, whatever is runnable I have run, whatever is choosable I have chosen, whatever is acceptable I have accepted, whatever is liftable I have lifted, whatever is throwable I have thrown. Whatever I wanted, I did; whatever I want, I do. When I have accepted someone, I do not look at the disloyalty I see from him. Rather, I pardon and pass over. I do not turn away from what I have said. *With Me the word does not change* [50:29].”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, the whole world wants You. What does the work is what You want. Happy is the one You want, for even if he turns back from You, You will be waiting in his road.”

O chevalier! Whomever He wanted He wanted in the Beginningless, and whomever He caressed, He caressed in the Beginningless. He did the work in the Beginningless, and today He shows what He did. He spoke the words in the Beginningless, and today He lets you hear the spoken words. He sewed the robes of honor in the Beginningless, and today He conveys them: *Each day He is upon some task* [55:29].

“My servant, you know Me today, but I am not of today. Your knowledge is today; but I am eternal. For some time I have been speaking to you of the mysteries, but you hear now. In the Beginningless I made the eternal hearing your deputy in listening to the beginningless word. In the Beginningless I made the eternal knowledge your deputy in knowing the beginningless attributes. When a guardian has an infant’s property, he has it as the infant’s deputy. When the infant reaches adulthood, he gives the property back to him. You were the infants of nonexistence. The eternal gentleness took care of your work and acted as your deputy. O you who await the arrival of Our gentleness! O you who look for the marks bearing witness to Our Unseen! Nothing drives friendship into your heart other than the ruling power of Our secret. No one strikes the knocker on the door of your heart other than the messenger of Our kindness.”<sup>2</sup>

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1 These two paragraphs are from RA 10.

2 These two paragraphs are mostly derived from RA 304-5; a somewhat different version of the passage is given under 21:101.

**41:2 A sending down from the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.**

This Qur'an was sent down by the Lord whose name is the *All-Merciful*, the *Ever-Merciful*. He is the *All-Merciful* through kindly acts, the *Ever-Merciful* through lights; the *All-Merciful* through blessings, the *Ever-Merciful* through protection from sin; the *All-Merciful* through self-disclosure, the *Ever-Merciful* through befriending; the *All-Merciful* through alleviating acts of worship, the *Ever-Merciful* through verifying *the most beautiful and an increase* [10:26].

When the ocean of mercy sends up the waves of generosity and forgiveness, all slips and acts of disobedience cease to exist and come to nothing, for the slip is the attribute of what was not and then came to be, and the mercy is the attribute of what always was and always will be. How can what was not, then came to be, stand up to what always was and always will be?<sup>3</sup>

**41:10 He set in it unshakables from above it and He blessed it.**

In form the unshakable mountains are the pegs of the earth, but in reality the friends are the pegs of the earth. It is through their blessing that rain comes from heaven and plants from the earth, and through their supplicating God trial is repelled from the people.<sup>4</sup>

The mountains are the pegs of the earth in terms of form, but God's friends are the pegs of the earth in terms of reality. The arrangement of the work of the world is tied to the towering mountains, but the straightness of the states and means of people in terms of meaning is tied to the blessedness and supplication of the friends. In body they are present with the people, but in heart they are absent from the people and present with the Real.

Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī said, "It is forty years that I have not spoken to anyone. Whatever I have said, I have said to the Real, and whatever I have heard, I have heard from the Real."

It is from here that Muṣṭafā said, "I spend the night at my Lord; He gives me to eat and drink." He was present with the people in his person for the sake of discharging the Shariah and expanding the creed, but in his secret core he was with the Real because of the overpowering force of love and the continuity of contemplation. When love overpowers, the lover does not become separate from the beloved.

Master Abu °Alī Daqqāq said, "Paradise has no business with me, and hell has nothing to do with me, for there is nothing in my heart but joy in the Real's subsistence."

Whatever is other than the Friend, break its snare!

Whatever is other than passion, name it "sorrow"!

\*

In my love for Buthayna I desired that we two  
be alone on a raft in the ocean.<sup>5</sup>

**41:30 Those who have said, "Our Lord is God," then gone straight—the angels will descend upon them saying, "Fear not and grieve not, and rejoice in the Garden that you were promised."**

*Those who have said, "Our Lord is God,"* is an allusion to the *tawḥīd* of attestation; *then gone straight* is an allusion to the *tawḥīd* of recognition. The *tawḥīd* of attestation belongs to the generality of the faithful, and the *tawḥīd* of recognition belongs to the recognizers and the sincerely truthful. The *tawḥīd* of attestation is that you say that God is one. The *tawḥīd* of recognition is that you be one for God.

Once Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī was standing in the station of knowledge and giving forth marks of the *tawḥīd* of attestation. A disciple said, "O shaykh! Do you recognize God?"

He replied, "In the whole world is there anyone at all who does not recognize or know God?"

At another time he was drowned in the ocean of the *tawḥīd* of recognition, incinerated by the fire of love. He was asked, "Do you recognize God?"

3 The two paragraphs are from RA 11-12.

4 LI 5:321-22.

5 The two poems and the saying about Daqqāq are from RA 21, though there are significant textual differences in the first poem.

He replied, “Who am I to recognize Him. In the whole world, is there anyone who recognizes Him?”

Who am I in my passion for You that a rose should bloom  
in the clay of my house from joining with Your face?

The *tawhīd* of recognition, which was expressed here as going straight, is that you reach the utmost limit of realization in assenting, you stroll into the gardens of the realities on the *footing of truthfulness* [10:2] and certainty, and you have a firmly fixed footing on the avenue of the Straight Path. You bind the collar of disengagement to the neck of solitariness, drink down the wine of love from the hand of the cupbearer of truthfulness, smell the rose of the recognitions from the garden of the subtleties, topple the celestial and terrestrial worlds, and say with the tongue of selflessness,

“Adam set up the banner of passion in the world  
and toppled a hundred worlds of knowers.  
Having breathed for a time in his own soul  
he gambled away paradise and lost both worlds.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Companionship with the Real is two words: response and going straight—response to the Covenant, and going straight in loyalty. Response is the Shariah and going straight is the Haqiqah. One can grasp a thousand years of the Shariah in an hour, but one cannot grasp an hour of the Haqiqah in a thousand years.”

*The angels will descend upon them saying, “Fear not and grieve not, and rejoice in the Garden.”* These great ones went by the road of straightness and took the ball of *tawhīd* to the goal in the playing field of surrender. At the time of the soul’s extraction they are clothed in the robe of generosity. The angels come down from heaven and give them good news: “*Fear not* that friendship will be extracted, *and grieve not* for the sins you have sent ahead, *and rejoice* in the beauty of the solicitude at the beginning.”<sup>6</sup> Do not fear, for there is no fear that you will be extracted from the realm of love. Do not grieve, for you will not be taken to task for sins. Be happy, for your only escort and companion is beginningless solicitude. “*Fear not*, for you were fearful for a long time, *and grieve not*, for you were among the recognizers, *and rejoice in the Garden. How excellent is the wage of the doers!* [3:136].” Do not fear, O fearful, for the day of fear has come to an end! Do not grieve, O recognizers, for the time of comfort has arrived! Be happy and joyful in paradise, for the message and news of happiness have come from the Friend!

O chevalier! Take care not to suppose that the yearning of those who went straight on the road of the religion, who yearned for the threshold of the Lord of the Worlds, and who were drowned in the ocean of certainty will decrease by one iota when they arrive tomorrow at the contemplation of the Possessor of Majesty. In the liver of a fish there is a heat that will not become less by one iota even if you gather all the oceans of the world. Today they are in yearning itself, and tomorrow in tasting itself on top of yearning’s burn.<sup>7</sup>

Tomorrow, all the shariahs will be scratched out by the pen of abrogation. It is permissible that prayer, fasting, hajj, and struggle come to an end and be abrogated. But it will never be fitting for the pact of love and the covenant of recognition to be abrogated. When you enter paradise, every day that passes will open you up to a world of recognition of the Real that was not there before. This is a work that will never come to an end, and may it never come to an end!

As long as I live, this will be my craft and work,  
this will be my ease, stability, and grief-dispeller,  
This will be my day, this will be my time—  
I will be a hunter, and this will be my prey.<sup>8</sup>

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6 This sentence is from LI 5:329.

7 The paragraph is derived from RA 26.

8 The paragraph and the poetry are taken from RA 77-78.

**41:31** *We are your friends in this world's life and in the next world.*

*In this world's life* through faith and *in the next world* through forgiveness, *in this world's life* through the realization of recognition and *in the next world* by gaining forgiveness, *in this world's life* through approval of the decree and *in the next world* through encounter in the abode of subsistence, *in this world* through love and *in the next world* through proximity, *in this world* through contemplation and *in the next world* through face-to-face vision.<sup>9</sup>

If the Adamite were given the life of Noah and he were to spend all his days showing gratitude for the blessing and generosity in this saying of the Exalted Lord— “*We are your friends in this world's life and in the next world*”—his life would come to an end and he would never be grateful enough for the blessings, or recognize the generosity, in God's words: “We are your friend, your lovingly kind companion, and your helper in this world and the afterworld.”

In this world, think how the Real answered the angels for your sake when they said, “*What, wilt Thou set therein one who will work corruption there?*” [2:30]. God did not say that they would not work corruption. He said, “*Surely I know what you do not know* [2:30]. You have no awareness of the secrets of My Divinity and no cognizance of the gentle favors of My Lordhood toward the Adamites.”

The slanderers do not diminish your level  
with Me, nor do the backbiters harm you.  
It is as if they praise you unknowingly  
in My sight with the faults they find.

“If they are unworthy, I will make them worthy. If they are far, I will bring them near. If they are abased, I will make them exalted. Though you see their outward disloyalty, I see their inward loyalty. Though you gaze on the opposition of their limbs and bodily parts, I gaze on the conformity of their hearts and secret cores. Though you wear the waistcoat of obedience, they wear the shirt of union. Though you have the robe of worship, they have the hat of forgiveness. Though you have clung to your own sinlessness, they have clung to My mercy. What would it matter if I did not accept your sinlessness? What harm is there in their disobedience when there is My pardon and forgiveness? They are lifted up by the beginningless gentleness and caressed by the endless bounty. Faults do not intrude on the Beginningless.”

Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī was walking in a road and heard the sound of group of people. He wanted to know what their state was all about. He went forward and saw an infant fallen in black mud, the people standing there watching. All of a sudden the child's mother ran forth from the side and threw herself into the mud. She lifted up the child and went. When Abū Yazīd saw that, he became happy. He shouted out while standing there and said, “Tenderness came and took away the defilement. Love came and took away the disobedience. Solicitude came and took away the sin.”

Your excuse with Me is elaborate  
and sin from the likes of you is slight.<sup>10</sup>

**41:37** *And of His signs are the night and the day, the sun and the moon. Do not prostrate yourselves to the sun and the moon, but prostrate yourselves to God, who created them.*

This is the speech of the Lord whose kingship has no removal, whose seriousness has no levity, whose exaltedness has no abasement, and whose decree has no rejection. He has no peer, and from Him there is no escape. He is a God other than whom there is no king, and His kingship is not through army and retinue. His exaltedness is not with drums and flags, horse and servants.<sup>11</sup>

He is a king, the portico of whose threshold is the seven lofty heavens, and the resting place of whose elect is the seven inaccessible carpets. The world-adorning sun is like a quicksilver goblet

9 LI 5:330.

10 From the verse, “*What, will You place therein*” to the end of the passage is derived from RA 81-82, 223-24.

11 From RA 13.

through His wisdom. The moon's figure is sometimes like a gold horseshoe and sometimes like a silver shield through His power. The celestial world and the terrestrial world are both marks of His unity and solitariness.

There are countless proofs of God's artistry,  
a thousand colors concealed in the petal of a rose.  
Though the day is white, bright, and brilliant,  
day and night are the same for those without eyes.

If someone wants to know and recognize a king as is fitting, first he should look at his realm, then he should look at his army, then he should look at his artistry and acts. After that, he should look at him himself so as to know him as is fitting. It is as if the Exalted Lord is saying, "My servant, if you want to look at My realm, *to God belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth* [5:120]. If you want to look at My acts, *gaze on the traces of God's mercy, how He brings the earth to life after its death* [30:50]. If you want to look at My artistry, *of His signs are the night and the day, the sun and the moon*. If you want to look at Me tomorrow, look today from My artistry to Me with the eye of the heart: *Dost thou not see thy Lord, how He stretched out the shadow* [25:45]? Then tomorrow look at My bounty with the eye of the secret core: *Faces that day will be radiant, gazing upon their Lord* [75:22-23]."

O chevalier! When someone knows God's majesty and looks at Him from His artistry, his destination will be God's threshold. His hands will be held back from acting freely in the two worlds, his passion's feet will always be in the road, his heart will be in the grasp of the King's exaltedness, he will have the cape of servanthood on his outwardness, and he will be adorned in his inwardness with gazing on the secrets of lordhood. By day he will be in secret whispering, by night in joy.<sup>12</sup>

When the Exalted Lord said, "*And of His signs are the night and the day, the sun and the moon*," He did not say it so that you would see the form and pass over it. Rather, He said it so that you would reflect upon the form, seek out its realities, and become aware of its intimations and allusions.

Know that night is the place of seclusion for friends, the meeting place and promised time of the seekers of peace, the moment for desirers to show their need, the time for the passionate to have whispered secrets and delight. The servants should be with the Real by day in the lodging of secret whispering, by night in the litter of joy. By day they should gaze upon the artifacts, by night contemplate the beauty of the Artisan. By day they should be with the people in good character and by night with the Real in the *footing of truthfulness* [10:2]. By day they should be with the work, by night with drunkenness. By day they should seek the road, by night speak of the mysteries. Then they will have given night and day their rightful due.<sup>13</sup>

As for His words, "*the sun and the moon*," you should understand them as the sun of solicitude and the moon of recognition shining from the constellation of beginninglessness. They rise from the horizon of proximity and shine in the breasts of the friends. The sun and moon are the form of heaven's adornment, as He says: "*We adorned the lowest heaven with lamps*" [41:12]. The sun of solicitude and the moon of recognition are the adornment of the hearts of the faithful for, as He says, "*And He adorned it in your hearts*" [49:7]. Sometimes the moon in heaven is concealed by clouds, but it is not nullified. This alludes to the fact that sometimes disobedience conceals recognition, but it never nullifies it.

*Do not prostrate yourselves to the sun and the moon, but prostrate yourselves to God, who created them.* When Adam was afflicted by the slip, he wept a great deal and at the end made a prostration of repentance. While he was making the prostration, his repentance was accepted. Gabriel came and told Adam that his repentance had been accepted. Adam lifted his head from the prostration and heard this good news from Gabriel. In gratitude for receiving this good news,

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<sup>12</sup> This paragraph is derived from RA 14.

<sup>13</sup> The paragraph is based on RA 172.

he hurried to make another prostration. The first was the prostration of apology, and the second the prostration of gratitude. This is a teaching for the servants: During the prayer, perform two prostrations, one to apologize for slips and the other to show gratitude for blessings.

It has also been said that of the two prostrations that the servant makes in the state of worship, one recounts the beginningless state, the day when the Exalted Lord said, “*Am I not your Lord?*” [7:172]. Everyone fell down in prostration in that state on hearing the address of the Real. The other prostration is the likeness of the endless state at the time of seeing the Majestic Lord in paradise, as has come in the report: “When a light shines for them, they fall down in prostration. Then it is said to them, ‘This is not the time for prostration—this is the time for finding.’” One prostration is in the state of finding, the other in the state of witnessing. When the faithful servant makes these two prostrations at the moment of prayer and the time of whispering in secret, he should number himself among those exalted ones. He should consider the first prostration as the state of finding and he should consider the second prostration as the state of witnessing. Then it will be as if he passes from the Beginningless to the Endless in prostration.

**41:53** *We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in their souls until it is clear to them that He is the Real.*

It is said that the Lord’s religion, which is the cause of the deliverance of the servants and the foundation of their familiarity with Him, is built on two things: One is showing on the part of the Real, and the other traveling on the part of the servant. Showing is what He says: “*We shall show them Our signs on the horizons.*” Traveling is what He says: “*Whoso does a wholesome deed, it is for himself*” [41:46]. As long as there is no showing on the Real’s part, there will be no traveling on the servant’s part.

Showing takes place in both the signs of the horizons and the signs of the souls. In the signs of the horizons, it is what He says: “*Have they not gazed upon the dominion of the heavens and the earth?*” [7:185]. In the signs of the souls, it is what He says: “*And in your souls; what, do you not see?*” [51:21]. He is saying, “Do you not look at yourself and do you not think about your own makeup?”

This is because the Lord of the Worlds has written out many fine points of wisdom and many realities of artisanry with the pen of eternal gentleness on the tablet of this makeup. He has inscribed on it the lights of fabrication and the traces of honoring. He made the round head—the pavilion of intellect and the gathering place of knowledge—a monastery for the senses. Whatever worth has been acquired by this hollow makeup and composite person has been acquired from intellect and knowledge. The worth of the Adamite lies in intellect and his respectability in knowledge, his perfection in intellect and his beauty in knowledge.

God created his forehead like a bar of silver. He strung the two bows of his eyebrows with pure musk. He deposited the two dots of his eyes’ light into two figures of darkness. He made a hundred thousand red roses grow up in the garden of his two cheeks. He concealed thirty-two teeth like pearls in the oyster shell of his mouth. He sealed his mouth with glistening agate. From the beginning of his lips to the end of his throat He created twenty-nine way stations, making them the places of articulation for the twenty-nine letters. From his heart He brought a sultan into existence, from his breast a field, from his aspiration a fleet-footed mount, from his thought a swift messenger. He created two taking hands and two running feet.

All the aforementioned is but the robe of creation and the beauty of outwardness. Beyond this is the perfection and beauty of inwardness. For a moment ponder the Lord’s subtleties and compassionate acts and the traces of the divine solicitude and kind favor that have been made ready in this handful of dust. Look at the different kinds of generosity and the special favors of proximity that He has placed within them: He created the whole cosmos, but He never looked at any creature with the eye of love. He sent no messenger to any existent thing and gave no message to any creature until it was the turn of the Adamites. They were pulled up by gentleness, caressed by bounty, and turned into quarries of light. He made their secret cores the locus of His own gaze, He sent them prophets, He set angels over them as watchers, He placed the burn of passion in their hearts,

and He sent them incitements to yearn and motivations to desire one after another.

What is intended by these expressions and allusions is that the Adamite is a handful of dust. Whatever bestowals of eminence and honor he has received derive from the gentleness and solicitude of the Pure Lord. When He gives, He gives because of His own generosity, not because of your worthiness. He gives because of His magnanimity, not because of your prostration. He gives because of His bounty, not because of your acts. He gives because of His Godhood, not because you are lord of the manor.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> After the first paragraph, this section is a rewriting of RA 63-64.

## Surah 42: al-Shūrā

**42:11** *The Creator of the heavens and the earth, He made for you from yourselves pairs and from your cattle pairs, thereby multiplying you. Nothing is as His likeness, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.*

The Creator of the seven heavens and the seven earths is God, and in creation He is one and unique. He gives being to nonbeings, from what was not He brings forth what is, and He is not similar to any being. His power has no slackening, His strength no shortcoming, and His measure is far from perception. His act has no instrument, His artisanry no cause, His doing no contrivance. He created the tremendous Throne and made it the crown on the head of being's realm. He created the tiny dust mote and concealed it from the eyes. In terms of power, the Throne is like a dust mote, and in terms of wisdom, the dust mote like a Throne. If you look at the world of power, the Throne will appear to you as a dust mote, and if you look at the world of wisdom, the dust mote will come to you as a Throne.<sup>1</sup>

Judging on the basis of the world of unneediness and the exalted divine majesty, in reality there is no need for the existence of creatures, so their realm of being appears to be an intrusion. Nonetheless, He Himself says, "'We created you so you would profit from Us, not so that We would profit from you.' When I created you, I did not create you to seek profit from you or to join My exalted majesticness with your existence."

Her own face had itself as a moon,  
her own eye had itself as collyrium.

"Rather, I created you so that you would seek profit from Me and you would take your own share from My bounty."

The attribute of bounty stood up seeking the obedient, the attribute of severity stood up seeking the disobedient, and the attribute of majesty and beauty stood up seeking the passionate. He had a severity and a gentleness to perfection, a never-ending majesty and beauty. He wanted to scatter these treasures. He placed the throne of gentleness on the head of one person in the garden of bounty, He put the burning brand of severity on another's liver in the prison of justice, He melted one in the fire of majesty, and He caressed another in the light of beauty.

He lit up the candle of the invitation: "*And God invites to the Abode of Peace*" [10:25]. Thousands of thousands of the helpless and grief-stricken threw themselves on the candle and burned, but nothing whatsoever was decreased from the candle or added to it.

I sorrow for Him who does not sorrow for me.  
I obey the command of Him who took my heart.  
I buy His iniquity and disloyalty with a hundred spirits—  
He will not buy my love and loyalty for a barleycorn.<sup>2</sup>

*Nothing is as His likeness, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.* God is a Lord similar to whom there is nothing and no one. He has no peer, none with the same attributes, and no spouse. In attributes and descriptions, in power and knowledge, in acceptance and rejection, in marks and proofs, there

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1 Most of this paragraph is derived from RA 4.

2 These two lines of poetry and most of the two preceding paragraphs are taken from RA 16-17.

is no one like Him. If this is not someone's belief, he is not with Him in the religion.

This verse corrects the deviation of two groups: the group that says there are no attributes, and the group that says there is resemblance. Not having attributes is nonbeing, but God is being. Resemblance comes from partnership, but God is pure of partners and partnership. Those who allow resemblance are outside the precinct of the submission, and those who negate attributes are heretics.

God says, "*Nothing is as His likeness.*" He does not say, "Nothing is there," for attributes are there. No attributes, however, are like His attributes. He is hearing, but none is hearing like Him. He is seeing, but none is seeing like Him. This is just like what He says in another place: "*Is He who creates like him who does not create?*" [16:17]. God has attributes worthy of Him, and the creatures are far from that. Created things have attributes worthy of them, and the Creator is pure of that.

The created thing is what exists because God gave it existence, and God exists because He abides in His own beginninglessness, being, and subsistence. The created thing lives through its soul and nourishment, in a measure and a time. God is alive through His own life, His own subsistence, His own firstness and lastness, without when, how many, and how. The created thing is an artisan through contrivance, tools, striving, and measure. God is Artisan through power and wisdom, without tool, contrivance, or cause—whatever He wants, as He wants, when He wants.

#### **42:19 *God is gentle to His servants.***

God is gentle to His servants, He is benevolent and lovingly kind toward them. It was His gentleness that gave you the success to worship Him and the success to ask from Him. He made your heart the quarry of light so that you love without seeing and you recognize without perceiving. It is His gentleness that asks temporary acts of obedience from you and gives everlasting rewards *as a gift unbroken* [11:108]. It is His gentleness that gives blessings in His measure and asks for gratitude from the servants in their measure: *Be wary of God as far as you are able* [64:16]. It is His gentleness that gives the servants the success to serve and then puts laudation and praise on top of that: *The repenters, the worshipers, and so on* [9:112]. It is His gentleness that calls you ignorant at the time of sin so as to pardon you: *Whosoever of you does an ugly deed in ignorance* [6:54]. At the time of bearing witness He calls you knowing so that He may accept your testimony: *except those who have borne witness to the truth while they are knowing* [43:86]. At the time of shortcoming He calls you weak to efface your shortcoming: *Man was created weak* [4:28].<sup>3</sup>

In burning and need that dervish said in the seclusion of secret whispering, "O God, You called me weak. What comes from the weak other than error? You called me ignorant. What comes from the ignorant other than disloyalty? You are a generous and gentle Lord. What is fitting for someone generous and gentle other than generosity, loyalty, and bestowing gifts?"

What is fitting for the servants once they recognize His gentleness and benevolence toward them is to pull back their skirts from the two worlds, roll up the carpet of folly, bind the belt of servanthood around their waists, cling to the threshold of service and veneration, sew up their eyes from gazing at others, burn the haystack of wanting from people, and, with a heart free of dust and a breast free of burdens, sit waiting for the gentle favors and kindly acts of God, until the Real takes care of their business with His own gentleness and caresses their hearts in the cradle of the Covenant.<sup>4</sup>

*God is gentle to His servants.* God has both gentleness and severity. His gentleness built the Kaabah and mosques, His severity built churches and idol-temples. He sent out success-giving to be the vanguard of the army of gentleness, and He stirred up deprivation to be the advance guard of the army of justice. The poor, hapless Adamite, who passes by gentleness and love. He does not know if the vanguard of the army of gentleness will embrace him in joy, or the advance guard of the army of justice will take him off his feet, weeping and lowly.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This paragraph is summarized from a much longer passage in RA 538-39.

<sup>4</sup> Most of this paragraph is from RA 453.

<sup>5</sup> Most of the paragraph is taken from RA 535.

O dervish! May you never have borrowed clothing without knowing it! May your life not pass by with hidden deception. Alas for the hidden fetters! Alack for everlasting regret! How many a prayerful old man has spent his life in the outer appearance of Islam! He made the night a strainer for the warm water of his eyes, and by day he had the rosary of glorification in hand, his hopes tied to his final end. Finally, when the thread of his life was thinning and the day of his hopes darkening, *there will appear to them from God that with which they had never reckoned* [39:47].

There was a muezzin who for several years gave the call to prayer. One day he went up on the minaret and his gaze fell on a Christian woman. He was caught up with her. When he came down from the minaret, as much as he struggled with himself, he could not hold himself back. He went to the door of the woman's house and told her the story. The woman said, "If you speak truly in your claim and your love is truthful, the stipulation is conformity. You must bind your waist with the Christian sash." That unfortunate man bound the sash in coveting that woman.

There is fear that I will be disgraced by your love,  
 that I will put aside the Book and take up the cross.  
 If you will not become a Muslim for me,  
 then I will become a Christian in passion for you.

The poor man began to drink wine. When he became drunk, he tried for the woman. The woman fled and went into the house. That miserable fellow went up on the roof so as to throw himself into the house by trickery. The beginningless deprivation charged forth and he fell from the roof, perishing after having turned away from his religion. For many years he had been a muezzin and had observed the laws of Islam, and in the end he died a Christian and did not reach the goal.<sup>6</sup>

**42:26** *And He responds to those who have faith and do wholesome deeds, and He increases them in His bounty.*

This "increase," according to the commentators among the Folk of the Sunnah, is the vision of the Lord. In the same way, He says in another place, "*Those who do what is beautiful shall have the most beautiful and an increase*" [10:26]. When the servant reaches the vision of God, he reaches it through God's bounty, not his own obedience, as He says: "*and He increases them in His bounty.*" Tomorrow, when He bestows His vision on His friends, He will do so by the request of His own beauty, not the request of mortal man. How could an insignificant mortal have the gall to make the request himself? What a marvelous business! Before the vision of others the exaltedness of jealousy requires mask upon mask, but the perfection of beauty requires self-disclosure upon self-disclosure!

Though He's always hidden behind the curtain  
 the light of His face is apparent on every horizon.

Once when he was overpowered by ecstasy, Abū Bakr Shiblī said, "O God, tomorrow raise up everyone blind so that only Shiblī may see You!"

Another time he said, "O God, raise up Shiblī blind, for it would be a shame for someone like me to see You!"

The first words were jealousy for beauty against the eyes of others, and the second time was jealousy for that beauty against his own eyes. In the road of the chevaliers, the second step is more complete and more exalted than the first.

Jealous for You, I'll pull out my heart and eyes  
 so my eyes will not see You and my heart will know nothing more of You.

Evidence that tomorrow's vision of the Lord will be at the request of beauty is in the sound report, "When the folk of the Garden enter the Garden, a call will come to them, 'O folk of the Garden, you have an appointment with God that He desires to fulfill.'" When the folk of paradise come into

<sup>6</sup> These three paragraphs, but not the poetry, are from RA 30-31.

paradise and they take up residence in their own goodly dwellings, a call will come, “O friends of the Real! You have a promise with the Real. Come and be present, for the Real will realize that promise through His bounty.’

They will say, “What promise is that?” How lovely are promises by friends, even if broken. What then if a promise is truthfulness itself? These are the words of one created thing to another:

“You put me off, you procrastinate,  
you promise, but you don’t come through.”

The paradise-dwellers say, “What is the promise You have made?,” though it is not as if they do not know what it is, but they pretend to be ignorant.

This is like Shāfi‘ī. Someone said to him, “Who is the intelligent man?” He replied, “The clever man who pretends to be heedless.” He brings his knowledge as if it were ignorance.

“So He removes the veil, and they gaze upon Him.” The Real lifts the veils from their eyes so that they may look upon their Lord.<sup>7</sup>

**42:28** *He it is who sends down the rain after they have despaired and spreads out His mercy.*

This verse alludes to the servant when the branches of his present moment have wilted, the limpidness of his love has turned opaque, the sun of his intimacy has been eclipsed, and the freshness of his covenant has become distant from the courtyards of proximity. At that point it may happen that the Real will gaze upon him with the gaze of mercy and send mercy’s rain to his secret core. Then the fresh twigs will return and flowering roses will grow up in the places of witnessing intimacy.

If Your forsaking me takes my hand,  
perhaps my days will return.  
Your covenant may curve back  
to life, for covenants may come again to life.  
Leaves sometimes go dry,  
then you see them green and moving.<sup>8</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Since the last of this work is so similar to the first of this work, the road to the Friend is a circle. It comes from Him and goes back to Him. The first of this work is like springtime and blossoms. A man is happy, fresh, and comfortable. Then he sees the downs and ups. Disappointments and dispersions come forth, for in worship there are both togetherness and dispersion, and in the stations there are light and darkness. In the darkness of dispersion the servant sees so much concealment that he says, ‘Oh, I tremble because I am worthless. What can I do other than burn until I rise up from this fallenness. What will happen then?’”

*Who sends down the rain after they have despaired.* The clouds of munificence pour down the rain of finding, the billows of bounteousness scatter the pearls of welcome, the rose of union blossoms in the garden of bestowal, and the last of the work goes back to the first. In joy and coquetry the servant says, “With reports I went forth seeking certainty, fear my resource, hope my companion. The goal was hidden from me and I was striving in the religion. All at once the lightning of self-disclosure flashed from ambush. With thought they see like that, with the Friend like this.”<sup>9</sup>

7 The explanation of this verse is based on RA 24-26.

8 The paragraph and the poem are from LI 5:354.

9 This saying is ascribed to Anṣārī under 37:24.

## Surah 43: al-Zukhruf

### **43:5** *Shall We turn the remembrance away from you because you are an immoderate people?*

When today He does not cut off His words addressed to those who persist in disobeying Him and who are immoderate in most of what they do, then tomorrow how would He hold back His forgiveness and the subtle favors of His beautiful doing from those who have not curtailed their faith in Him nor been defective in their recognition of Him, even if they are stained by disobedience?<sup>1</sup>

The Pir of the Tariqah said in his whispered prayer, “It is You who see unworthiness from the servant and do not hurry to punish. You hear unbelief from the servant and do not hold back blessings. You offer him repentance and pardon, and You call him back with Your message and address. If he does come back, You promise him forgiveness. *‘If they desist, He will forgive them what is past’* [8:38]. Since You are like this with the bad-doing enemy, what will You be like with the beautiful-doing friend?”

### **43:6-7** *How many a prophet We sent among the ancients, but a prophet never came to them except that they mocked him.*

This is a marvelous business. Whenever there is talk of friends, He joins it to the story of the estranged. Whenever He shows gentleness and generosity, He puts it next to severity and harshness. Wherever there is a reality, He creates a metaphor to scatter dust on the reality. Wherever there is an argument, He mixes it with ambiguity to scratch the face of the argument. Wherever there is knowledge, He brings forth ignorance to struggle with the ruling power of the knowledge. Wherever there is *tawhīd*, He brings forth associationism to travel the path of quarreling with *tawhīd*. For every friend, He creates a thousand enemies. For everyone sincerely truthful, He brings a hundred thousand heretics. Wherever there is a mosque, He builds a church in front of it. Wherever there is a monastery, there is a tavern; wherever a turban, a sash of unbelief; wherever an attestation, a disavowal; wherever a worshiper, someone ignorant; wherever a friend, an enemy; wherever someone truthful, someone ungodly. He has filled from east to west with adornment and blessings, and in every blessing He has prepared a tribulation and trial. “Among the hardships of this world is the harm of almond candy and the benefit of myrobalan.” The poor, incapable Adamite! He stays bewildered in the midst of this work and does not have the gall to say a word.<sup>2</sup>

He suffers iniquity from those moon-like faces  
and does not have the gall to sigh,  
His face is like a mirror  
and a sigh would ruin it.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The Adamite has three states with which he is busy: obedience, by which he profits; disobedience, which he regrets; and heedlessness, by which he loses. What counsel is more beautiful than the Qur’an? Who is more lovingly kind as a counselor than the Patron? What capital is vaster than faith? What is more profitable than commerce with God? Is it that the Adamite is content to be in loss and approves of severance? Has he disowned the Patron? He will wake up on the day when whatever is to be for him comes to be. He will accept advice

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1 From LI 5:362.

2 The paragraph is based on RA 56.

when whatever is to arrive for him arrives.” This is the attribute of that people concerning whom the Exalted Lord says,

**43:8** *So We destroyed those stronger than they in seizing, and the example of the first ones passed away.*

“They have taken Our prophets as liars, ridiculed them, and did not accept their advice. Hence We showed them Our harshness and severity. We overthrew them and pulled them up by the roots. If anyone contends with Us, Our severity will overcome him. We exact justice from the arrogant, We take vengeance on the apostates, and We show the answer to the enemies.”

**43:67** *Bosom friends on that day will be enemies of one another, except for the godwary.*

Know that in reality God alone deserves friendship, no one else. This is because perfect beauty and never-ending majesty belong to Him, the beginningless Essence and everlasting attributes belong to Him, limitless existence and infinite munificence belong to Him, and non-instrumental knowledge and uncontrived power belong to Him.

Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq said, “When someone tastes of unmixed love for God, that prevents him from seeking this world and alienates him from all mankind.” Whenever the limpidness of the Real’s love settles down in someone’s heart, the opacity of seeking this world and people’s acceptance packs its bags from his heart. If he then loves anyone among the people, it is because that person has an attachment to the Real or an affinity with the Real through His friendship. Whenever anyone has a friend, in reality he also loves his abode, street, and neighborhood. The poet says,

My covenant is not because of love for earthly dust,  
but for that in which the Beloved dwells.

\*

What I want from Your street is Your face.<sup>3</sup>

Friendship for the godwary and the pious is what He says: “*His friends are only the godwary*” [8:34]. Love for God’s Messenger is what he himself says: “Love me because of God’s love!”

So, the final end of all loves is the perfection of the beauty of the Divine Presence. To this He alludes with His words, “*Surely the final end is unto thy Lord*” [53:42].

The mark of love is that whenever something reaches you that is disliked by your nature and makeup, you accept it gladly. Muṣṭafā said, “The foul odor of the fasting person’s mouth is more fragrant with God than the aroma of musk.” The altered smell from the mouth of the fasting person comes from the aroma of the pavilion of holiness. Consider it prior to all the perfumes of the world, for the Friend approves of it. Poets have said,<sup>4</sup>

Were the Beloved’s hand to pour poison for me,  
poison from His hand would be sweet.

\*

The heart that You burn thanks You,  
the blood that You shed boasts.

\*

The blood that You spill thanks You,  
the heart that You scare praises You.

\*

The poison I drink in remembrance of You is sweet,  
the mad man who sees You comes to his senses.

It has also been said, “Whoever sees You recognizes, whoever recognizes clings, and whoever clings burns. The burnt one will not be burned again.” Rather, he will be caressed with this call:

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3 The verse and the hemistich are from RA 461.

4 This paragraph and the four lines of poetry are taken from RA 462-63.

**43:68** *O My servants, no fear is upon you today, neither will you sorrow.*

Just as He said in the Beginningless, “*My servants,*” so He Himself will say in the Endless, “*My servants.*” In the Beginningless He said, “O My servants, you are My creation and I am your Lord, so present your needs to Me.” In the Endless He will say, “*My servants, no fear is upon you today, neither will you sorrow.*” This indeed will be addressed to the generality of the faithful. As for the sincerely truthful and the near ones, He will address them with this: “My servants, did you yearn for Me? Did you love to encounter Me?” This will be an exalted state and a great rank: the intender will have reached the Intended, the seeker the Sought, the lover the Beloved. The tree of union will bear fruit, the messenger of the Sought will come forth, and the Companion will come out with the stipulation of passion.

At last the Friend will come out with the stipulation of passion—  
the suffering of my passion for Him will come to an end.

**43:71** *For them will be brought around platters and cups of gold. Therein will be whatever the souls hunger for and gives pleasure to the eyes.*

*For them will be brought around platters and cups of gold.* This is the portion of the renunciants and worshipers, who kept themselves totally in obedience and worship. They passed their days in hunger and thirst by the decree of discipline and struggle according to the Shariah. They did not take advantage of the tasty foods and drinks of this world, so tomorrow in paradise the serving boys and servants will pass around golden cups and say to them, “*Eat and drink pleasantly for what you left behind in bygone days*” [69:24].

*Therein shall be whatever the souls hunger for and gives pleasure to the eyes.* This is the portion of the recognizers and the yearners, who were always wishing for the vision of the Real’s majesty and beauty with thirsty hearts, burning breaths, and spirits lit up by passion. A whiff of the world of friendship had reached them, and that whiff distracted and bewildered them. This was a bewilderment within the curtain, not outside the curtain. The bewilderment that takes you outside makes you lose the road, but the bewilderment inside the curtain is one of the traces of the perfect divine majesty. Whoever cannot go from creation to the Real is bewildered by losing the road. Whoever cannot come from the Real to creation is bewildered by the Presence of the Threshold. Wherever he goes, he returns only to Him.

From here the Pir of the Tariqah said, “For a long time I was seeking Him and finding myself. Now I seek myself and find Him.”

This is the same bewilderment requested by the chevaliers of the Tariqah: “O Guide of the bewildered, increase me in bewilderment!” They sang,

“I am bewildered in Thee, take my hand,  
O guide of those bewildered in Thee!”

A group worshiped God with fear and hope and their eyes fell on this: *For them will be brought around platters and cups of gold.* They are the wage-earners who have stayed attached to the reward and tied their hearts to aching for everlastingness. A group worshiped Him with affection and love, and they are the recognizers. They gave their hearts to His love and burned in wishing to see Him.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “How should I have known that the wage-earner is he whose capital is paradise, and the realizer is he who is wishing for one glance of union? How should I have known that the bewilderment of union with You is the path, and he who is drowned in You seeks You all the more?”

When will my luck smile at me from Your playing field?  
When will separation from You strike its tent from my spirit’s desert?  
How long will I go after Your scent in the street of seeking You,  
loving You and talking with You, seeking You in every direction?

It was revealed to David, “O David, surely the most beloved of beloveds to Me is he who worships Me not for the sake of gain but to give lordhood its due. O David, who has done greater wrong than he who worships Me because of the Garden or the Fire? Had I not created a Garden and a Fire, would I not be worthy of being obeyed?”

Jesus passed by a group of worshipers who had become emaciated and were saying, “We fear the Fire and hope for the Garden.” He said, “You fear a created thing, and you hope for a created thing!”

He passed by another group who were saying, “We worship Him in love for Him and in reverence for His majesty.” He said, “You are God’s friends in truth, and I have been commanded to stand with you.” And God knows best.

## Surah 44: al-Dukhān

### **44:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

In the name of Him whose mention is the adornment of our tongues and whose love is the nourishment of our hearts. In the name of Him whose gaze is the witness of our living selves and whose remembrance is the repose of our spirits. Blessed the one whose intimate is His name and exalted the one whose traveling companion is His remembrance! Happy is the heart in which is His love, flourishing the tongue on which is His mention! Free is he whose existence is in His bonds, great the soul that hopes to see Him!

O God, how can I remember You, for I myself am all remembrance? I have given the harvest of my marks to the wind. O God, You are the remembrance, You the reminder, You the aid in finding You. You are the meaning of the call of the truthful, You light up the souls of the friends, You are the repose of the hearts of the exiles! You are present in the heart, so it is with my heart lost that I say, “Where are You?” The spirit must have life—You are that. You Yourself are the spokesman for Yourself. By Your rightful due against Yourself, do not seat us in the shadow of delusion! Convey us to union with You!

When You are the soul’s food, then You leave it,  
the soul whose food You are does not linger.

\*

You are my spirit and world. If I see You not,  
may all my spirit and world be ill fortune!

### **44:32** *We chose them, with a knowledge, above the worlds.*

*We chose them, with a knowledge* of their hearts’ love for Us despite the multiplicity of their sins against Us. And *We chose them, with a knowledge* of Our secrets that We deposited within them and of the realities of Our rightful due that We unveiled to them.<sup>1</sup>

Although this verse descended specifically concerning the faithful among the Children of Israel, in terms of understanding by way of allusion it is a general declaration of the eminence of the children of Adam and their superiority over all creatures. In the same way, He says in another place, “*We indeed honored the children of Adam*” [17:70]. He is saying, “We chose them, and We were not wrong in choosing them, for We chose them with pure knowledge. We knew, with complete knowledge, that of all the created things, they were worthy of being chosen. Hence We chose them. Our choosing them was through Our knowledge and desire, without cause. Our caressing them was through Our bounty and generosity, without inducement. We choose and caress whomever We want, and no one can ask how or why about Our activity. We drive away and burn whomever We want, and no one can protest against Our decree.”

On the day He drew the circle of engendering over this individual of clay, He announced, “I am creating an individual the like of whom I have never created. Not that it is impossible for My power, but My jealousy holds back the reins of power.” This He expressed like this: “*He fastened to them the word of godwariness, to which they have more right and of which they are worthy*” [48:26].

O chevalier! His power allows Him to create a hundred thousand like us in an instant, but His

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1 LI 5:384.

love and jealousy do not allow this. This is because the secret of love has no howness, especially in respect to us: *He loves them, and they love Him* [5:54].

The proximate angels of the Exalted Threshold and the residents of the all-compelling Presence put the finger of bewilderment in the mouth of wonder: “This is a great work and a strange state that has appeared for the dust-dwellers. They are those caressed by His gentleness and pulled up by His compassion. They recognize through His giving recognition, they are eminent by His bestowal of eminence, they arrive by His making them arrive, and they are joyful in arrival at Him. They are the narcissus of the meadow of munificence, the cypress of the garden of existence, the jewel-box of the pearls of wisdom, the light of the eye of the world of power. The peerless Creator is one, and they are the peerless creature. The Most Beautiful of Creators is one, and they are the most beautiful of creations. *We created man in the most beautiful stature* [95:4].”

There was no world and no Adam, no Throne, Tablet, or Pen, no paradise or hell, but there was talk of love for them without them, for *He loves them, and they love Him*.

How blessed was the time of Your covenant, without which  
my heart would have no place for ardor!

O chevalier, gaining access to Him takes place only through His eternal beautiful doing.

Ḥasan ibn Sahl was the vizier of Ma<sup>3</sup>mūn. One day someone came to him whom Ḥasan did not recognize. He said, “Who are you?”

He said, “I am the one toward whom you acted beautifully in such and such a year.”

Ḥasan said, “Welcome to the one who gained access to me through my acting beautifully!” Then he commanded that the man be presented with gifts and honored.

Surely the beginning of kindness is a precedent splendor,  
and the most splendorous splendor is its completion.

The crescent moon delights the eyes  
with beauty, but not like its beauty when full.

O God, Your beginningless solicitude planted the seed of guidance, You watered it with the messages of the prophets, You made it grow with help and success-giving, You brought it to fruit with Your own gaze and beautiful doing. I ask Your gentleness to keep the poisons of severity away from it, not to blow the wind of justice against it, and to help with endless kind favor what You planted with beginningless solicitude!<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Beginning with, “On the day He drew the circle of engendering,” these paragraphs are a rewriting of RA 82-84. As already noted under verse 19:1, Maybudī attributes an almost identical prayer to the Pir of the Tariqah.

## Surah 45: al-Jāthiya

**45:3** *Surely in the heavens and the earth are signs for the faithful.*

In this verse He shows to the creatures the perfection of His power in creating heaven and earth.

**45:4** *And in your creation and the beasts He has scattered are signs for a people who have certainty.*

He is making manifest His gentleness toward all animals and especially the Adamites.

**45:5** *And the difference of night and day, and the provision that God sends down from heaven whereby He brings the earth to life after its death, and the turning about of the winds, are signs for a people who use intelligence.*

He reminds the creatures of His blessings in creating water, wind, and rain and thereby making ready their daily provision. Then He says, “*are signs for a people who use intelligence.*” An intelligent person is someone who ponders and reflects upon the signs. From the first sign [45:3], he will understand His power, and the requisite of power is fear, so he will fear His harshness and forcefulness. From the second sign [45:4], he will understand His gentleness, and the requisite of gentleness is hope, so his heart will attach itself to His generosity. From the third sign he will recognize His blessings, so he will undertake to give gratitude for them. First is the station of the fearful, second the station of the hopeful, and third the station of the grateful.

In the station of gratitude, much unveiling and veiling occurs. When the Exalted Lord says, “*the difference of night and day,*” He is alluding to unveiling and veiling. Bright day is the likeness of unveiling, and dark night is the mark of the veil. The servant passes back and forth between these two states. In the state of unveiling he sees only the Beneficent. He does not become happy in blessings, nor does he become sorrowful in tribulation. He is so busy contemplating the Beneficent that he does not attend to the blessings nor to the grief and tribulation. In this meaning they have sung,

“If I distinguish between Your doing good or bad,  
I will be busy with the distinction, not You.”

In the time of the veil, the contemplation of the Beneficent conceals itself from him. He turns all of his attention to blessings and tribulation. Hence in blessings he beats the drum of happiness, and in tribulation he carries the burden of grief.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Pain and remedy, grief and happiness, poverty and wealth—these are all attributes of the wayfarers in the way stations of the road. When a man reaches the goal, he has no station or way station, no moment or state, no spirit or heart.”<sup>1</sup>

Make not your home in body or spirit, for that is low and this is high.  
Take a step outside of both—be not here and be not there. [DS 51]

O God, sometimes I take joy in pain and make do with its increase, hoping that when I melt in this pain, I will overthrow both pain and comfort.

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1 In fact this saying is taken from RA 562-63.

**45:18** *Then We set thee on a wide road of the command, so follow it, and do not follow the caprices of those who know not.*

In other words, “We singled you out for gentle favors, so recognize them. We set down paths for you, so follow them. We affirmed realities for you, so do not go outside of them and do not incline to follow others.”

**45:19** *Surely they will not make thee unneedy of God in anything.*

“If God desires a blessing for you, no one will prevent it, and if He desires a trial for you, no one will turn it away. So do not attach your reflection to any created thing and do not turn the attentiveness of your mind to anything. Depend on your Lord and trust in Him.”<sup>2</sup>

“O paragon of the world, O master of Adam’s children, O sun of felicity’s sphere, O moon of mastery’s heaven, O lodging of the world of knowledge, O pearl of the oyster of eminence, O embroidery on the garment of existence! We separated you out from the world’s folk, we orphaned you from father and mother, and We brought out your family and relatives against you so that your heart would be free of all and be totally detached for obeying and serving Me. From the wide roads We made for you the road of the religion, and you call the world’s folk to that road: *Say: ‘This is my path; I invite to God’* [12:108].

“O paragon! On the night of the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj*, We sat you down in the dome of proximity and scattered a hundred thousand gentle gifts on the head of your good fortune. We made the two worlds the dust beneath your feet and brought the celestial figures and the terrestrial center under the banner of your rulership. What We intended was to give you expansiveness on the carpet of intercession. As long as there is the story of the pain of the disobedient, you should lift it up to Us and apologize for it on their behalf: *Take us not to task if we forget or make mistakes* [2:286]. O Muḥammad! If tomorrow you ask Us for the two worlds and the world’s folk, you will have asked only for the dust beneath your feet. And if We, through eternal gentleness, use the dust of those feet in the work of one of your servants, that is not far-fetched for Our perfection.”

The collyrium of insight had been daubed on the eyes of the prophethood of that greatest of the prophets. He knew that dust should be a carrier of burdens, not headstrong, because dust is for carrying burdens, not for being headstrong. Do you not see how the Exalted Lord threatens and warns those who were headstrong and refractory:<sup>3</sup>

**45:21** *Or do those who commit ugly deeds reckon that We will make them like those who have faith and do wholesome deeds, that their living and their dying will be equal? Ugly is what they reckon!*

About them He also says that they have gone into roadlessness, become headstrong in the tracks of their own caprice, and ridiculed the prophets and those who call to the road of the Real:

**45:23** *Who then will guide them after God?*

Once God has made them roadless, who in the entire world will bring them back to the road? From whom will they gain the means of approach when the road to the means of approach has been blocked to them? Today the tree of despair has grown old for them, instances of abandonment have come forth, and the destructiveness of justice has brought forth the dust of wealth. Tomorrow the caller of justice will begin the shout of abandonment:

**45:34** *Today We forget you just as you forgot the encounter of this day of yours; your refuge is the Fire.*

Yes, I said that dust must carry burdens, not be headstrong. If a sultan should pick up a poor beggar from the middle of the road, take him before the throne of his good fortune, and dress him in a robe of elevation, the stipulation for the beggar is that he not forget himself and that he know his own worth. He must always keep that poverty and lack of honor before his eyes.

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<sup>2</sup> LI 5:392.

<sup>3</sup> Much of this section is drawn from RA 62.

It reached the ears of °Umar ibn °Abd al-°Azīz that his son had a ring made, and then bought a stone worth one thousand dirhams and placed it in the ring. He wrote a letter to him: “My son, I hear that you have had a ring made, bought a stone worth one thousand dirhams, and placed it on the ring. If you want to please me, sell the stone, feed a thousand hungry people, and make a ring for yourself from a piece of silver. On it, engrave the words, ‘May God have mercy on the man who knows his own worth!’”

O chevalier! No garment fits the stature of earth better and more beautifully than the garment of humility: “Anyone who has twice traveled the urinary canal should not be proud.” Greatness, magnificence, exaltedness, height, tremendousness, and splendor are the attributes of the Majestic Lord.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> These three paragraphs are derived mostly from RA 62-63, 60-61.

## Surah 46: al-Aḥqāf

**46:2** *The sending down of the book is from God, the Exalted, the Wise.*

These words are sent down by the Lord. They are His book and message, His sweet talk and blessed speaking. They are from a Lord whose name is *Exalted*, which means “exalter.” The name means that He exalted the faithful by making them the object of His address and worthy of His book and message. He made their hearts the quarries of the lights of His secrets.

For seven hundred thousand years the pure ones of the Empire and the proximate ones of the Exalted Threshold had put down the prayer carpets of obedient acts in the station of generous gifts. In the khanaqah of sinlessness they leaned in service on the prayer grounds of reverence: *We are those in rows, We are the glorifiers* [37:165-66].<sup>1</sup> At the Exalted Threshold they never found the proximity that these dust-dwellers saw, for they were mere servants, but the latter were both servants and friends: *He loves them, and they love Him* [5:54]. *We are your friends* [41:31].

Those angels were flying birds, standing, devoted, and prostrating. Their subtle makeups were adorned with sinlessness and trimmed of slips. But the nests of birds are one thing, and the oyster shell of the night-brightening pearl is something else. The Adamite’s makeup is the shell for the pearl of the heart, the heart is the shell for the pearl of the secret core, and the secret core is the shell for the pearl of gazing on the Real.<sup>2</sup>

You say, “Dust is the cause of ruin.”

I say, “Their saying is ‘Ruins are the homeland of the Real.’”

You say, “That homeland is unknown.”

I say, “The unknown homeland is the place of the sultan’s treasure.”

That exalted man said,

“Seek the religion from the poor, for reigning kings  
have the custom of keeping treasures in ruined places.” [DS 466]

**46:3** *We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between the two except with the rightful due.*

This means except for the sake of the rightful due and establishing the rightful due.

“When I created the seven heavens and the seven earths, I brought the engendered beings and newly arrived things from nonexistence to existence. I created them so that you would recognize the rightful due of My lordhood and enactorship against yourself and you would acquiesce to My command and bow your head.”

O chevalier! Doing servanthood is easy work, but being a servant is a tremendous work and a great trait. For seventy thousand years Iblis the abandoned was doing servanthood, but he was not able to be a servant for one breath. “Servanthood is to abandon free choice in all apportionments that appear.” “Servanthood is to abandon self-governance and to witness predetermination.”

In the flow of apportionments you must pull out the thorn of free-choice from the foot of your own work. You must wash your hands of mortal governance in the alterations of the Lordly predetermination. You must be a praiser beneath the burden of the decree and put a stop to gratifying

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1 These three sentences are from RA 629.

2 The paragraph is from RA 631.

the soul that seeks its own share. Only then will you reach the station of servanthood.

He who worships Him for his own share is the servant of the share, not of Him.

Pir Bū ʿAlī Siyāh said, “If you are asked, ‘Do you want paradise, or two cycles of the prayer?’ take care not to choose paradise. Choose the two cycles of the prayer, for paradise is your portion, but the prayer is His rightful due. Whenever your portion is in the midst, even if it is a generous gift, it is permissible for it to be the ambush of deception. But performing His rightful due has no mischief or deception.”

When Moses came to Khiḍr, he protested to him twice: once because of the rightful due of the boy, and the second time because of breaking the boat. Since his portion was not in the midst, Khiḍr was patient. But, in the third state, when his own portion appeared, he said, “*If you wanted, you could have taken a wage for it*” [18:77].

Khiḍr said, “There is no way for me to be your companion: *This is separation between me and you* [18:78].”<sup>3</sup>

**46:35** *So be patient, as the messengers possessed of resoluteness were patient. And seek not to hurry it for them. On the day they see what they were promised, it will be as if they had not delayed for an hour of daytime.*

God’s Messenger heard so many insults and ill words from the unbelievers and underwent so much suffering from them that he became anguished. Because of that anguish he wished in his heart that a punishment would reach them and they would taste chastisement. The Lord of the Worlds sent this verse: “*So be patient... and seek not to hurry it.* O Muḥammad, be patient with the torment and insults of the associaters and do not hasten to chastise and punish them. Emulate your brothers the prophets. They were patient with the sufferings and repellent things from their people. They knew that all of it was Our decree, so they did not complain or become anguished. You do the same that they did. O Muḥammad, *so emulate their guidance* [6:90]. Do you not know that one of My names is the Patient? The patient is he who does not hurry to punish: ‘He gives respite but does not disregard.’”

When the faithful servant believes that the Real is the Patient, he must make patience his own holdfast and support in order to increase in faith. Muṣṭafā said, “Patience is half of faith, and certainty is all of faith.” The station of patience is the station of the worshipers, and the station of certainty is the station of the recognizers.

Muṣṭafā said to Ibn ʿAbbās, “If you can act for God with approval and certainty, do so. Otherwise, there is great good in patience with what you dislike.” First he called him to certainty, which is the great station and all of faith. Then he said, “If you do not have the capacity and do not reach this station, keep your feet fixed in the station of the patient, for in patience there is good aplenty. *Surely the patient shall be paid their wage in full, without reckoning* [39:10].”

A great man was asked about the meaning of patience. He said, “Swallowing down trial without making claims.” It is to taste the poison of trial and then not to voice any claim.

“Patience is keeping tribulation secret and making favor manifest.” Patience is to keep tribulation hidden and to make blessings apparent.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, Your friends are the chiefs and captains, without treasure and goods. They are the rich who are named poor. Indeed, the rich of this world are they. They have many pains, but they do not have a tongue to speak of them.”

In the jewel-box of the spirits how much the jealous for You  
 wail in secret without redress from the pain of Your love!  
 You set down such a firm foundation for beauty that nothing  
 is engraved there but *there subsists the face of thy Lord* [55:27].<sup>4</sup> [DS 996]

3 From “O chevalier,” these paragraphs are borrowed from RA 68-69.

4 Much of the discussion of the divine name Patient along with these two lines of poetry is drawn from RA 628.

## Surah 47: Muḥammad

**47:38** *And God is the Unneedy, and you are the poor.*

God has no need for your obedience, and you are the poor toward His mercy.<sup>1</sup>

God is the Unneedy and has no need for anyone. He is One and has no associate or partner. He is the Compeller, and no one has the color of union with Him. He is the Owner of the Kingdom, and no matter what He does, no one has the gall to protest or a way to fight.

If you were to gather all the deeds of the sincerely truthful among the folk of the earth and all the obedient acts of the holy ones of heaven, they would not have the weight of a gnat's wing in the scales of the majesty of the Possessor of Majesty. Beware! Never look at your own distracted deeds or your own tiny intellect with the eye of self-admiration. When you seek Him, seek Him through His bounty, not your intellect and knowledge. *Were it not for God's bounty toward you, and His mercy, none of you would ever have become pure* [24:21].

O chevalier! Exaltedness is His attribute and unneediness His description. How can knowledge, understanding, and intellect have the gall to open up before His exaltedness? Bounty is His attribute and exaltedness His attribute. Who opens up before His attributes? It is His attributes themselves that open up. When someone seeks refuge in intellect, the attribute of exaltedness comes forth and sends him back in despair. When someone seeks refuge in bounty, it escorts him to the highest of the High Chambers.<sup>2</sup>

When someone leans on his own deeds, he will be left to himself. When someone clings to His bounty and mercy, he will be taken beyond the Gardens of Bliss to the *seat of truthfulness, at an Omnipotent King* [54:55].

The Prophet said, "There is none of you who will be saved by his deeds."

They said, "Not even you, O Messenger of God?"

He said, "Not even I, unless God envelops me with His mercy."

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1 LI 5:416.

2 The passage to here is from RA 575-76.

## Surah 48: al-Fath

### **48:1** *Surely We opened up for thee a clear opening.*

There are several surahs in the Qur'an that begin with *surely We [innā]*: *Surely We sent it down* [97:1], *Surely We sent* [71:1], *Surely We gave thee* [108:1], *Surely We opened up for thee*.

“The one abandoned by the Threshold, °Azāzīl, said, ‘*I am better*’ [38:76], and We wreaked havoc on him. We gave his 70,000 years of obedience and service to the wind of unneediness and placed the brand of abandonment and deprivation on his liver. The unaided Pharaoh said, ‘*Does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me?*’ [43:51], and We isolated him from blessing, kingship, and pomp and We killed him with water. Korah said, ‘*because of a knowledge that I have*’ [28:78], and We cut off his head with the sword of severity and took him upside-down into the earth. The angels said, ‘*And We glorify*’ [2:30]. We burned thousands of them in the fire of majesty so that the world’s folk would know that other than We, no one can say ‘I’ or ‘We,’ for We are the Lord. It is We who are worthy of Lordhood and We who know God-work. We are one in Essence, peerless in attributes, possessor of exaltedness and magnificence, tremendousness and splendor. ‘Magnificence is My cloak and tremendousness My shawl; if anyone contends with Me in either, I will put him in the Fire.’”

## Surah 49: al-Ḥujurāt

### 49:10 *The faithful indeed are siblings.*

O You who make every existent thing appear! O You who accept every burning sigh! O You whose generosity assures the daily provision of the servants! O You whose kingship is secure from annihilation and disappearance! No one debases the one You have exalted. No one throws down the one You have pulled up. No one can covet the one with Your brand. The faithful have all been branded by You. They have been pulled up by Your compassion and caressed by Your gentleness. In the alternations of created nature and the states of mortal nature, they keep their feet within the circle of duty on the center point of approval. Sometimes like a cypress they are in the station of seclusion in the meadow, sometimes like a polo mallet they are in the station of service.

It is they who were caressed by the Lord of the Worlds in the Beginningless, when brotherhood was established among them, for *the faithful indeed are siblings*. This is a brotherhood that will never be cut off, a kinship that will never be broken, a lineage that will be joined with the Endless. It is to this that the report refers, “Every tie and lineage will be cut on the Day of Resurrection, save my tie and my lineage.” What is meant by this is the lineage of the religion and godwariness, not the lineage of water and clay. If it were the lineage of water and clay, Abū Lahab and Abū Jahl would have a portion of it. It is this to which He alludes with the words, “*Surely the noblest of you with God is the most godwary*” [49:13].

O chevalier! You know that all the faithful are your brothers and kinsmen in the lineage of faith and godwariness. Attend to the rightful due of brotherhood and the stipulations of kinship. Live in agreeableness with them, choose the road of preferring others and chivalry, and serve them without recompense. If they sin, excuse them. If they are ill, visit them. Put your own portion totally off to the side and increase their portion. This is the rightful due of brotherhood. If you have the head for it, then enter. Otherwise, emigrate.

Dhu’l-Nūn was asked, “With whom should we be companions and with whom should we come and go?”

He said, “With him who does not own, who does not censure any state of yours, and who does not change when you change.”

He said that you should be the companion of someone who has no property. In other words, whatever wealth and property he has, he does not consider it his own rightful due. He recognizes his brothers’ rightful due in it more than his own rightful due. Wherever there is antagonism in the world, it rises up from your-ness and my-ness. When you remove your-ness and my-ness from the road, agreement comes and antagonism leaves.

He also said that you should be a companion of someone who will never censure you and, if he sees a defect from you, he will not turn away from you. He knows that the Adamite is not empty of defect, and that being pure and without defects is the attribute of the Holy Lord alone.

A man had a wife and acted well toward her in the work of passion. The woman had a white spot in her eye, and the man, because of his great passion, knew nothing of that defect. One day his passion for her diminished and he said, “When did this white spot appear in your eye?”

She said, “The moment your perfect passion diminished.”

Muṣṭafā said, “Love for a thing makes you blind and deaf.” A man’s friendship blinds him to seeing the defects of the beloved and makes him deaf to hearing blame.

Dhu'l-Nūn's third description was "he does not change when you change." With these words, he cut him off from companionship with creatures. He says that when you are a companion, be the companion of the Real, not creation, for creatures change when you change, but in the majesty of His unity and the perfection of His self-sufficiency the Real never changes, even if creatures change.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, You are the shelter of the faithful and await the strivers at road's end. Exalted is he whom You want! If he flees, You are in the road for him. Blessed is he to whom You belong—will You indeed ever be ours?"

Dhu'l-Nūn said, "I saw a woman near the shores of Syria, a woman who appeared as a woman in form, but who was more than a thousand men inwardly. She was limpidness itself and loyalty itself. Her outwardness was all limpid in attribute, and her inwardness was all the subsistence of recognition. In form she did not cling to name and body, nor had she put down her bags in the home of states and words."

Make not your home in body or spirit, for that is low and this is high.

Take a step outside of both—be not here and be not there. [DS 51]

"She had lost her own being in the being of the Beloved, she had disowned her own attributes in the attributes of the Beloved."

O you who ask about our story—

were you to see us, you could not tell the difference.

When you see me, you see him;

when you see him, you see me.

O chevalier, love is a severe sultan, and the Shariah of love is different from the outward Shariah. In the outward Shariah, all is gentleness, benevolence, blessing, and caressing. In the Shariah of love, all is severity, harshness, killing, and spilling blood.

If I'm killed in passion for you, there's nothing to fear—

where is a cloak of passion that hasn't been torn?

Dhu'l-Nūn Miṣrī said, "I asked that woman, 'Whence have you come, and where are you desiring to go?'

"She said, 'I come from a group whose *sides shun their couches as they supplicate their Lord in fear and want* [32:16] to men whom neither trade nor buying diverts from the remembrance of God [24:37].' I come from people who are awake and I go to people who are aware."

Such people are made known by their attributes and conduct, not their names and kinship. Those who find eminence and nobility in the world find it through attribute and conduct, not name and kinship. What eminence will kinship have when it is cut off tomorrow? God says, "*That day there will be no kinship between them, nor will they ask of each other*" [23:101]. What nobility is greater than that of which the Exalted Lord speaks? "*Surely the noblest of you with God is the most godwary*" [49:13].

Then she made the attribute of those people wakefulness, for sleeplessness is the attribute of the yearners and the custom of the passionate. She said that when night comes and the sun becomes hidden, their hearts become the quarry of sorrows. Sometimes they moan and weep, sometimes they complain of lowliness, sometimes they open the journal of passion and begin the chapter of longing. They cry out and weep, remembering the Friend. All night long they put their heads on the knees of bewilderment, or they rub their faces in the dust of longing. With pain in the heart and burning in the liver they make this lament:

"Every moment my night gets darker,

O Lord, it seems my night has no dawn."

O chevalier, when someone has not stayed awake for a night, what does he know of the suffering of wakefulness? When someone has never been sick for a night, how can he be aware of the length

of the night for those who stay awake? Have you ever had a night when, because of the pain of not finding your intimate, you have taken the moon as your intimate and whispered your secrets to the stars?

O you who have made the long night short with the sleep of heedlessness and the bright day black with disobedience! You poor wretch, the day of your lifespan has turned into night, the spring of youth has passed, your pomegranate face has turned yellow, your carnelian lips have become straw, your lamp has burned down, and the account of your life has come to just this. The counted days have reached their end and the courier has arrived. Mourn for yourself today. Pour the tears of remorse from your eyes before neither eyes remain nor sight, neither body nor ability, neither strength nor knowledge, neither perfection nor comeliness.

O lords of wealth, take heed, take heed!

O lords of words, apologies, apologies!

Before this apologizing soul runs out of apologies,

before this heed-taking eye fails in its task! [DS 182]

## Surah 50: Qāf

### **50:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

Know that the world's elements are four: wind, fire, water, and dust. When these four elements found existence at the beginning of creation, they found it from these four words: *name, God, All-Merciful, Ever-Merciful*. Then, from the first age until the last era these four elements had the strength of nature, and the world was arranged through the compoundedness of their parts in keeping with the divine predetermination.

In every era, these four elements showed an increase in strength. In the era of Noah, water was strong and rebellious, according to His words, "*When the water rebelled*" [69:11]. In the era of Hūd the wind was strong and howling, according to His words, "*by a howling, furious wind*" [69:6]. In the era of Moses, the dusty earth showed increased strength until it made manifest its revenge by devouring Korah: "*So We made the earth engulf him and his house*" [28:81]. In the era of Jonah the malice of fire gained the power of radiance in the air. So it went in every era whenever wind blew, waves rose up in the sea and drowned a ship or destroyed a city, lightning flashed and burned a realm, and earth quaked, making manifest sinking and deforming.

Then came the era of the paragon of the world, the master of the children of Adam. The interval between prophets came to an end and day dawned for the creation of the religion of Islam. The earth took on light, the heaven found joy, the face of the stars became radiant, and Gabriel shouted out in the air, "*in the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*" His shout permeated the parts of the world such that every mote of the world found a tongue in the passion of hearing these words. From each was heard a hum and a noise.

°Ā'isha said, "When *in the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful* descended, the mountains made a noise such that their droning was heard by the folk of Mecca. They said, 'Muḥammad has worked sorcery on the mountains.'"

Ibn °Abbās said, "When *in the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful* descended, the winds were stilled, the oceans threw up waves, the beasts gave ear, the satans fled from heaven, and the Exalted Lord swore this oath: 'His names will not be pronounced over anything without its being blessed.'"

Then each word of this formula gave a beauty and perfection to one of the elements. By the word *name* a tie was placed on wind. From the awe of the name *God* a brand was placed on the tongue of fire. From the mercy of *All-Merciful* a trace was put in water. From the clemency of *Ever-Merciful* a breeze was conveyed to dust. Wind put aside malice, fire calmed its sparks, water repented of rebellion, and dust put aside quaking and became straight. This was all because the era of justice had passed and the era of bounty had arrived. The era of swallowing down and deforming had passed and the era of clemency and mercy had come: *We sent thee only as a mercy to the worlds* [21:107].

When you compare this community, which keeps its feet on the carpet of Aḥmad the Messenger, with the community of those who went before, it is the relationship of Adamites to animals. This is because in the first era their forms accepted deformation, their surahs accepted abrogation, and their compacts accepted abolishing, for they had not reached the furthest limit of perfection. But when the era of the paragon of the world arrived, the effusion of the divine revelation conveyed its fragrances to the hearing of Adam's offspring. The call came, "O Master! All the Shari'ahs

have abrogation, but your Shariah has no abrogation. All the compacts have abolishing, but your compact has no abolishing. All the communities have deformation, but your community has no deformation.”

**50:1 Qāf! By the splendid Qur’an!**

Ibn ʿAṭāʾ said, “God swears an oath by the strength [*quwwa*] of the heart of His beloved, Muḥammad, inasmuch as he carried the discourse that left no trace in him, because of the elevation of his state.”<sup>1</sup>

When someone has a dear friend, in every state he seeks his approval. He always looks at him, he whispers his secrets to him, and he swears his oaths by his spirit and secret core. He speaks of him much, and he watches out for him at home and while traveling, in sleep and in wakefulness. He considers whatever he does beautiful, and he never holds back talk and “Peace!” from him. The generous Lord, the ever-merciful king, showered the realities of these meanings on His beloved, the Seal of the Prophets, so that the world’s folk would know that in the Exalted Threshold, no one has the rank, level, and distinction held by that paragon. The engendered beings and existent things are all for his sake, and His love for all is love for him.

*Your creation and your upraising are as but one soul* [31:28]. It has been said that this means, “for one soul,” and what is meant by this soul is Muṣṭafā’s essence. In all states, He sought his approval, as He says, “*And in the hours of the night glorify, and at the ends of the day, that perhaps thou mayest approve*” [20:130]. He sought his approval in the kiblah: “*Now We shall turn thee toward a kiblah that thou shalt approve*” [2:144]. He sought his approval in intercession for the community: “*Thy Lord shall bestow upon thee so that thou shalt approve*” [93:5]. He swore by his life: “*By thy life*” [15:72]. He swore by the strength of his heart: “*Qāf! By the splendid Qur’an!*” He swore by the limpidness of his love: “*Sād! By the Qur’an possessing the remembrance!*” [38:1]. He swore by the place of his feet: “*Nay, I swear by this land!*” [90:1]. He swore by his face and hair: “*By the bright morning! And by the night when still!*” [93:1-2].

He never veiled him from His gaze: *Surely thou art in Our eyes* [52:48]. *Who sees thee when thou standest* [26:218]. In sleep and wakefulness He kept him protected: *And God will protect thee from the people* [5:67]. He was his sufficiency in all of his states: *Does God not suffice His servant?* [39:36].

He joined him with the revelation everywhere and in every state. He was asleep when revelation came: “*O enwrapped in thy cloak!*” [74:1]. *O enwrapped in thy robe!* [73:1].” He was on a camel when revelation came: “*Today I have perfected for you your religion*” [5:3]. He was in the road of battle when revelation came: “*O people, be wary of your Lord—surely the quaking of the Hour is a tremendous thing*” [22:1]. He had come out of Mecca to Juhfah when revelation came: “*He who made the Qur’an obligatory upon thee shall restore thee to a place of return*” [28:85]. He was in the cave when the Exalted Lord disclosed him as *the second of two, when the two were in the cave* [9:40]. He was grieving when revelation came: “*We indeed know that thy breast is straitened by what they say*” [15:97]. He was happy when revelation came: “*Surely We opened up for thee a clear opening*” [48:1]. He was in Jerusalem on the night of the *miʿrāj* when revelation came: “*And ask those We sent*” [43:45]. He was in the presence of Two-Bows’ Length on the carpet of joy when he heard without intermediary, “*Then He revealed to His servant what He revealed*” [53:10].

Passion came and gave spirit and heart to the Beloved.

The Object of passion gave me a spirit from His own spirit.

Such were the wines that He gave in concealment

that one drop will not be given for a hundred thousand spirits.

The chevaliers of the Tariqah and lords of recognition have voiced another secret in the meaning of Qāf. They say that Mount Qāf, which is known to surround the world, is the work of the Qāf with which He has surrounded the hearts of the friends.

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1 Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* 50:1.

In this world, when someone wants to pass beyond Mount Qāf, his feet are held back and it is said to him, “There is no road beyond Qāf and no way to pass over it.” In the same way, when someone has stepped into the realm of the heart and the desert of the breast and wants to take one step outside the attributes of the heart and the world of the breast, his foot is held in the heart’s station. It is said to him, “Where are you going? I am right here with you. ‘I am with those whose hearts are broken for Me.’”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, if I have, why don’t I catch a scent? And if I don’t, to whom shall I voice this longing? O God, when someone is given one look, his intellect takes flight. How can he who sees You constantly with the eye of the heart have any rest?”

This is a marvelous work—someone who gazes on Him and also seeks Him from Him. He is together with His seeker, so what use is seeking? This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, “*We are nearer to him than the jugular vein*” [50:16]. This verse alludes to the Real’s proximity to the servant. As for the servant’s proximity to the Real, that is as He says: “*Prostrate thyself and draw near*” [96:19].

Muṣṭafā said, reporting from the Real, “The servant never ceases drawing near to Me through supererogatory works until I love him.” At first the servant’s proximity to the Real is through faith and assenting to the truth, and at last it is through beautiful doing and realization.

“Beautiful doing is that you worship God as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you.” This report alludes to the heart’s encounter with the Real, the secret core’s convergence with the Unseen, and the spirit’s contemplation during hidden, whispered prayer.

The Real’s proximity to the servant is of two sorts. One is proximity with all creation through knowledge and power, like His words, “*And He is with you wherever you are*” [57:4]. The other is proximity with the elect of the Threshold through the characteristics of kindness and the marks bearing witness to gentleness, like His words, “*We are nearer to him.*”

First He gives the servant proximity to the Unseen so as to keep him back from the world. Then He gives him proximity through unveiling so as to keep him back from the world’s folk. Then He gives him true proximity so as to keep him back from water and clay. He decreases the marks bearing witness to the servant and increases the marks bearing witness to Himself such that, just as he was at first, so also he will be at last—attachments cut, causes dissolved, traces nullified, limits come to nothing, allusions ended, expressions negated, reports effaced, and the one Real subsisting in His rightful due. *And God is better and more subsisting* [20:73].

I saw my beloved with the eye of my heart.

He said, “Who are you?” I said, “You.”

You have passed beyond every limit

by effacing “where,” so where are you?

**50:17** *When the two receivers receive, sitting on the right and on the left.*

It is reported that the two angels entrusted with the servant sit like the servant. The one on the right writes his beautiful deeds, and the one on the left writes his ugly deeds. When the servant sleeps, one stands above his pillow, while the other watches over him from his feet. When the servant walks, one goes before him and one goes behind, both of them protecting him from blights.

It has also been said that the angel of beautiful deeds is changed every day and night, another angel being sent. The wisdom in this is that tomorrow he will have many witnesses for his acts of obedience and beautiful deeds. But the angel of ugly deeds is not changed, so only that angel will know his defects.

The equivalent of this in the Qur’an is found in the verse, “*O My servants who have been immoderate against yourselves*” [39:53]. In saying “*who have been immoderate*” God sums everything up, keeping the lid on and without going into detail. He says: O Gabriel, you deliver the revelation, for they *have been immoderate*, but know not in detail what they have done. O Muḥammad, you recite the revelation, for they *have been immoderate*, but know not what they have done. Generous Lord, merciful King! He did not want Gabriel to know the sins of the ser-

vants and the Messenger to recite their acts of disobedience. How could He then allow Satan to drive the servant away from His threshold?

**50:18** *Not a word he utters, but by him is an observer ready.*

The angel on the right is the angel of bounty, the angel on the left the angel of justice. Just as bounty rules over justice, so also the right-hand angel rules over the left-hand angel. O angel on the right! You be the commander. Write down ten beautiful deeds for every beautiful deed he performs. O angel on the left! You be the follower. Write down nothing except what the angel on the right tells you to write. When the servant commits an act of disobedience, the angel on the right says, "Wait seven days before you write it down. Perhaps he will offer an excuse and repent."

What is all this? It is the result of one decree that God issued in the Beginningless: "My mercy precedes My wrath."

Listen to something even more wonderful: When the servant is disobedient, the command comes, "Pull down the curtain of his faith so that his faith may conceal and overpower his offense and sin."

So many offenses and acts of disobedience come together that they say, "O God, there is much offense, and the curtain of faith does not conceal it."

He says, "If the curtain of his faith does not conceal it, then pull down the curtain of My generosity so that it will be concealed."<sup>2</sup>

**50:19** *And the agony of death comes with the rightful due.*

Know, O chevalier, that from the era of Adam until the annihilation of the world, no one is released from death. You also will not escape. "Death is a cup, and everyone will drink it."

How will the passing days that were not loyal to Adam be loyal to you? How will the lifespan that ended for Noah keep you in subsistence? How will the moment of death that attacked Abraham let you get away? How will the death that ambushed Solomon be lenient toward you? How will the entrusted angel who demanded Muḥammad's spirit treat you kindly? If you bring to hand the lifespan of Noah, the wealth of Korah, the kingdom of Solomon, and the wisdom of Luqmān, they will be useless at the door of death and will show you no favor. A little less than 7000 years have passed since the Adamites began this journey. They come from the loins to the wombs, and they go from the wombs to the face of the earth, and from the face of the earth to its stomach. The whole world is a graveyard. Beneath it is all remorse, above it all remorse. Lift up your head and ask heaven: "How many dear ones do you have in your stomach?"

Ask the lofty palace about its inhabitant  
whom it saved from the hard and soft of life.  
He established his kingdom and enslaved the people,  
then death's messenger threw him on his face.

O fooled by wishes! O heedless of the moment of death! O prisoner of greed! O servant of need! How long will you grieve for summer in winter and grieve for winter in summer? You do not think about the work that will come about inescapably and you do not gather the supplies for the road that in verified truth will be walked. You arrange the work of this world and do not provide for death.

You poor wretch, your death is right behind you. Remember it! Your home is the grave. Make it flourish! Today you are asleep—wait till you wake up. Today you are drunk—wait till you are sober. You gather the chaff of this world and keep back from what deserves to be done. Why do you want to remain with this forever? Wait till the angel of death comes and plunders your life, the heirs come and plunder your wealth, the adversary comes and plunders your obedience, the worms come and plunder your skin and flesh. Alas if in this heedlessness and slipping, in this bustle and darkness, the enemy should come and plunder your faith! What a poor wretch you will be—without body, without life, without property, without gain and loss, without obedience, and without faith!

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<sup>2</sup> The commentary on this verse is drawn from RA 576.

If you have any doubt about death, count back the number of your fathers to Adam the Chosen, not one of whom was released from death. In the world there was no one who had the position and respect of Muṣṭafā the Arab in the Exalted Threshold, but he was shown no leniency: “*Surely thou wilt die and surely they will die* [39:30]. O master before whose perfection the totality of perfection is but a dot! O paragon the vision of the face of whose beauty turns the bright moon black! The world’s sun is distracted in your north wind. Riḍwān approves of being the doorman for your Ṣuhayb and Bilāl. The angels scatter stars from the spheres on your harmonious cheek and stature. Musk is envious of your tresses and mole! Splendor [*majd*], praise [*hamd*], creed [*milla*], and good fortune [*dawla*] are joined with your M, Ḥ, M, and D! Despite all this distinction and rank, O master, you must walk the road of annihilation and you must sleep on the floor of the grave. Your father Abraham was not released from this severity. Your brother Moses did not escape from this poison.

“O Muhammad, now the work is finished and the foundations of the Shariah have been put in order: *Today I have perfected for you your religion* [5:3]. You have read out the edict of messengership, you have conquered Mecca, you have triumphed over the enemies, you have shredded the skirt of unbelief, you have destroyed the stalwarts of Quraysh, and you have purified the Kaaba of idols. In fear of you the Byzantine emperor is unsettled in his palace, the king in Ethiopia is your servant boy, and Heraclius in Byzantium is obedient to your command and message. Heaven is delighted by the top of your head and earth is delighted by the bottom of your feet. The time has come for you to turn your face to death and leave all that entirely. Once a work reaches perfection, it turns to decrease. When the moon is a crescent in heaven it increases; when it becomes full and complete in its radiance, it turns toward decrease. In springtime the branches of trees increase every day, bringing leaves, making flowers bloom, keeping the world perfumed, and making the meadows luminous. When they reach perfection and give fruit, they fall into decrease.

“O master of the world, O paragon of Adam’s children! The time has come for you to put the earring of death on the ear of servanthood and aim for My Presence, so that I may do what you want.”

The story of his death has already been told in the Surah al-Anbiyā’.

*And the agony of death comes with the rightful due.* Although the state of death appears difficult outwardly, therein the faithful and the friends have nothing but exaltedness and joy; at every instant a comfort comes from the Friend, at every moment a robe of honor. This is why Muṣṭafā said, “The gift of the faithful is death.” No possessor of truthfulness fears death.

Ḥusayn ibn °Alī saw his father battling with one shirt. He said, “This is not the dress of warriors!”

°Alī said, “Your father does not care if he falls upon death or if death falls upon him.”

Truthfulness is the traveling supplies for the journey to death. Death is the road of subsistence, and subsistence is the cause of the encounter. “When someone loves the encounter with God, God loves the encounter with him.”

When the folk of heedlessness reach the edge of death, [they look at what will be given to them. But when the folk of the Haqiqah reach the edge of death,]<sup>3</sup> they look at what will be taken from them. The worn-out shirt will be taken from his back and a new robe put in its place. A man has had one shirt for seventy years and it has become worn out. It is taken from his back and he is clothed in the shirt of the endless kingdom. That is a place for happiness, not weeping.

The life of °Ammār Yāsir reached ninety years. When he took a spear in hand, his hand trembled. Muṣṭafā had said to him that his last food in this world would be milk. °Ammār was present in the battle of Siffin, a spear in hand, and he became thirsty. He asked for a drink of water and was given a cup of milk. He went forth saying, “Today I will encounter the beloveds, Muhammad and his party.”<sup>4</sup>

O chevalier! The life of this world is a dark curtain pulled over your days. On the day of death, the hand of gentleness will pull back the curtain so that you may reach the center point of endless life. As long as this life is in place, endless subsistence is behind the curtain. When the curtain is lifted, endless subsistence will show its face to you. That is His words, “*We shall surely give him to live a goodly life*” [16:97].

3 The text in brackets is from RA and must have been dropped at some point in the copying or printing process.

4 The five paragraphs to here are from RA 615.

It is said that the person of faith in the grave is like the infant in its mother's womb. Think what the state was at first in the womb: You were weak, without strength or power, without going or taking, without hearing or speaking: "I made you appear in those darknesses and held up your mother's liver to you like a mirror. I made your shape apparent within it so that whatever you needed she ate and conveyed to you. You were in joy and ease, and no one was aware of you. At the end I will do what I did at first: I will take away your seeing, speaking, hearing, taking, and going and I will place you in the grave. Just as at first I made your mother's liver your mirror, so I will make the grave your mirror. Just as I conveyed to you the ease of the blessings of this world in the womb and no one was aware, so also in the end I will convey to you the ease of the scent of paradise and no one will be aware. Thus will you know that I am ever-merciful, generous, and gentle.

"My servant, I had the power to make you appear without the prison of the womb. I had the power to convey the prison of the grave to the resurrection, but I kept you nine months in the prison of the womb and I kept you for long years in the grave. Why do I do this?"

"My servant, when I wanted to free Joseph from the hand of his brothers' envy, I kept him for three days in the prison of the well. When I wanted to entrust the kingdom of Egypt to him, I kept him for seven years in prison. O Joseph the Sincerely truthful! Being at ease from the hands of the envious is worth three days of prison in the well. The empire and rulership of Egypt is worth seven years in Egypt's prison. For the *tawhīd*-voicing person of faith, seeing the beauty of mother and father is worth nine months in the prison of the womb. Seeing Him who has no beginning and no end is worth a thousand years in the prison of the grave."

**50:37 Surely in that is a reminder for him who has a heart.**

If you rub your face in the dust a hundred times and traverse the world on your forehead, so long as your obedience is not the bosom friend of the true center point called the "heart," all will be inscribed with nothingness. A report has come, "The meditation of an hour is better than the worship of jinn and men."

When the servant comes to the Threshold and begins secret whispering while the heart is still captive to this world's preoccupations, abandonment will be inscribed on that obedience and it will be thrown back in his face. It has been said, "When someone's heart is not present in his prayer, his prayer is not accepted." When a heart is delivered from the shackles of servanthood to others, that heart is one for the Real. It does not have the color of eye-service toward the people, nor the dust of seeking reputation. Nonetheless, it is in the ship of peril, for the Master of the Shariah has made this allusion: "The sincerely truthful are in great peril."

The purer someone becomes, the closer he is to the Real. The closer he is to the Real, the more he trembles. The proximate angels of the Presence, the attendants of the Threshold of the Self-Sufficient, and the pure ones of the Empire are always in fear, for He says, "*And they are apprehensive in fear of Him* [21:28]. *The only ones of His servants who are frightened of God are the knowers* [35:28]." Muṣṭafā said, "I hope that the most truthful of you toward God's prophet will be the most fearful of you toward God."

The near ones are bewildered  
for they know the Sultan's harshness.

The vizier is always quivering in his watchfulness toward the sultan, but the stableman has no fear, for the vizier's breast is the storehouse of the sultan's secrets, and breaking the seal of the storehouse is full of peril.

Ḥudhayfa Yamān was the possessor of the Messenger's secret. He said, "One day I saw Satan weeping. I said, 'O accursed one! What is this wailing and weeping of yours?'"

"He said, 'It is because of two things. One is that the Threshold has opened me up to cursing, and the other is that He has shut me off from the hearts of the faithful. Whenever I aim for the threshold of the heart of a man of faith, I am burned by the fire of awesomeness.'"

Revelation came to David: "Your tongue is a broker making claims at the top the bazaar. It has no place at the forefront of the religion's kingdom. That place belongs to the heart, for it gives

off the scent of the mysteries of unity and endlessness.

The ruler of Egypt said to his brothers, “Pack your bags and go back to your homeland and lodging place, for your hearts do not give off the scent of love for Joseph.

This is the secret of the words of the Lord of the Worlds, “*Surely in that is a reminder for him who has a heart.*”

## Surah 51: al-Dhāriyāt

### **51:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

*In the name of God* reports of the exaltedness and power of the Possessor of Majesty. *The All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful* alludes to the attribute of the clemency and gentleness of perfect beauty. The majesty of the divinity burned away a hundred thousand spirits of the seekers. The beauty of the self-sufficiency lit up a hundred thousand spirits of the lovers. One group burns in the severity of majesty in dread of severance, another group lights up in the gentleness of beauty in hope of union.

Night and day under the influence of these two attributes, the hearts of the servants are sometimes in fear and sometimes in hope, and by the requisite of these two roots, sometimes in contraction and sometimes in expansion. At the time of contraction, they see everything in lassitude and awe; at the time of expansion they see all in gentleness and mercy. At the time of contraction the cold wind of severity comes, the marks giving witness to majesty appear, and the servant burns, weeps, and enters into pleading. At the time of expansion the breeze of gentleness brings the scent of union, the marks giving witness to beauty appear, and the servant delights and enters into ease. At the time of contraction, he gazes on tremendousness and sees all as pain and melting. At the time of expansion he gazes on proximity and sees all as intimacy and joy.

This is why the Pir of the Tariqah said, “Gaze on proximity so that intimacy may be born! Gaze on tremendousness so that reverence may increase! Wait between this and that to see what indeed will be shown by the precedence of the Beginningless.”

### **51:1** *By the scatterers scattering.*

This is an allusion to the dawn winds that carry the moaning of the yearners to the courtyards of exaltedness, then bring the breeze of proximity to the nostrils of the secret cores of the folk of love, letting them find ease from the overpowering force of rapture.

I will let the winds guide me to your breeze  
when their blowing comes from your direction.  
I will ask them to carry my greetings to you.  
If they arrive one day, respond to me!<sup>1</sup>

When the announcers of the good news of dawn appear, the army of brightness breaks out of its ambush, and the east wind begins to blow love into the world’s air, then a dawn wind is sent into the road like a messenger from the Gardens of Eden in order to convey the divine inbreathings to the nostrils of the secret cores of the friends. Exalted is the hour and great the moment when, on the carpet of *We are nearer* [50:16] in the seclusion of *He is with you* [57:4], He conveys the wine of “I am the sitting companion of him who remembers Me” to His friends, secret to secret, without the intrusion of others! In the attribute of clemency the caller of exaltedness calls out in the world of being so as to caress the poor: “Who will lend to one who is neither lacking nor wrongdoing?”<sup>2</sup> What wonder if at that moment He says in the heart of the servant, “My servant, *fear not, thou art among the secure*” [28:31].

1 The previous paragraph and the poetry are from LI 6:27.

2 For a more complete version of this *ḥadīth qudsī*, see under 2:245.

**51:49** *Of everything We created a pair.*

In this verse there is an affirmation of the Lord's solitariness and unity. When God creates newly arrived things and engendered beings, He creates them as pairs, whether linked to each other or opposed to each other. For example: male and female, day and night, light and darkness, heaven and earth, land and sea, sun and moon, jinn and mankind, obedience and disobedience, felicity and wretchedness, guidance and misguidance, exaltation and abasement, power and incapacity, strength and weakness, knowledge and ignorance, life and death.

He created the attributes of the creatures in this manner—paired with each other or opposed to each other—so that they would not resemble the attributes of the Creator. Thus His unity and solitariness would become manifest to them, for His exaltation has no abasement, His power no incapacity, His strength no weakness, His knowledge no ignorance, His life no death, His joy no sorrow, His subsistence no annihilation.

The uniquely one God is one in Essence and attributes, unique in worthiness. He is incomparable with everyone and separate from everything. *Nothing is as His likeness* [42:11]. No one is like Him and nothing is similar to or resembles Him. Resemblance derives from partnership, and God has no associate or partner. He is without equal and without need.

The door of His withholding is shut and the door of His munificence open. He forgives sins and caresses the faulty. He makes His love apparent by caressing servants. He loves His servants, though He has no needs. He brings about love between Himself and the servants without association or partnership. Thus the servants, no matter what their states—whether wounded by the arrow of trial or drowned in gentleness and bestowal—should seize hold of His generosity and seek shelter in Him, fleeing to Him from the creatures. This is why He issues the command, “*So flee to God!*” [51:50].

## Surah 52: al-Ṭūr

### 52:2 *And an inscribed book.*

In the tongue of allusion and according to the tasting of the Folk of the Haqiqah, the *inscribed book* is what He wrote against Himself in the Beginningless Covenant: “My mercy takes precedence over My wrath.”<sup>1</sup>

May a thousand dear spirits be sacrificed to that heart-caressing moment when He gave us a place of seclusion without us and opened for us the door of His infinite acts of gentleness! With beginningless solicitude and precedent, endless gentleness He was saying to us, “My mercy takes precedence over My wrath.”

O chevalier! Give thanks to the God who, before you asked, gave you something that you would not have reached even if He had left you with yourself and you had thought for a thousand thousand years under your own control. He called you when you were heedless, He taught you when you were ignorant, He created you when you were *not a thing remembered* [76:1], and He *will pour* for you from the cup of His kindness in the sitting place of His secret *a pure wine* [76:21].<sup>2</sup> All of these are the traces of the precedence of mercy of which He spoke: “My mercy takes precedence over My wrath.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, You planted the seed of guidance with beginningless solicitude, You watered it with the messages of the prophets, You made it grow with help and success-giving, and You nurtured it with Your own gaze. Now it will be fitting if You do not let the wind of justice blow, if You do not stir up the poisons of severity, and if You help with endless kind favor what You planted with beginningless solicitude.”<sup>3</sup>

### 52:4 *By the Inhabited House.*

*The Inhabited House* is an allusion to the hearts of the recognizers, inhabited with recognition and love.<sup>4</sup>

This is an allusion to the hearts of recognizers that are inhabited with recognition and love of God, hearts that live through His gaze and are happy with His gentleness.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “There are three things within which lie the servant’s felicity and through which servanthood’s face is bright: the tongue’s occupation with remembering the Real, the heart’s immersion in loving the Real, and the secret core’s filling with the gaze of the Real. First comes the gaze from the Real, thus adorning the heart with love and keeping the tongue in remembrance.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, Your remembrance is my religion, Your love is my way, and Your gaze is the eye of certainty. This is my last word. O Gentle One, You know that this is so.”

A great man said, “A tongue that is busy with His remembrance, a heart that is inhabited by His love, a spirit that is joyful with His gaze—in reality, this is *the Inhabited House*.”

This state has three marks in which is the perfection of servanthood: plentiful deeds, being concealed from the people, and a heart always hurrying to the time of devotion.

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1 LI 6:39.

2 Up to here, this paragraph is taken from RA 509.

3 This prayer seems in fact not to be by Anṣārī, but is taken rather from Sam‘ānī (RA 84). See the note under 19:2.

4 LI 6:40.

**52:13** *The day they are driven with a driving to the fire of hell.*

This verse demands fear.

**52:17-18** *Surely the godwary will be in gardens and bliss, rejoicing in what their Lord has given them.*

These verses demand hope.

The Lord of the worlds has them follow one after another so that the servant will constantly travel between hope and fear. Hope and fear are each other's mates. When they come together, the beauty of faith's realities shows its face. Any traveling that is empty of these two meanings will result either in security or in despair, and these two are attributes of the unbelievers. This is because one feels secure from the incapable, and to believe that God is incapable is unbelief. One despairs of the base, and to believe that there is baseness in God is associationism.

Also, one must not simply fear punishment, nor must one simply hope and wait for mercy. This will become clear to you with an example: When a lamp has no oil, it gives no light. When it has oil but no fire, it gives no illumination. When there are oil and fire but no wick to sacrifice its being, it is not complete. Thus fear is like fire, hope like oil, faith like a wick, and the heart like a lamp-holder. If there is only fear, this is like a lamp that has no oil. If there is only hope, this is like a lamp that has oil but no fire. When fear and hope come together, the result is a lamp that has both the oil to aid subsistence and the fire to give the material of illumination. Thus faith takes help from both, one for subsistence and one for illumination. The person of faith travels on the road with the escort of illumination and walks with the escort of subsistence.<sup>5</sup>

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5 These two paragraphs are derived from RA 85.

## Surah 53: al-Najm

### **53:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

This is a name that designates the majesty of Him who always was, a name that reports about the beauty of Him who always was, a name that alerts to the welcome of Him who always was, a name that alludes to the bounteousness of Him who always was. The recognizers witness His majesty and lose their wits, the limpid witness His beauty and delight in life, and the friends witness His welcome and flourish.

This is the name of the Lord who possesses majesty without disappearance and beauty to perfection. His majesty is a world-burning fire and His beauty a universe-brightening light. His majesty plunders the hearts of the desirers and His beauty eases the spirits of the tested. His majesty plunders the heart that puts down its bags in Him. When His beauty discloses itself, it pulls all sorrow from the heart.

Recognizers look at His majesty and lament, lovers look at His beauty and rejoice. Those lament in fear of separation, these rejoice in hope of union. The poor wretch who hears His name, unaware of His beauty and seeing no trace of His majesty! He does not know that this name fills a mountain range with tulips and brings the hearts of the awake to lamentation. Hearing this name increases revelry and finding this name snatches away attributes. It brings the hearts of the recognizers to a boil and the disobedient to wailing and shouting.

The painters paint Your name in a hundred meanings,  
they give up their spirits in remembering You and Your name.

There was a great man who in every state and at every moment was always saying this name. After his death he was seen in a dream and asked about his state. He said, "I was saved from hellfire and arrived at the Abode of Bliss through the blessing of *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*"

### **53:1** *By the star when it fell.*

Know that in this surah the Real reported about the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj* of that paragon of the world and master of the children of Adam, his journey to heaven, and his return from contemplation and face-to-face vision. Thus by knowing this story his community may give repose to their spirits and increase the light and joy of their hearts. At the beginning of the Surah of Banī Isrāʾīl He mentions the story of his going and, to show its greatness, put His own incomparability before it: "*Glory to be Him who took His servant by night*" [17:1]. In this surah He explains his return from the Presence and, to declare its eminence, swears by his person: "*By the star when it fell! By that bright star, by that full moon, by that lit lamp, when he returned from the presence of face-to-face vision!*" His person saw the station of proximity, his heart found the repose of contemplation, his secret core reached the good fortune of union, and he listened to the secrets in the secluded cell of *Or closer* [53:9] on the carpet of expansiveness.

Know that the Master's going to that way station is not strange, but his resting in this way station is wondrous, for the people of the world are in the darkness of distance, but he was in the light of nearness and proximity. When that paragon left Gabriel in his *known station* [37:164] and passed on, he entrusted the luminous secrets of his outwardness and inwardness to the attraction of

the Presence. He dove into the sea of light and the ocean of tremendousness and he traversed the canopy of eminence with the feet of aspiration. Just as a magnet attracts iron to itself, so the spires of the Splendorous Throne attracted that paragon to itself. From the Splendorous Throne he aimed for the presence of *two-bows' length* [53:9], and in the station of *two-bows' length* he made himself a resting place on the seat of beauty in the description of perfection while contemplating majesty. The exalted revelation explains these intimations in these words:

**53:8-9** *Then He drew close, so He came down until he was two-bows' length away, or closer.*

Among all the creatures in the World of the Realities, none was greater than Muḥammad Muṣṭafā. The root desire of the divine decree in accordance with the beginningless knowledge was to bring about the state of that paragon and make manifest his majesty.

The first substance that received a robe from the command *Be!* and upon which shone the sun of the Real's gentleness was his pure spirit. There was still no Throne or Carpet, no nighttime intrusion or daytime mercy, when God's artisanry brought his spirit from the repository of beginningless knowledge to the lodging place of endless splendor. He put it on display in the meadow of approval and the station of contemplation. Whatever came into existence afterwards rode on the coattails of his spirit's existence. Whatever people imagine of familiarity, nearness, clemency, mercy, leadership, and felicity, He sprinkled over his spirit's essence and attributes. Then He placed it inside the frame of Adam the Chosen and made it pass over the degrees of variegation and the trails of stability. Then He sat it down in the seat of messengerhood, commanding it to call the people to the presence of the religion, to bring the lost back to the road, and to invite the travelers to the Threshold.

You might say that this paragon was a falcon trained on the hand of bounty, nurtured on the carpet of proximity and nearness, and brought forth from the togetherness of contemplation to the dispersion of invitation so that he could hunt a world and place everyone before the gentleness and severity of the Real. Today he makes everyone his prey with the Shariah, and tomorrow, in the station of intercession, he will entrust them all to the Real.

When that paragon stepped into the playing field of invitation and when the exalted ones of the Presence responded, the vanguard of trial showed its face from every corner. From the heaven of creativity the rain of tribulation began to fall. The Eternal Qur'an reports the story of their grief as follows: "*We will indeed try you with something of fear and hunger*" [2:155]. "*You will surely be tried in your possessions and your selves and you will hear much hurt from those who were given the Book before you and from the associaters*" [3:186].

O chevalier! Whoever strikes his tent at the top of love's street will have no escape from tasting trial and hearing disloyalty. As long as you keep your feet in the world of safety, the whole world will be your carpet. When you step into the world of passion, you will be twisted with the chain of moaning on the rack of trial, and the neck of your need will be hung from the knocker on the door of unneediness. If you are a manly knight and a faithful lover, you will shout out, "*Is there any more?*" [50:30]. Otherwise, if the pain of the blow of severity's sword brings forth "I cannot bear it!" from you, they will strike your head with the whip of rebuke and say,

"When you knew that your love was not true,  
you should not have made the intention to fall for Me."

When the suffering of the trial of those pure Companions, the exalted ones of the Presence, reached its utmost, and the injuries and attacks of the unbelievers passed the limit, a command came to Gabriel, the messenger of the Presence, the courier of Mercy, the emissary of prophecy: "O Gabriel, the hearts of those faithful, exalted Companions have remained in bewilderment and grief, and their breasts have become the quarry of sorrow and regret. It seems that they know nothing of the varieties of bliss and the gentle favors of generosity that We have prepared for them in the subsistent home, nor of the bestowals and chambers that We have built in their names. Rise up, pass through the layers of heaven, and travel to the lower world. Go to the threshold of Muḥammad the Arab, that paragon of the world and master of the children of Adam, their prophet and Our mes-

senger, and tell him to come to the Presence to see their final issue and returning place. He can recount that joy, bliss, and tremendous triumph that We have made for them and place a balm on their hearts. Then the hardship and trial they suffer in this world may become easy for them in the hope for this generosity and bestowal.”

“O Muḥammad! Tell your companions that someone will be aware of the sweetness of union once he has tasted the bitter colocynth of separation.” When someone hopes for a great kingdom in the neighborhood of the generous Lord, it is not beneath him to carry the burden of tribulation and, with the hope of that blessing, to consider the tribulation good fortune. Thus the Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, I wept so many tears in hoping for union that I sowed the seeds of pain with my eyes’ water.

“If I find endless felicity,  
I will approve of this pain.  
If one day my eyes fall on You,  
I will count all tribulation as good fortune.”<sup>1</sup>

It has been reported that on the morning of the day after the night of the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj*, Muṣṭafā reported about the beginning of his journey in the earth to Jerusalem. The exalted Companions became happy and accepted that, and the report was spread in Mecca. Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq was absent that day and had not seen the Prophet. When Abū Jahl heard the report, he said to himself, “If it is possible to turn Abū Bakr away from the followers of Muḥammad through some cause, the cause may be this absurd report.” Hence he got up and set off in the road of Abū Bakr. He said to him, “O son of Abū Qaḥāfa! This companion of yours Muḥammad is talking about an absurdity that no intelligent man would ever accept. He says that last night he left his mosque and went to Jerusalem and returned the same night. O Abū Bakr! Do you believe that someone can in one night go from Mecca to Jerusalem and return on the same night? That is one month for a caravan or a man who goes on foot. If you believe this absurd report, there is no doubt whatsoever that your intelligence is defective.”

The sincerely truthful Abū Bakr gave him a circumspect answer and abbreviated explanation. He said, “If he said that, he is telling the truth.”

Abū Jahl despaired of him, and Abū Bakr hurried to the Messenger and, before sitting down said to him, like someone truthful and in love, “O Messenger of God! Tell me about your journey last night.”

He said, “O Abū Bakr, last night Gabriel came bringing Burāq and took me to Jerusalem. I saw the pure spirits of the prophets and the chieftains of the Higher Plenum and I led them in prayer. From there I journeyed to the realm of the Dominion and arrived at the Highest Horizon. I saw the greatest signs and returned to the region of Mecca while it was still night.”

Abū Bakr said, “You have spoken the truth, O Messenger of God! By the exaltedness of that Lord who sent you with the truth, just as you were awake and taken on this journey in your form and person from place to place, my spirit was also taken in companionship with and service to you. Your journey was in the form and frame and my journey in serving you was in spirit and secret core. I saw myself in a dream in your service, and you were shown in wakefulness by the confirmation of the Real.” Just as he was saying these words, trustworthy Gabriel came and revealed this verse: “*And he who brought truthfulness and he who assented to it*” [39:33]. From that day on Abū Bakr’s title became “the sincerely truthful,” and until the coming of the Hour the folk of the Sunnah and the Jamā<sup>c</sup>a will be emulating him in assenting to the truthfulness of the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj*. I have told the whole story of the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj* and its subtleties and realities at the beginning of the Surah of Banī Isrā<sup>3</sup>īl.<sup>2</sup>

Someone may ask, “It is narrated that on the night of the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj*, when that paragon of the

1 Note that under 4:49, Maybudī quotes this same saying, but here the wording of the last two sentences is changed in order to produce a quatrain.

2 This is a sixteen page account called “The *Mi<sup>c</sup>rāj* of the Messenger” appended to Stage Two of the commentary on Surah 17 (KA 5:484-500).

world wanted to place his feet in the stirrups, Burāq shied away from him. Why did Burāq shy away?"

The answer is that when Burāq saw that he would be the steed of the Master, he lifted up his head, rejoiced, and strutted. He said, "O Master! I have a hope from you. Afterwards a day will come when you will strut into paradise, just as today you are going to Jerusalem. On that day also I want to be your mount, for the habit of noble men is that whoever seeks an intimate at night will have in the day the rejoicing of a close friend."

The paragon of the world verified this covenant for him and with the clemency of prophethood and the tenderness of messengerhood said, "At the resurrection, you will be my mount."

Then Burāq said, "O paragon of the world, nonetheless I still want a souvenir from you so that I may bind it around my neck as a collar and make it a necklace for myself."

The Master answered his request and gave a strand of his black hair to him. Burāq bound that to his neck with the hand of need and until the coming of the Hour will remain in the giddiness of that wine and the revelry of that union.

Now, some have said that Burāq shied from his hand because the smell of idols came from it. Gabriel asked the Messenger about that, and he said, "One day I was passing by an idol and I put my hand on it and said, 'This poor wretch of an idol does not know that it is being worshiped. And even worse of a wretch is he who worships it.' That is where the smell comes from." This has been transmitted, but the transmitter is not reliable and the answer not correct. The correct answer is what I said at first.

Someone may ask, "What wisdom is there in the fact that on the night of the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj*, Moses spoke with him about reducing the number of prayers, but no other prophet spoke of that?"

The answer is that Moses was a possessor of whispered prayers in this world and he had the opinion that no one's level was higher than his level and no one's *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj* beyond his *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj*. But Moses' *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj* was to the Mount, and Muḥammad's *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj* was to the Carpet of Light. Moses was commanded to fast for forty days, and when he was made present in the presence of whispered prayer, some of his requests were granted and some were not. But Muḥammad was the unique pearl of the ocean of creativity, and he was taken to the Presence still stained by sleep. In one instant he asked several times for reduction, and all of that was granted to him. This was so that Moses would come to know the eminence and level of Muṣṭafā and ask forgiveness for what he had said: "A young man has been made to pass above my head!" What is even more wondrous is that when Moses asked for vision—"Show me, that I may gaze upon Thee!"—he was answered with the sword of jealousy: "Thou shalt not see Me." When the damage of that question struck against him, he paid the fine with "I repent to Thee" [7:143].

When the turn of Muṣṭafā arrived, his eyes were anointed with the collyrium of jealousy: "Stretch not thine eyes! [15:88]. O Muḥammad, be careful that you not lend to anyone the eyes with which you see Me. The paragon bound his eyes with the band of *the eyesight did not swerve, nor did it trespass* [53:17]. He said with the tongue of his state,

"I will bind up my eyes and not again open them  
until the day of visiting You, O Exalted Companion!"

This is why, when he became present in the Presence, the majesty and beauty of the Possessor of Majesty was unveiled to him: *His mindful heart did not lie about what he saw* [53:11].

When I whisper secretly with You, all my body becomes heart.  
When I open my eyes, all I see is Your beauty.

\*

If I remember Him, all of me is heart:  
if I look at Him, all of me is eye.

It has been said that when Moses returned from the presence of whispered prayer, the light of awesomeness and tremendousness came with him, so everyone who looked upon him was blinded. But when Muṣṭafā returned from the presence of contemplation, the light of intimacy came along

with him, so everyone who looked upon him increased in eyesight.<sup>3</sup> The former is the station of the folk of variegation, and the latter the state of the lords of stability.

**53:10** *He revealed to His servant what He revealed.*

Even though He said these words with the lid on and left them obscure so as to declare the greatness of that state and the magnificence of Muṣṭafā's measure, it has been mentioned in some books that a group of the Companions asked Muṣṭafā what this revelation was. Muṣṭafā explained as much as their capacity was able to bear. He said that the Lord of the Worlds complained about his community, saying,

“O Muḥammad, in holding to the covenant, I who am the Lord did not create any of the depths of hell for your community. But they, in breaking the covenant, are trying to throw themselves into hell. O Muḥammad, I am the Exalter and the Abaser. He is exalted whom I exalt, and He is abased whom I abase. They are seeking exaltation from elsewhere and they see abasement coming from elsewhere. O Muḥammad, I do not ask them today for tomorrow's deeds, but today they seek from Me tomorrow's provision. O Muḥammad, the provision that I have put in their name I will not give to another, but they give the deeds that are My rightful due and fitting for Me to others through eye-service. O Muḥammad, the blessings come from Me and they show gratitude to others. O Muḥammad, nonetheless, I am seeking for pretexts to forgive your community. O Muḥammad, were it not that I love to rebuke them and talk with them, I would not call them to account for anything. O Muḥammad, I did four things with previous communities that I will not do with your community: I took a people into the earth, I changed a people's form, I rained down stones on a people, and I destroyed a people with the flames of fire. Because of your eminence and rank, I will not do any of these with your community. O Muḥammad, I secluded you with Me to show the people who you are and to show you who I am.”

When God's Messenger saw all this honoring and exalting from the Exalted Threshold, he said, “Lord God, bestow all of my community on me!”

The command came, “O Muḥammad, tonight you came alone. As a favor for your coming to this feast, I bestow upon you a third of that. Tomorrow at the resurrection in the Greatest Gathering, I will bestow the rest on you. Then the world's folk will know your level and rank with Me.” And God is the success-giver and helper!

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3 Beginning with the question about Moses and reducing the number of prayers, this passage is derived from RA 213-15. According to the Hadith literature, when the Prophet came down from visiting God, Moses asked him what he had received as a gift, and he replied fifty cycles of prayer a day. Moses told him he must ask for a reduction, and so he did, several times at Moses' insistence, and when the number reached five, he was ashamed to ask for more (Maybudi's account of this is found in KA 5:498).

## Surah 54: al-Qamar

### **54:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

The bodies of the seekers melt in the expanse of His magnificence, the spirits of the desirers splinter in the exaltedness of His subsistence, the hearts of the yearners burn in the inaccessibility of His majesty, beauty, and splendor, and the secret cores of the *tawhīd*-voicers revel in remembering His attributes and names.

It is *God* who brings the lost back to the road. From Him kings take greatness and position, and He is powerful over all things and king over every king. He is the hand-taker of all the helpless, and a good shelter for the incapable. When someone does not call upon Him, he is lost and his work spoiled. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, “*Gone astray are those whom you supplicate except Him*” [17:67].

It is the *All-Merciful* who is assigner of daily provision and nurturer of enemies, creator of good and evil, originator of the thing itself and its traces, and sculptor of Adam from neither father nor mother. You see someone in this world with rank and gravity, his breast unaware of the Real. You see someone else in whose heart is the tree of faith and in whose liver is the brand of familiarity, without shoes on his feet or scarf on his head. This is what the Exalted Lord says: “*Surely We created everything according to a measure*” [54:49].

It is the *Ever-Merciful* who bestows faith and a healthy heart and who delivers the faithful from the fire of Gehenna. He sent a noble messenger to the people, praised him for his *tremendous character* [68:4], and declared about him, “*eagerly desirous is he for you, and clement and ever-merciful toward the faithful*” [9:128].

### **54:49** *Surely We created everything according to a measure.*

“Everything that was, is, and will be is all My creation by My decree and determination, by My desire and will.” The decree has been made, the judgment issued, the work completed. It is not your desire that He puts into effect today. It is the beginningless deed that He makes apparent.

For one person the inscription of bounty was written by the beginningless gentleness. He accepted him before his deeds, He responded to him before his supplication, He bestowed upon him before his asking, He gave a robe of honor before his service, and He pardoned him before his sins.

Another person He branded with justice on the first day at the Beginningless Covenant, and He drove him from His threshold. His chastisement was before his disobedience, and His punishment before his sins.

O indigent man! Ask for nothing of Him but Him. Do not serve Him by making a contract. Making a contract is the creed of Iblis. Iblis said, “Now that You have rejected and cursed me and driven me from Your Presence, give me something: *Grant me respite till the day they are raised up* [7:14].” He gave him all of this world, but He took Himself back from him. When someone is held back from Him, even if he finds everything, he has found nothing. And when someone finds Him, even if he finds nothing, he has found everything.

It is as if God said, “My servant, you were not, but I was there for you. I was there for Myself in exaltedness, I was there for the wage-earner in mercy, and I was there for the friend in companionship. I saw you thrown down and I lifted you up. I saw you put aside and I accepted you. The attribute with which I lifted up is in place. Should I throw down what I lifted up? By My exalted

exaltedness, I will not throw down!”

**54:54** *Surely the godway will be in the midst of gardens and a river.*

The worth and exaltedness of that region lies not in roasted chicken, flowing rivers, and *women good and beautiful* [55:70]. The worth of the oyster lies not in the oyster—the oyster’s worth lies in the kingly pearl within. The worth of the house of subsistence lies not in the fact it has edibles and drinkables—its worth and eminence lie in that it has the stamp of proximity to the Real and the mark of election. For it is,

**54:55** *In a seat of truthfulness, at an Omnipotent King.*

In this meaning, someone composed a poem:

My covenant is not because of love for earthly dust,  
but for that in which the Beloved dwells.

\*

What I want from Your street is Your face.<sup>1</sup>

The word *at* has the stamp of proximity and election: “In the abode of the decree We gave this robe of proximity, eminence, and rank to Muṣṭafā the Arab, as he said: ‘I spend the night *at* my Lord.’ Tomorrow We will place this same robe and rank next to the faithful in the measure of their traveling, for they will be *in a seat of truthfulness, at an Omnipotent King.*”

Ṣāliḥ ibn Ḥayyān narrated from ʿAbdallāh ibn Barīda a saying concerning His words, *in a seat of truthfulness, at an Omnipotent King*: “The folk of the Garden will enter in upon the Compeller twice a day and recite for Him the Qur’an. Each man among them will sit in his own sitting place, on a pulpit of pearls, rubies, emeralds, gold, and silver, in accordance with their deeds. Their eyes will never be so delighted as they are by this. They will never have heard anything more tremendous and more beautiful. Then they will turn back to their lodging places, blissful, their eyes delighted, until the like of it on the morrow.”

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1 The verse and the hemistich are from RA 461.

## Surah 55: al-Raḥmān

### **55:1-2** *The All-Merciful—He taught the Qur’an.*

No one’s hand will reach the knocker on the Qur’an’s gate simply and easily, unless with the success-giving and facilitating of the All-Merciful. If anyone could reach this good fortune without the help of the All-Merciful, that would be Muṣṭafā, the Seal of the Prophets. But there is no one among the creatures with the majesty and rank that he had. Concerning him the Real says, “*The All-Merciful—He taught the Qur’an,*” that is, He taught Muḥammad the Qur’an.

As much as teachers strive in teaching, masters instruct, and memorizers keep classes going, all of these are secondary causes, and the teacher in reality is God. Whenever someone comes to be taught, He is the teacher. Whenever someone lights up, He is the light-giver. Whenever someone burns, He is the burner. Whenever something is made, He is the maker.

He taught Adam the knowledge of the names: *And He taught Adam the names, all of them* [2:31]. He taught David chain-mail making: *And We taught him the artisanry of garments for you* [21:80]. He taught Jesus the science of medicine: *And He will teach him the book and the wisdom* [3:48]. He taught Khidr the science of recognition: *We taught him knowledge from Us* [18:65]. He taught Muṣṭafā the secrets of the divinity: *He taught thee what thou didst not know* [4:113]. He taught the folk of the world explication:

### **55:3-4** *He created man. He taught him the explication.*

Some people say that *He created man* means all people generally—faithful and unbeliever, self-purifier and hypocrite, truthful and heretic. Whoever is human is included in this address. They say that He created everyone and taught them all explication. In other words, He gave everyone intellect, understanding, and upbringing so that they would find the road to their own best interests and discern between good and bad. He gave everyone language so that they would know each other’s desires—in every region a language; or rather, in every city a language; or rather, in every neighborhood a language. He specified the human individual for this and separated him out from other animals with this specification and bestowal of eminence.

It has also been said that *He created man* means all the faithful of Muḥammad’s community. *He taught him the explication* means the road of the Real, the pure Shariah, the unswerving religion. He taught it to them and showed its road to them: *Say: “This is my path. I invite to God”* [12:108]. *Invite to the path of thy Lord with wisdom!* [16:125].

He set this road up in three stations: first, recognition of the outward Shariah; second, recognition of the inward struggle and discipline; third, talk of the heart and its Beloved and the story of the friends.

Then He turned this over to three groups and taught the people on the tongues of these three groups: “Ask the ulama, mix with the possessors of wisdom, and sit with the great ones.” Learn the science of the Shariah from the ulama, the science of discipline from the possessors of wisdom, and the science of recognition from the great ones.

It has also been said that *man* in *He created man* is Adam the Chosen. This is the same man about whom He says, “*He created man of dried clay, like pottery*” [55:14]. Although in form he is pottery and clay, in conduct he is worthy of the pavilion of proximity and union. Outwardly, he is sculpted from water and clay; inwardly he is the carrier of the ruling power of love. Outwardly he is *an extraction of clay* [23:12]; inwardly he is the precious stone in the seal-ring of good fortune.

“What should be considered is the joining, not the root. The joining is proximity, the root dust. The root is in respect of the sperm-drop, the joining in respect of God’s help.”<sup>1</sup>

*He taught him the explication.* This is the knowledge of the names that He taught him. Through this one knowledge He made him surpass the angels, such that for his sake He said to the angels in response to them, “*Surely I know what you do not know*” [2:30].

How wonderful! The secrets of lordhood become apparent in places that the intellects of the intellectuals will never reach. What do you say: He grasped a handful of dust in the hand of His attributes with the perfection of His power. Then He kept it for forty years in the sunshine of His gaze until the dampness of being left it. Then He commanded the angels of the Dominion, “Go to the gate of this wondrous form and marvelous guise and kiss the doorstep of his majesty.” How could a handful of dust have the worthiness for the residents of the Holy Palisades and the preachers on the pulpits of familiarity to come to him and prostrate themselves? No, no—that level, distinction, and rank did not belong to the door-keeper of clay, rather to the sultan of the heart: “The heart is between two of the fingers of the All-Merciful.”<sup>2</sup>

One of the specifications and bestowals of eminence for the Adamite is that He created two oceans within his makeup: one, the ocean of the secret core, and the other the ocean of the heart. To this He alludes with His words,

**55:19 *He mixed the two oceans that meet together.***

From the ocean of the secret core, the pearls of contemplation and face-to-face vision come forth, and from the ocean of the heart the coral of conformity and unveiling. That is His words, “*From the two come forth pearls and coral*” [55:22]. He prepared both of them in his makeup and kept the barrier of power between them: *Between the two is an isthmus they do not overpass* [55:20]. The one does not exert strength over the other, nor does the other make this one change.

It has also been said that the two oceans here are the hope and fear of the common Muslims, the contraction and expansion of the elect among the faithful, and the awe and intimacy of the prophets and the sincerely truthful. From the ocean of fear and hope come forth the pearls of renunciation and scrupulosity, from the ocean of contraction and expansion come the pearls of poverty and ecstasy, and from the ocean of awe and intimacy the pearl of annihilation shows its face so that they may be at ease with the way stations of subsistence. This is why He says, “*From the two come forth pearls and coral.*”

**55:26-27 *All that is upon it undergoes annihilation, and there subsists the face of thy Lord, Possessor of Majesty and Generous Giving.***

This is the same that He says elsewhere: “*What is with you runs out, but what is with God subsists*” [16:96]. Muṣṭafā said, “Prefer what subsists over what undergoes annihilation.” This world is the Abode of Delusion, the afterworld the Abode of Joy. This world is the Abode of Annihilation and the afterworld the Abode of Subsistence.

The breeze of intelligence does not reach those who choose what undergoes annihilation over the subsistent, who put aside the Abode of Joy and build up the Abode of Delusion. Even if the empire of the world and the empire of Adam’s children were beneath your seal ring and the keys to this world’s treasures given to you, the outcome of all would be annihilation, so fixing the heart on it would be an error. Listen to these words of wisdom, testaments of the sages, and words of advice of the great:

“Being satisfied with words without deeds is the work of the deluded.”

“Depending on the resources of others is the vocation of the indigent.”

“Delighting in borrowed clothes is the custom of the idle.”

“Being happy with others’ robes of honor is the conduct of the unintelligent.”

“Being disloyal and hoping for loyalty is the act of double-dealers.”

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1 These two paragraphs are derived from, RA 204.

2 This paragraph is taken partly from RA 164.

**55:29** *Whatever is in the heavens and the earth asks of Him. Each day He is upon some task.*

The faithful are two groups: the worshipers and the recognizers. The asking of each group is in the measure of their aspirations, and the caressing of each is suited to their capacity. The worshipers want everything from Him, the recognizers want Him Himself.

Aḥmad ibn Abi'l-Ḥawārī saw the Real in a dream. He said, 'O Aḥmad, all the people are seeking from Me, except Abū Yazīd—he is seeking Me.'

I set out for You seeking the heights,  
and others set out for their livelihood.

\*

Each has a prayer-niche in some direction,  
but Sanāʿī's prayer-niche is Your street. [DS 1004]

At this threshold everyone has a station and each has what is suited for him.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "O God, everyone indigent has a portion of Your munificence, everyone in pain has a physician from Your generosity, and all have a portion from the embracingness of Your mercy."

Each He keeps in a place and each He dyes in a color. This is why He says, "*Each day He is upon some task.*" He lifts up one group and puts down others. He puts one at the front of the hall of worth with the attribute of exaltedness, He keeps another at the back with the shoes, in abasement itself. He seats one on the carpet of gentleness, He puts another under the carpet of severity. He pulled Adam the dust-dweller up from the dust of abasement and placed the throne of prosperity on the head of his aspiration, without bias. He pulled down °Azāzīl, who was the teacher of the angels, from the celestial world and hung him at the crossroads of the causeless desire from the rack of punishment, without iniquity. To one group He says, "*So rejoice!*" [9:111], to another group He says, "*Die in your rage!*" [3:119].

Moses the speaking-companion set off in search of fire. When he left he was a shepherd in a blanket, when he came back he was a prophet, God's speaking-companion. Balaam Beor, who knew the greatest name, went up a mountain as a friend by virtue of form, but came back down as a dog by virtue of attribute and meaning.

Adam was still clay when they made the hat of chosenness. Iblis the miserable had still not refused when they moistened the arrow of the curse with the poison of severity. This one was commanded, "Prostrate yourself," but he did not. That one was commanded, "Don't eat the wheat," but he did. He gave Adam the excuse that he was a friend in the Beginningless, and the slip of friends is not held accountable.

When the beloved comes with one sin,  
his beautiful traits come with a thousand interceders.

He placed the brand of the curse on Iblis because he was an enemy in the Beginningless, and the obedience of enemies is not taken into account.

When someone is not worthy for union,  
all of his beautiful doing is sin.<sup>3</sup>

3 The explanation of "*Each day He is upon some task*" is derived from RA 161 and 163.

## Surah 56: al-Wāqīʿa

### **56:24** *As recompense for what they were doing.*

This is the prize for the deeds of the faithful and the rewards for their acts of obedience and worship. It is the attribute of wage-earners who do the work and want the wage. But God has friends who do not bow their heads to the paradise of His approval, nor do they hunt the maidens, castles, rivers, and trees. They are servants at the house of the Sultan of *tawhīd*, the residents of the world of love, the sultans of the realm of recognition, yearning for the wine of nonbeing.

The Paradise of Everlastingness presents its adornment and beauty to them, and they disclose their certainty and recognition to it. Paradise presents its rivers of wine, milk, and honey to them, and they disclose the springs of *tawhīd* and the oceans of solitariness to it. Paradise presents its trees full of fruits with their flowers and blossoms to them, and they disclose the green shoots of pain and bewilderment to it. Paradise presents to them the wide-eyed maidens, adorned and trimmed, and they disclose to it the veiled virgins of recognition and the hidden secrets of witnessing. Finally, paradise turns away from them in shame, and they pass on to the *seat of truthfulness, at an Omnipotent King* [54:55]. They do not open the eyes of their aspiration toward anyone.

### **56:58-59** *Have you seen the seed that you spill? Do you create it, or are We its creators?*

In this noble verse of the eternal, beginningless speech, the Presence of the Real makes manifest His power of creation over the world's folk so that they will know that the artisan without cause is He, the enactor without tool is He, the all-subjugating without cause is He, the all-forgiving without delay is He, the all-curtaining of every slip is He.

He is the Lord who created a subtle form from frail water and showed firm artisanry to a feeble sperm-drop. He set up many diverse paintings with “*Be!*”, *so it comes to be* [2:117]: mutually similar limbs, opposites like unto each other, every limb adorned with one sort of beauty, not more than its limit, not less than its measure. To each He gave an attribute, and in each He placed a strength: senses in the brain, splendor on the forehead, beauty in the nose, sorcery in the eye, sauciness in the lips, comeliness in the cheek, perfect loveliness in the hair, envy in the liver, rancor in the spleen, appetite in the veins, faith in the heart, love in the secret core, recognition in the spirit. It is not apparent whether the artisanries in the natures are more beautiful, or if the governance of the form-giving is sweeter. What is this sculpture doing between subtle water and gross dust?! Since the Sculptor is one, how is it that there is this lowliness in individuals? So many marvels and wonders from a drop of water! The intelligent man gazes on His artisanry, but the heedless man is asleep.

O chevalier! How long will you look with the outward eye at the marks giving witness? Look once with the inner eye at the marks of the subtleties. It is as if the Exalted Lord is saying, “My servant, I adorned your face and I adorned your heart. I adorned your face for gazing on creation. I adorned your heart for gazing on Me. It is your face that the creatures see, and your heart that I see. I did not allow exacting the penalty of the Shariah from your face, which is the gazing place of the creatures. How can I allow conveying the pain of severance to your essence, which is My gazing place? I am that Lord in the attribute of whose power is both creating and making to die.”

Of creation He reports, “*Do you create it, or are We its creators?*” Of making to die He reports,

**56:61** *We have determined death among you.*

“In creation, I showed the attributes of gentleness, and in making to die I showed the perfection of severity. I created so that you would see power and gentleness. I make to die so that you may see harshness and severity. Again I bring to life so that you may see awesomeness and ruling authority. Since you know that I am powerful and able, wise and knowing, peerless in ability and knowledge, then you should

**56:74** *Glorify the name of your Lord the Tremendous!*

“Come, praise Me and remember My oneness and greatness, so that tomorrow I may bring you forth in the ranks of the proximate ones of *repose and ease*, for this is what I have decreed in the Beginningless. In My eternal speech I have said,

**56:88-89** *If he is one of those brought near, then repose and ease and a garden of bliss.*

One of the great ones of the religion said that *repose and ease* will be both in this world and in the afterworld. The repose is in this world and the ease will be in the afterworld. The repose is that He adorns the heart of the faithful servants with His gaze so that they will discern truth from falsehood. Then He makes them wide in knowledge so that they will find there the vision of His power. Then He makes them seeing so that they will have the light to see His favors. He makes them hearing so that they will listen to the beginningless advice. He makes them pure so that they will seek only His companionship. He makes them happy with the fragrance of union so that their love for the Friend will grow. He makes them bright with His light so that they will gaze from Him to Him. He scours them with the file of solicitude so that they will see Him wherever they look.

When the servants go to the house of felicity with these attributes, they will see the *ease* of generosity. The breeze of intimacy will be blowing, the seat of approval will be set up under the tree of finding, the carpet of intimacy will be spread, the candle of compassion lit. The servants will sit like kings and the beginningless Friend will lift up the curtain, greeting their ears with “peace” and showing the vision of the Possessor of Majesty:

**56:90-91** *If he be one of the companions of the right hand, then “Peace to you from the companions of the right hand.”*

The companions of the right hand are lower in station and rank than the preceders and the proximate. They are the worshipers, those who worship in order to reach the joy and bliss of paradise. They are the doers, those who do deeds in this world to find reward in the afterworld. The Exalted Lord says, “*We leave not to waste the wage of those who do beautiful deeds* [18:30]. We will not leave to waste the wage of the beautiful-doers. We will not make them despair of the permanent good fortune and generous kingdom that they want. We will give them their wage completely: *He will give them their wages in full* [4:173]. And We will place Our bounty on top of that: *He will increase them from His bounty* [4:173].”

They will have adorned sitting places and refined dwellings. The lights of gentle favors will be lit and varieties of incense will be burning; serving boys and servants, servitors and retinue, will be standing in wait; heart-entrancing cup-bearers will have cups of wine placed in their hands, and tumult-inducing minstrels will be playing heart-stealing tunes. Each one will be seated like a king, leaning back on an exalted throne in his own chambers, towers, gardens, and forests, a crown of rulership studded with the pearls of solicitude on his head, on the carpet of expansiveness, with justice given to the contemplation of the Contemplated. The necklace of beauty will be hung around the neck of union, and his voice will be raised in praise and magnification. The Patron will lift up the curtain and “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what has never passed into the

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heart of any mortal” will become hard cash. By the majesty of the Lord God, no loving mother has ever caressed a weeping child more than God will caress the disobedient servant at the moment of face-to-face vision!

## Surah 57: al-Ḥadīd

### **57:1 *Whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies God.***

The maker of the world and the world's folk, the nurturer of mankind and jinn, the creator of earth and heaven, the wonder-worker of the emplaced and place, reports that everything in heaven and earth, whether wind, fire, water, mountains, seas, sun, moon, stars, trees, and all animate and inanimate things, praise Him for purity, mention His name with honor, and testify to His oneness. This glorification and *tawḥīd* throw tumult into the Adamic heart and are rejected by intellect, but the religion of the submission accepts them and the Creator of the creatures testifies to their correctness. Whenever success-giving is someone's companion and felicity his helper, he will accept them, unperceived, with spirit and heart and will come forth with reverence, surrender, and attestation. Then tomorrow, he will find his place in the gathering place of the sincerely truthful and the assemblies of the friends on the seat of everlasting exaltedness.

Beware, O chevalier! Take care not to give one iota of innovation access to your heart. When you hear something that your intellect does not perceive, suspect only your intellect. Do not take the road of interpretation, because going after interpretation is a tested poison. It is to remove a thorn from the foot with a thorn. A knowing man will not test poison, for that would be to hurry to his own destruction. He will not pull a thorn from his foot with a thorn, for he knows it would only increase the pain.

That chevalier said it beautifully:

“Seek not the road of *tawḥīd* with intellect,  
scratch not the spirit's eye with a thorn.  
By God, can anyone ever  
take benefit from God without God?  
As trainer and leader on the path of the religion—  
consider none better than the Qur'an and the reports.  
Only the hand of Muḥammad's heart  
can undo the locks on the treasury of secrets.” [DS 201-2]

### **57:2 *To Him belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth.***

The seven heavens and the seven earths are His kingdom and property. They are kept by His help, penetrated by His will, and driven by His decree. All creatures are incapable, and He is powerful and potent. All are weak, and He is subjugating and strong. All are ignorant, and He is knowing and knowledgeable. The artifacts and determined things are a mark of His power, the beings and newly arrived things are the explication of His wisdom, the existents and the known things are the proof of His existence. Increase does not befall Him, nor does decrease come upon Him. He is the powerful, eternal, knowing, wise, the God of all.

### **57:3 *He is the First, the Last, the Outward, and the Inward, and He is knower of everything.***

He is the *First*, for He knew the nonbeings, the *Last* for He knows what He knew, the *Outward* through what He made, the *Inward*, hidden from imaginations.

He is the *First*: He was before every created thing, without beginning. He is the *Last*: He will be after everything, without end. He is the *Outward*: He stands over everyone, without any one to

overpower or prevent. He is the *Inward*: He knows all hidden things, without veil.

He is the *First* through beginninglessness, the *Last* through endlessness, the *Outward* through unity, and the *Inward* through eternity. He is the *First* through awesomeness, the *Last* through mercy, the *Outward* through proofs, the *Inward* through blessings. He is the *First* through bestowal, the *Last* through recompense, the *Outward* through laudation, the *Inward* through loyalty. He is the *First* through guidance, the *Last* through sufficiency, the *Outward* through rulership, the *Inward* through kind favor. He is the *First* of every blessing, the *Last* of every tribulation, the *Outward* of every argument, the *Inward* of every wisdom.

In terms of allusion He is saying, “O child of Adam, in relation to you the people of the world are four groups: A group who are useful to you at the beginning of the state and the first of life, and they are parents. A group who are useful to you at the end of life and the weakness of old age, and they are children. Third is the group of friends, brothers, and all the Muslims who are with you outwardly and show tenderness. Fourth is the group of wives and women, who are your inner, inside realm and are useful to you.”

The Lord of the Worlds is saying, “Do not rely and depend on these and do not fancy that they themselves are your caretakers and caregivers, for I am the *First* and the *Last*. I am suited to be the beginning and end of your work and state. I am the *Outward* and the *Inward*. I keep you in My own keeping and I set straight your final ends. I am the *First*, for I tightly bound the hearts of the passionate with beginningless compacts. I am the *Last*, for I hunt the spirits of the truthful with My promises. I am the *Outward*, for I have brought the outward things to Myself with the cord of the Shariah. I am the *Inward*, for I have placed the secret cores under My decree in the cradle of the covenant of the Haqiqah.”

When a man journeys in firstness, lastness charges forth, and when he journeys in the attribute of outwardness, inwardness gives his capital over to plundering. The poor Adamite! He is confounded between the two attributes and senseless between the two names.

Bewilderment upon bewilderment, thirst upon thirst—  
sometimes doubt becomes certainty, sometimes certainty doubt.  
His presence is exaltation and majesty, His carpet unneediness—  
a hundred thousand caravans have been waylaid in this road.

*And He is knower of everything.* Of everything He is a knower who is work-doing, right-working, and care-giving. He sees everything, knows every work, and is aware at every moment.

In the next verse He adds bounty and generosity:

**57:4** *And He is with you wherever you are.*

“My servants! My creatures! Wherever you are, I am with you through solicitude, mercy, and kind favor. Wherever in the world there is someone poor, wounded by offenses, helpless in the hand of an adversary, I am his patron. Wherever there is someone with a ruined life, made indigent by the passing days, I am looking after him. Wherever there is someone burnt, struck by grief, I am the happiness of his spirit. Wherever there is someone weeping in shame, his head turned while not having anyone, I am his proof. I am the Lord who is far from the path of retribution. I lift up all those thrown down and fleeing, for I am clement and ever-merciful to the servants.”

**57:9** *Surely God is to you clement, ever-merciful.*

Part of His clemency and mercy was that the servant was in the concealment of nonexistence and He was taking care of his work with perfect bounty and generosity. The servant was in the concealment of nonexistence and He chose him over the whole world.

Part of His mercy is that He gives the servant the success to be on guard against the hidden sorts of associationism and the subtle sorts of eye-service. He said, “I am clement and ever-merciful” so that the disobedient would not despair and would have a strong hope in His bounty and generosity.

Yahyā ibn Mu‘ādh Rāzī said, “You were gentle to Your friends, so they recognized You.

Had you been gentle to Your enemies, they would not have refused You.” You made the jasmine of Your gentleness grow in the garden of the hearts of Your friends such that, by means of Your gentleness and bounty, the Abode of Peace was their place. But,

One group reached the spheres, another the pit—  
alas at Your threats toward a handful of dust!<sup>1</sup>

On the heads of one group He placed the crown of generosity:

**57:12** *Their light running before them, and on their right hands.*

On another group He placed the brand of deprivation:

**57:13** *And a wall will be set up between them, inside of which is mercy and outside of which is chastisement.*

Pharaoh’s sorcerers dwelt in nothing but unbelief and sin, but it is said that sorcery has no effect unless a man is polluted. When the wind of good fortune blew from the direction of gentleness and generosity, it left neither sorcery nor any sorcerer, neither unbelief nor any unbeliever. In the morning they were busy with the sin of unbelief and denial, and in the evening they were at the side of faith and asking forgiveness.

Shaykh Abū Sa‘īd Abu’l-Khayr said, “Whoever picks up a burden from the garden of solicitude will put it down in the playing field of friendship. Whoever sucks milk from the breast of kind favor will be nurtured in the embrace of protection.”

[The Master Abū ‘Alī said,] “Whoever is given familiarity in the morning can hope for forgiveness in the evening.”<sup>2</sup>

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1 The commentary on this verse is derived from RA 241-42.

2 The commentary on this verse is from RA 242.

## Surah 58: al-Mujādila

**58:1** *God has heard the words of her who disputes with thee concerning her husband and complains to God.*

The weaker someone is, the gentler is the Lord. The lord of lords, the master of all masters, the gentle, generous, and lovingly kind, takes care of the work of the weak in a way that leaves all the strong in wonder. A hundred thousand proximate angels, glorifying and hallowing, were diving in the oceans of bows and prostrations and raising the voices of glorification and hallowing at the Exalted Threshold, but no one talked about them. But that poor, weak woman—the disputer who wept before the Threshold in burning and bewilderment and who complained of her despair—look how the Splendorous Qur’an wrote the inscription of exaltation on the cape of her secret whispering: “*God has heard the words of her who disputes with thee concerning her husband and complains to God.* We have heard her complaint, We have listened to her lamenting and supplicating, and We have made apparent the opening up of the suffering and tightness in which she has remained because of her husband’s repudiation of her. We are the Lord who is the good companion of everyone helpless and without a companion, We untie the knots of everyone in bonds, We dispel the sorrows of everyone sorrowful. We hear the voice of the poor, We listen to the whispering of the miserable, We respond to the need of the helpless.”

It has come in a report that one day this woman who disputed came to ‘Umar Khaṭṭāb during the days of his caliphate for a business she had with him. She spoke harshly with him. Those who were with him shouted at her, saying, “Do you not know that you must not speak harsh words to the Commander of the Faithful?”

‘Umar said to them, “Be silent! Have respect for this poor woman! She is the woman whose words the Real heard from beyond the seven levels of heaven, and upon whom He placed this caress and generosity: “*God has heard the words of her who disputes with thee concerning her husband and complains to God.*”

O Muslims! Respect the poor and seek proximity to God by taking care of them and giving comfort to them. Although today they are helpless and poor, tomorrow they will be the kings of the Garden of Refuge and the great ones of the Highest Paradise. Do not look at the fact that today their state is defective, their clothing tattered, their faces yellow, and their hearts full of pain. Look rather at the fact that tomorrow they will be the great ones of the Abode of Peace and the chiefs of the Abode of the Station. Their state will be as the poet said:

“The poor have a scent of union,  
you’d say they have a stream from love’s wine.  
In the session of remembrance, they have cries of joy—  
they’re shouting out that they have the likes of Him.”

**58:12** *O you who have faith, when you whisper with the Messenger, offer charity before you whisper.*

It is narrated that the Commander of the Faithful ‘Alī said that when this verse came down, he gave one dinar in charity and asked ten questions from God’s Messenger. He said, “‘O Messenger of God! How should I supplicate God?’: How should I call upon God and worship Him?”

The Messenger answered, “‘With truthfulness and loyalty’: Be loyal to the covenant that was made with Him on the Day of Alast and be truthful in your speaking and doing. Have what you

show, do what you say, and be whence you call out.”

°Alī said, “What should I ask for from God?”

He answered, “‘For safety in this world and the next.’ In this world and the next the safety of the heart from the blights of mortal nature and the well-being of the body in the varieties of trial.”

°Alī said, “‘What should I make ready for my salvation?’: What should I do so that in the gathering place of the resurrection I may be delivered, secure from the terrors of the resurrection and arrived at the degrees of the Garden?”

He answered, “‘Eat the permitted and speak with truthfulness’: When you eat something, eat the permitted, and when you speak, speak with truthfulness. Do not give the forbidden access to yourself, for the forbidden has a bad outcome. Avoid lying, for anyone who lies will have a bad name in the two worlds.”

He said, “‘What is the stratagem?’: What stratagem should I use so that things will come out as I want?”

He answered, “‘The stratagem is to abandon stratagems’: Let go of stratagems and know that everything is as God wants and that the stratagems and governance of the servant will never overcome God’s predetermination.”

He said, “‘What must I do?’: What are the rules that I must discharge?”

He answered, “‘The command of God and His Messenger’: Everything mandatory and obligatory commanded by God, and everything set down as Sunnah and recommended by the Messenger.”

He said, “‘What is ease?’: What is ease and comfort?”

He answered, “‘The Garden’: Ease is that you settle down in paradise and its blessings and that you stay secure from hell and its punishment.”

He said, “‘What is joy?’: What is happiness and when will happiness be found?”

He answered, ‘Vision’: Happiness is the happiness that comes at the end of the night of separation, when the morning of union rises from the horizon of good fortune and the servant sees marks giving witness to the beauty of the Possessor of Majesty.”

He said, “‘What is the truth?’: What is the truth in whose road there is no falsehood?”

He answered, “‘The submission’: The religion of the submission.”

He said, “‘What is corruption?’: What is the corruption and ruin that is far from truth and purity?”

He answered, “‘Unbelief’: To practice unbelief and to conceal the truth.”

He asked, “‘What is loyalty?’: What is loyalty and who is a loyal man?”

He answered, “‘Bearing witness that there is no god but God.’ Saying the words of the Shahadah and staying straight in faith, *tawhīd*, and self-purification.”

## Surah 59: al-Ḥaṣhr

**59:7** *Whatever the Messenger gives you, take; whatever he prohibits you, forgo.*

The call came from the Real: “Whatever drink comes to you from the auspicious hand of Muḥammad the Arab, the Hashimite prophet, take, for your life lies in that. Read the tablet that he writes, learn servanthood from his character traits, take seeking from his aspiration, put his Sunnah to work, walk behind him in all states. The final goal of the traveling of the servants and the perfection of their states is My love, and My love lies in following the Sunnah and conduct of your prophet. Whoever walks straight in his tracks is in reality My friend. *Say: ‘If you love God, follow me; God will love you’* [3:31].”

The faithful Companions came back to being loyal to the beginningless Covenant and kept their feet straight in following Muṣṭafā’s Sunnah. They put to work truthfulness in acts, and the Lord of the Worlds praised them for their truthfulness:

**59:8** *Those—they are the truthful.*

Truthfulness [*ṣidq*] is the charity [*ṣadaqa*] of the secret core, the dower [*ṣidāq*] of the Garden, and the true friend [*ṣadīq*] of the Real.

Make truthfulness your trade, for among the ranks at the resurrection,  
none are delivered from God’s anger but the truthful. [DS 188]

**59:18** *O you who have faith, be wary of God and let every soul consider what it has sent on ahead for tomorrow, and be wary of God.*

In this one verse He mentions godwariness twice. First is the godwariness of the common people, namely the avoidance of forbidden things. Second is the godwariness of the elect, namely the avoidance of everything other than the Real.

It has also been said that the first alludes to the root of godwariness and the second to the perfection of godwariness. No one can pass over the steep road of the resurrection without the perfection of godwariness. One must be detached from all objects of desire, one must seize on not reaching one’s desires, and one must consider all sweet drinks as poison. When someone’s feet reach this point, he has reached the perfection of godwariness.

Wāsiṭī said, “When the folk of godwariness act proudly toward the sons of this world, they are making claims in godwariness.” For, if this world had no impact on their hearts, they would not be proud about turning away from it.

A great one said, “This world is a shard of pottery seen in a dream. The next world is a pearl found in wakefulness. The man is not someone who is wary of a shard in a dream—the manly man is he who is wary of a pearl found in wakefulness.”

In short, know that the steps of the travelers in the road of godwariness are three: The step of the Shariah illuminates the door of the bodily frame. The step of the Tariqah illuminates the door of the heart. The step of the Haqiqah illuminates the door of the spirit. When those who travel in the bodily frame arrive, the hospitality of *Surely the godwary will be in the midst of gardens and a river* [54:54] will be brought for them. When those who travel in the heart arrive, the hospitality of *a seat of truthfulness* [54:55] will be brought for them. When those who travel in the spirit arrive, the hospitality of *at an Omnipotent King* [54:55] will be brought for them.

## Surah 60: al-Mumtaḥana

### **60:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

There are three things within which is the servant's felicity and through which servanthood's face is bright: the tongue's occupation with remembering the Real, the heart's immersion in loving the Real, and the secret core's filling with the gaze of the Real. Happy is he upon whose secret core God gazes so that his heart is adorned with love and his tongue is kept in remembrance.<sup>1</sup> No remembrance is more exalted than the name *God*, and no name and remembrance is more exalted than this formula: "*In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*"

Muṣṭafā said, "When any affair of significance is begun without *in the name of God*, it will be fruitless." Without the signet of *in the name of God*, no work will go forward in the empire. Without saying *in the name of God*, your prayer will not be correct and your whispered secrets will be useless.

It has come in the traditions that one of the folk given success recited the Surah of Ikhḻāṣ every day one thousand times without saying *in the name of God*. When he reached the afterworld, he was seen in a dream and asked, "What did God do with you?" He said, "For every time that I recited *Say: He is God, One* [112:1], He built a palace for me in paradise, but now that I have seen them, I do not find them pleasing, for they are defective." It was said, "Why are they defective?" He said, "Because in the world I put aside the eminence of *in the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful*, from the head of the surahs."

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "If all the kingdom of the existent things is opened up in your name, be careful not to look at it without the signet of *in the name of God*, for that has no more worth than a gnat's wing. If Gabriel and the carriers of the Throne bind their belts as your serving boys, you will not have the status and eminence that you will have if the ruling power of *in the name of God* places a burning brand in the midst of your spirit. When a spirit is more passionate, it is more quickly made captive; when a heart is more burnt, its bags are more quickly plundered."

I said, "Since I am low and captive in Your hand,  
caress me, do not beat me, O luminous moon!"

He said, "Do not be troubled by My blows—  
beneath each blow is nothing but a caress."

### **60:1** *O you who have faith, take not My enemy and your enemy as friends.*

"O you who have faith, who have seen the Messenger as truthful, and who have accepted My message with spirit and soul, do not take My enemy and your enemy as your friend. No enemy of yours is greater than the commanding soul. Beware lest you feel secure from it. Always be on guard against it."

Muṣṭafā said, "Your worst enemy is your soul that is between your two sides." Your worst enemy is the disobedient soul. It always wants that in which is your loss. Anyone who lets the soul have what it wants is planting the seeds of his own remorse.

Among the reports from David is this: "O David, be the enemy of your own soul, for no one in the empire contends with Me except it."

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<sup>1</sup> These sentences are ascribed to the Pir of the Tariqah under 52:4.

The soul [*nafs*] is dust-dwelling, terrestrial, and dark. It is a treacherous and deceiving enemy. Its root is from “rivalry” [*tanāfus*], and rivalry is the beginning of rancor, envy, hatred, and enmity. Muṣṭafā was not exaggerating when he said, “We have returned from the lesser struggle to the greater struggle.” He called war against Byzantium the smaller war and war against the soul the greater war. For, you can take Byzantium from the emperor with a small army, but you cannot take the soul from someone with all the friends on the face of the earth. This is because an unbeliever in Byzantium struggles face-to-face and shows impudence and wrath against the warriors and calls them to do improper acts. But the soul does not struggle face-to-face. It shows him affection and kindness and calls him to do honorable acts. This is why the men of religion’s road leave aside many of the obedient acts, for they know that those are the decoys of the soul; a hunter catches birds with birds.

Aḥmad Khidrūya Balkhī said, “I had severely put down my soul with various sorts of discipline and struggle. One day it became elated by war. I was surprised, because the soul does not become elated by obedience. I asked myself what sort of deception was hidden there. Perhaps it could not put up with hunger, for I was always commanding it to fast. It wanted to travel so as to break its fast while traveling. I said to the soul that if I traveled I would not put aside the fasting. The soul said that it accepted that. I thought that perhaps it was not able to put up with standing in prayer all night. It wants to be able to sleep when traveling. I said that I would not decrease my standing in prayer, just as if I were not traveling. The soul said that it accepted that. I thought that perhaps it is because it does not mix with people when not traveling, for I kept it in solitude and seclusion. Its desire was to have companionship with people. I said to the soul that wherever I went in this traveling I would stop at ruined way stations so it would not see any people. It accepted that. I was helpless at its hands.

“I wept to God and pleaded with Him to make me aware of its deception. In the end I brought it to attestation. It said, ‘When not traveling you kill me a thousand times every day with the sword of struggle, going against my desire, but people are not aware of that. At least let me go to war so that I may be killed once and for all. I will be a martyr, and all the world will know that Aḥmad Khidrūya was martyred in the war.’

“I said to myself, ‘Glory be to the Lord who created a soul so defective that it is a hypocrite in this world and wants to be famous after death! It does not want the reality of the submission in this world or the next.’ Then I said, ‘O commanding soul, by God I will not go to the war until you bind the belt of obedience.’ So I did not travel and I increased the acts of discipline and the various sorts of struggle with which I was busy.”

## Surah 61: al-Şaff

**61:1** *Everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies God, and He is the Exalted, the Wise.*

He who desires to make his glorification of Him limpid should make his heart limpid without the traces of his soul, and he who desires his life in the Garden to be limpid should make his religion limpid without the filth of caprice.<sup>1</sup>

The world's folk are two groups: The life of one group is with the Real's gentleness and bounty, and their ease is the glorification and remembrance of the Real. The life of the other group is a mark of the Real's justice, and their ease is found in the shares of the soul. Those who are the folk of gentleness and bounty have a heart that is limpid, an aspiration that is high, and a breast that is empty for the divine remembrance. Their tongue is given over to bearing witness, their heart turned over to recognition, their spirit mixed with love, their secret core fled to God, and their own attributes disowned. It has been said that every attribute of selfhood is an attachment, every attachment a color, and every color a disgrace in the road of men.

He who painted a thousand worlds with color—  
why would He buy my color and yours, O bankrupt man!

The glorification and remembrance of this group come from the pure quarry and reach the pure Lord, accepted and approved by God, as He says: "*To Him ascend the goodly words, and He uplifts the wholesome deed*" [35:10].

As for those who are the mark of the Real's justice and who live through the shares of the soul, their breast is tainted with appetite, their heart is the quarry of trouble, and their inwardness is different from their outwardness. Their names are written in the register of the hypocrites. Their acts are different from their words, just as the Lord of the Worlds says:

**61:2** *O you who have faith, why do you say what you do not do?*

Concerning the hypocrites to whom these words refer, the Lord of the Worlds says,

**61:3** *Greatly hateful to God is it that you say what you do not do.*

Very ugly, inappropriate, and hated by God are words that do not bring deeds in conformity, or preaching in which the preacher has no portion of the practice.

Do not prohibit the people and then do the like of that!  
Your disgrace is tremendous when you do so.

God revealed to Jesus, "O son of Mary! Counsel yourself. If you take the counsel, counsel the people. Otherwise, have shame before Me."

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1 LI 6:143.

## Surah 62: al-Jumu'ah

**62:1** *Everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies God, the King, the Holy, the Exalted, the Wise.*

He is the King, the Owner, the Owner of the Kingdom, and the King of Kings. The king in reality is He, for His kingship has no removal, His seriousness no levity, His exaltedness no abasement, His decree no rejection. He has no peer, and from Him there is no escape.

When the faithful, believing servant comes to know that the owner in reality is He, he will break the tablet of making claims, roll up the carpet of folly, pull his skirt back from the two worlds, surrender possessions and the kingdom to the Absolute Owner, and consider His desire prior to his own desire. He will be ashamed to abase himself before any created thing or to bend his upright neck for the sake of a grain or a mouthful. "He who aims for the ocean has no need for rivulets."

"He who recognizes God will not put up with the abasement of the creatures." Whoever knows the Real's majesty will not give himself over to creatures' abasing. The hand of his truthfulness will be held back from the two worlds, the foot of his love will always be in the road, his heart will be in the grasp of the King's exaltation, and his secret core will be the quarry of the secret of the Possessor of Majesty. On his forehead will be the mark of prosperity, in the eye of his certainty the light of taking heed of God's acts, in his nose the fragrance of the garden of union. People have states, pleasures, and names, but he is without states, pleasures, and names. What then has he lost? For tomorrow in the house of the afterworld he will be the nightingale of the garden of At-ness and the falcon of the mystery of unity.<sup>1</sup>

Ḥallāj was asked about renunciation. He said, "Putting aside the enjoyment of this world is the soul's renunciation. Putting aside the bliss of the next world is the heart's renunciation. Abandoning one's own self in this road is the spirit's renunciation. Those who are renunciants in this world settle down in the abode of approval. Those who are renunciants in paradise settle down in the Palisades of Holiness. As for the group that renounce their own selfhoods, they will be snatched away by a flood in the valley of *No god but God*. There will be no news of them in this abode and no trace of them in that abode. They will settle down in the Pavilion of Jealousy with access to the dome of the Self-Sufficiency's proximity."

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1 These three paragraphs are derived from RA 13-14.

## Surah 63: al-Munāfiqūn

**63:1** *When the hypocrites come to thee they say, “We bear witness that thou art indeed the Messenger of God.”*

On the first day in the era of the Beginningless He sent the diver of power into the ocean of Adam’s loins to bring out the night-brightening pearls and the black beads to the shore of existence. There were both faithful and hypocrites, and just as He brought forth the faithful, so also He brought forth the hypocrites. But with His bounty He kept the faithful at the front of the hall of exaltedness on the carpet of gentleness, without bias; and with His justice He kept the hypocrites in the back with the shoes beneath the carpet of severity and abasement, without iniquity. He placed the crown of felicity on the heads of the faithful, and their portion of the Book was this: “*So rejoice in your sale you have made to Him*” [9:111]. He placed the bonds of abasement and the shackles of degradation on the feet of the hypocrites, and their portion of the Book came to be this: “*Die in your rage!*” [3:119]. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, “*Those—their portion of the Book will reach them*” [7:37]. About the faithful He says, “*in a seat of truthfulness, at an Omnipotent King*” [54:55], and about the hypocrites He says, “*in the lowest reach of the Fire*” [4:145].<sup>1</sup>

Be as your luck lets you be,  
I’ll be as my lot allows.

Tomorrow in the courtyards of the resurrection the hypocrites will ride on the coattails of the faithful and will go with their brightness until they reach the Narrow Path. Then the faithful will go ahead and cross over the bridge with the light of their faith and self-purification. The unbelief and hypocrisy of the hypocrites will seize their skirts so that they remain in darkness and bewilderment. They will call out, “*Wait for us so that we may borrow some of your light*” [57:13]. They will ask for light and brightness from the faithful, but the faithful will respond, “*Turn back behind and request a light*” [57:13], that is, “*Turn back to the decree of the Beginningless and seek light from the apportioning.*”<sup>2</sup> Seek for the light from the decree of the Beginningless, not from us.”

Anyone who is given light was given it on that day. Anyone left aside was left aside on that day. *And he to whom God assigns no light has no light.* [24:40]. *When God desires ugliness for a people, none can repel it* [13:11]. “Surely a man may do the deeds of the folk of the Garden while in God’s eyes he is one of the folk of the Fire, or he may do the deeds of the folk of the Fire while in God’s eyes he is one of the folk of the Garden.” In fear of this station, the hearts and livers of all the great ones of the Tariqah have burned. He put into effect what was precedent as He knew, and He laid down the outcome as He wanted. How many seclusions of the great ones has He struck with fire! How many haystacks of obedience has He given to the wind! How many livers of the sincerely truthful has He ground to dust under the millstone of the decree!<sup>3</sup>

There are thousands upon thousands of realms in this road, but the portion of the ill-fortuned is nothing but dismissal. When wretchedness turns its face toward a man, he may have filled earth and heaven with striving, but that will have no profit for him.

Do not suppose that wretchedness lies in unbelief. On the contrary, unbelief lies in wretch-

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1 Much of this paragraph is inspired by RA 161.

2 This sentence is from LI 6:105.

3 This paragraph is drawn from RA 183-84.

edness. And do not suppose that felicity lies in the religion. On the contrary, the religion lies in felicity. The dog of the Companions of the Cave had the vileness of unbelief, and the robe of Balaam Beor had the embroidery of the religion. But felicity and wretchedness were waiting in ambush from both directions. When good fortune showed itself, that dog's hide covered Balaam's face, for it was said, "*So his likeness is the likeness of a dog*" [7:176]. And Balaam's cloak was put on that dog, for it was said, "*They were three, and the fourth of them was their dog*" [18:22]. The haystack of obedience is given over to the wind of unneediness at the moment of the soul's extraction, for *We shall advance upon what work they have done and make it scattered dust* [25:23]. There is many a flourishing breast that turns into ruins in the state of death's agonies, for *there will appear to them from God that with which they had never reckoned* [39:47]. There is many a face that is turned away from the kiblah in the grave. There is many a familiar called a stranger on the first night. To one it is said, "Sleep the sleep of a bride." To another it is said, "Sleep the sleep of the ill-fated." The explanation of one is *Their mark is on their faces, the trace of the prostration* [48:29]. The mark of the other is *The offenders will be recognized by their mark* [55:41]. "Do not be deluded by the praise of the people, for surely the outcome is obscure."

My poor heart—it knows a lot,  
but it falls short in knowledge of the outcome.

## Surah 64: al-Taghābun

**64:1** *Everything in the heavens and everything in the earth glorifies Him. His is the kingdom and His is the praise, and He is powerful over everything.*

The meaning of glorification is to declare holy and incomparable. Declaring holy is that you know that God is incomparable with and hallowed beyond unworthy attributes and the descriptions of newly arrived things; pure of defect, far from imagination, outside of intellect, and hallowed beyond reasoning. He is described but not caused, recognized but not intelligible, apparent but disregarded. His howness is not known, intellect in Him is dismissed, and understanding in Him is bewildered. His being is to be seen, His Essence and attributes to be accepted but not perceived, and His howness to be heard but not known.

He is saying, “The seven heavens and the seven earths and everything within them glorify God and praise Him for purity and peerlessness.” From creatures He asks for acceptance and firm fixity, for they do not perceive and know that. Have you not read that God says, “*But you do not understand their glorification*” [17:44]? You do not perceive the glorification of heaven and earth, water, fire, wind, and earth, mountains and seas, and all animate and inanimate things. He has made faith in it mandatory but He has made the creatures despair of perceiving it. Since you do not perceive the created things with intellect, how will you determine God’s Essence and attributes with mere intellect? Accept the outwardness, give over the inwardness, leave it with what God desires, and remember to stay safe.

Know also that in twenty attributes, God is incomparable with and pure of twenty attributes. In unity He is pure of associate and partner, in self-sufficiency He is pure of being grasped, in firstness He is pure of beginning, in lastness He is pure of end, in eternity He is pure of new arrival, in existence He is pure of encompassment, in witnessing He is pure of perception, in self-standing He is pure of change, in power He is pure of weakness, in patience He is pure of incapacity, in withholding He is pure of niggardliness, in vengeance He is pure of rancor, in all-compellingness He is pure of iniquity, in magnificence He is pure of rebellion, in wrath He is pure of annoyance, in artisanry He is pure of need, in guile He is pure of delusion, in shame He is pure of regret, in deception He is pure of contrivance, in wonder He is pure of not knowing, in subsistence He is pure of annihilation. These are the attributes of the Creator, who is without opposite or peer, without similar or likeness.

The attributes of the creatures are those linked with their opposites: with life there is death, with power incapacity, with strength weakness, with withholding niggardliness, with wrath annoyance, with deception contrivance, with vengeance rancor. Thus you may know that the enacted is not like the Enactor, the attributes of the Creator are not like the creature, and God has no like or similar in Essence, attributes, magnificence, and exaltedness. *Nothing is as His likeness, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing* [42:11].

**64:2** *He it is who created you. Among you are unbelievers and among you are faithful.*

The work is what He did in the Beginningless, the decree is what He issued in the Beginningless, the robe of honor what He bestowed in the Beginningless. The apportioning was made, not to be increased or decreased. One was washed with the water of solicitude, another fastened by the nail of rejection—a decree without bias, a judgment without iniquity. The name of one was recorded in

the ledger of the felicitous and accepted for beginningless bounty, without any cause in the midst. The name of another was recorded in the register of the wretched, the belt of rejection bound to his waist; he was driven from the threshold of acceptance and good fortune, and he has not the gall to say a word.

“One group sought Him, and He abandoned them; another group fled from Him, and He grasped them.” One group never rested from the road of seeking night and day, making themselves emaciated and wasted with acts of struggle and discipline, but He placed the hand of rejection on their breasts, for “The seeking is rejected, the path blocked.” Another group became the devotees of idol-temples, prostrating themselves before Lat and Hubal, but the call of exaltedness had been set in place for their sake: “You are Mine, and I am yours.”<sup>1</sup>

Ibrāhīm Khawāṣṣ said, “Once I was walking in the desert for the sake of disengagement. I saw an old man sitting there, a hat on his head, and he was weeping in lowliness and misery. I said, ‘Hello, who are you?’

“He said, ‘I am Abū Murra [the Father of Bitterness].’

“I said, ‘Why are you weeping?’

“He said, ‘Who is more worthy of weeping than I? For forty thousand years I was serving that threshold, and in the Highest Horizon no one was placed before me. Now look at the divine predetermination and the unseen decree—what days have been brought for me!

“‘O questioner! How will it be for you after me?

I met what was ugly and it made Him happy.

I had become conceited in union

and over time became secure from His deception.

Such has the aversion burnt me

that not a speck of what I witnessed remains.’”

Then he said, “O Khawāṣṣ! Be careful not to be deluded by your own effort and obedience, for the work is done by His solicitude and choice, not by your effort and obedience. A command came to me that I prostrate to Adam, and I did not. A command came to Adam not to eat from the tree, but he ate. In the work of Adam there was solicitude, so He excused him, saying ‘*He forgot, and We found in him no resoluteness*’ [20:115]. In my work there was no solicitude. He said, ‘*He refused and claimed to be great*’ [2:34]. He did not take Adam’s slip into account, nor did He count my long-standing obedience.”

When someone is not worthy for union,  
all of his beautiful doing is sin.<sup>2</sup>

**64:16** *So be wary of God as much as you are able.*

In another place, He says, “*Be wary of God as is the rightful due of His wariness*” [3:102]. One of these verses is the abrogator, the other the abrogated. One alludes to what is necessary by the command, the other alludes to what is necessary by rightful due. What is necessary by the command came and abrogated what is necessary by rightful due. This is because when the Real calls the servants to account, He does so by what the command makes necessary so that He may then pardon their acts. If He were to take them to task for what is necessary by rightful due, then a thousand years of obedience would have the same color as a thousand years of disobedience. If all the prophets, the friends, and the limpid, and all the recognizers and lovers, came together, which of them would have the capacity to undertake His rightful due or to answer to His rightful due?

His command is finite, but His rightful due is infinite. This is because the command subsists as long as the prescription of the Law subsists, but the prescription of the Law pertains to this world, which is the abode of prescription. The rightful due subsists through the subsistence of the Essence, and the Essence is infinite. Hence the subsistence of the rightful due is infinite. What

1 These two paragraphs are largely derived from RA 218.

2 This poem and part of the previous paragraph are drawn from RA 163.

is necessary by the command will disappear, but what is necessary by the rightful due will never disappear. This world will pass away, and the turn of the command will pass away along with it. But the turn of the rightful due will never pass away.

Today everyone has a mad fervor in his head because he is looking at the command. The prophets and messengers look at their own prophethood and messengerhood, and the angels look at their own obedience and worship. The *tawhīd*-voicers, the strugglers, the faithful, and the purifiers look at their own *tawhīd*, faith, and self-purification.

Tomorrow, when the pavilions of the lordly rightful due are thrown open, the prophets, despite the perfection of their state, will speak of their own knowledge of the Subsistent: “*We have no knowledge*” [5:109]. The angels of the Dominion will strike fire to the monasteries of their obedience, saying, “We have not worshiped You with the rightful due of Your worship.” The recognizers and *tawhīd*-voicers will say, “We have not recognized You with the rightful due of Your recognition.” And God knows best what is correct.<sup>3</sup>

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3 The commentary on this verse is derived from RA 54.

## Surah 65: al-Ṭalāq

**65:1** *O Prophet, when you divorce women, divorce them for the set period.*

This explains the ruling on divorce. Although the Shariah permits divorce, God hates it, for it is the cause of separation. Muṣṭafā said, “Among the permitted things most hateful to God is divorce.”

He also said, “Take spouses and do not divorce, for the Throne shudders at divorce. Whenever a woman asks her husband for divorce, the ease of the Garden is forbidden to her.” He is saying, “Get married and do not seek divorce, for the Tremendous Throne trembles at divorce and separation. Any woman who seeks divorce from her husband without his having harmed her or made her suffer will never smell the scent of the eight paradises.”

Marriage is the cause of joining, and God loves union. Divorce is the cause of parting, and God hates separation. The wall of separation’s world is affliction, and the water of separation’s ocean is the bloody tears of remorse.

The day of separation has no sun and the night of severance no day. If there were any drink more bitter than separation, it would have been placed on that rejected one of the Threshold, Iblis. A bowl was prepared of curses, the drink of severance and separation was poured into it, and it was put in his hand. He drank it all down, not leaving a drop. That was expressed like this: “*Upon thee shall be My curse until the Day of Doom*” [38:78].

The great ones of the religion have said that two goblets appeared from the Unseen. One was *And he was one of the unbelievers* [2:34] and the other was *He is Ever-Merciful toward the faithful* [33:43]. The cup of unbelief was full of the drink of separation and the cup of mercy full of the drink of union. He sent the cup of mercy on the hand of welcome with the escort of bounty to the spirit of Muṣṭafā the Arab. God says, “*Surely God’s bounty upon thee is magnificent*” [4:113]. The cup of unbelief was given by the hand of justice with the description of abasement to Iblis the abandoned. It was said, “*I shall surely fill Gehenna with thee and whosoever follows thee, all together*” [38:85].

Rābi‘a ‘Adawī said, “Unbelief has the flavor of separation, and faith has the pleasure of union. That flavor and this pleasure will appear tomorrow at the resurrection. In the plain of awe and the courtyard of harshness it will be said to one group, ‘Separation without union!’, and to another group, ‘Union without end!’” Those burned by separation will keep on saying,

“Separation from Him turns a moment into a thousand days,  
Trial from Him makes one night a thousand years.” [DS 864]

Those lit up by union will keep on saying,

“On the day of caresses He pulls back union’s curtain  
and beats the drum of departure for separation from the Friend.”

## Surah 66: al-Taḥrīm

**66:8** *O you who have faith, repent to God with true repentance.*

“O believers, familiars, and friends, all of you repent! Come back to My threshold! Turn to Me! Though you have done what comes from you, I will do what comes from Me! Nobody accepts the defective except here. Come back! No threshold forgives sins but here. Seek shelter in Me! Come from the unkindly to the Lovingly Kind! Come from the pain of despair to hope! I have no fear of forgiving sins, come back! I am not ashamed to accept the defective, return!”

Read the equivalent of this verse in “*Be penitent toward your Lord*” [39:54]. The station of penitence is higher than the station of repentance. Penitence is the servant’s return to his Lord with heart and aspiration, and repentance is the servant’s return from disobedience to obedience.

What is penitence? Coming from the valley of hypocrisy on the feet of truthfulness to the valley of tranquility, coming from the valley of innovation on the feet of surrender to the valley of the Sunnah, coming from the valley of dispersion on the feet of disentanglement to the valley of togetherness, coming from the valley of making claims on the feet of poverty to the valley of solitariness, coming from the valley of intelligence on the feet of indigence to the Real.

What is repentance? An obeyed interceder, tender trustee, and generous deputy effaces the imprint of sin and at his intercession the Real pardons the sinful servant. He cleanses and makes pure the servant’s ledger of disobedience and makes the repentant man equal to a man without sin. This is why Muṣṭafā said, “He who repents of sin is like him who has no sin.”

He also said, “Surely God is happier at His servant’s repentance than a thirsty man who comes upon a spring, a man who has lost his camel and finds it, and a barren woman who gives birth.” He is saying, “The Real is more quickly pleased by the repentance of the repenters than by any other act of obedience. Know that His approval of the repentance of the sinner is like the happiness of a thirsty man in the middle of a dry, waterless desert who suddenly comes across pure water. Or it is like that of a traveler who has lost his goods and mount in the middle of a perilous desert and then, after despairing, he suddenly comes across his mount and his goods. Or it is like that of an old, barren woman, hopelessly wishing for a child, who is given the good news of a child of beautiful conduct and lovely form.” In the whole world, there is no happiness that reaches the level of these three, yet next to the Real’s approval of the repenter’s repentance these three count as nothing and naught.

The decree of eternity has gone forth that if someone should be disobedient in a tavern for seventy years but then one day he makes an ablution in pain, puts on the clothing of loyalty, comes in shame to the mosque, makes the intention in bewilderment, raises his hands in remorse, says “God is greater” in dread, and enters into the presence of prayer and whispered secrets, that prayer will not yet be finished when a call will come forth from the Majestic Compeller to the folk of the Dominion, “O My appointees in these heavens! Today put aside all your acts of worship and stop the chanting of your glorification and hallowing. Burn the incense of asking forgiveness for this returned servant of Mine, for he has come to My threshold. Put the water that came with self-exertion from his eyes full of pain into the storehouse of mercy so that tomorrow in the courtyards of the resurrection I may send Riḍwān to take his hand and show him around the resurrection calling out, ‘This is God’s freedman.’ This is the one given freedom by the Lord and forgiveness by the Real, for in his sinfulness he had the brand of Muḥammad on his tongue and the brand of My love in his heart.”

It has been said that tomorrow on the Day of Resurrection a servant will be given his book in his hand. He will see his tainted deeds and hang down his head, a tremendous grief sitting on him. The Real will gaze upon him with mercy and say, “O helpless man, fallen short in your days! Lift up your head, for today is the day of peace and the time of scattering mercy.” In shame before the Real the servant will keep his head hung down. Then the Exalted Lord will say in His generosity, “By My exaltedness, lift up your head and gaze upon My majesty! Even though in the world you did not do what I commanded, today at the time of your misery and helplessness I will do what you want. ‘Say: “Each acts according to his own manner”’ [17:84]. Everyone does what is worthy of him, and that is what comes forth from him. You are without loyalty because I created you that way. What is worthy of Me is all loyalty and generosity, for that is My attribute.”

Then the cup of the wine of holiness will be placed in his hand and he will drink it down all at once. Shouting out like the enraptured he will come forth in the plain of the resurrection, the tongue of his state saying,

“I was at ease with my sins once I saw  
that pardon is the result of sin.”

\*

Since Your pardon shuts down the road of my offenses,  
from now on I will hold on to disobedience.

This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, “*Those—God shall change their ugly deeds into beautiful deeds, and God is forgiving, ever-merciful*” [25:70].

## Surah 67: al-Mulk

**67:1** *Blessed is He in whose hand is the kingdom, and He is powerful over everything.*

The kingdom of the 18,000 worlds is in His hand. The heads of all the headmen are in the grasp of His predetermination, the necks of all the proud wear the collar of His subjection, the forelocks of all the tyrants are acquiescent to the severity of His all-compellingness. It has come in a report, “‘I am the King. The hearts and the forelocks of the kings are in My hand, and I make them fluctuate as I will.’ I am the king, I am king over all kings. Exalting and abasing the servants is in My hand. The hearts of the world’s folk are in My grasp. I turn them any way I want and I drive their secret cores according to My desire. If I want, I call them and make them laugh. If I want, I drive them away and make them weep.

“O you who are the world’s folk! Do not busy your breasts because of kings and do not attach your hearts to them. Attach your hearts to My religion, trust in My generosity, and turn your face to the threshold of obedience to Me. Serve the religion so that this world may follow you. Serve the King of kings, so that the kings of this world may serve you.”

Serve Him so that kings may serve you,  
be His boy and the sultan will be your servant.

The kingdom of human nature is one thing, the kingdom of the heart another, and the kingdom of the spirit still another. Human nature runs the kingdom in this world, the heart runs the kingdom in the next world, and the spirit runs the kingdom in the World of the Haqiqah.

The kingdom of human nature is this: *Surely the life of this world is but play, diversion, and adornment* [57:20]. The kingdom of the heart is this: *He loves them, and they love Him* [5:54]. The kingdom of the spirit is this: *Faces that day will radiant, gazing upon their Lord* [75:22-23].

That exalted man of the road said, “Tomorrow when the banner of His magnificence is raised at the resurrection—*Whose is the kingdom?* [40:16]—with His permission I will open up a door in the corner of my heart and give out some of my pain for Him. Then dust will rise up from the resurrection and it will say, ‘*Whose is the kingdom?*’ If someone comes into the road to protest, I will say, ‘He who has weak and indigent ones like us.’

“He will say, ‘*Whose is the kingdom?*’

“Ours, for we have an all-compelling King. Why should it not be we who say, ‘*Whose is the kingdom?*’ Though He has servants like us, we have a Lord like Him.”

When someone is given access to the sanctuary of the Qur’an, for a time he wears this robe: *As for My servants, thou shalt have no ruling power over them* [17:65]. Then for a time he finds this bestowal of eminence: *He loves them, and they love Him*. Then for a time he drinks this draft: *And their Lord will pour for them* [76:21]. Why should it not happen that such a person rule over the newly arrived things and say morning and evening, “*Whose is the kingdom?*”

Tell them to call me nothing but lord—  
that’s a name suited for Your serving boy.  
I will break the belt of the spheres with my own strength  
when Your name is inscribed on my belt.

## Surah 68: al-Qalam

### 68:1 *Nūn. By the Pen and what they inscribe.*

*Nūn* is one of the letters of the alphabet. The alphabet's letters are the roots of words, the connectors of phrases, and the separators of verses. All indicate generosity and bounty, some in brief and some in detail. They allude to gentleness, the good news of love, expiation of offenses, and the plundering of the hearts of the friends. They are the foundation of words and the adornment of speakers. Understanding them is the mark of those who conform. They are burdens on the neck of the enemies and thorns in the eyes of the innovators. It is the belief of the faithful that these letters are the speech of the Lord of the world. He is a Lord who has knowledge and power. His knowledge is without reflective thought and His power without tools. His kingship is without end, His solicitude without bribery, His bestowal without obligation. He is a Lord who is the artisan of the universe and the protector of creation, the keeper of enemies and the companion of friends. He is in everyone's eyes through artisanry and settled down in the hearts of His lovers, the hard cash of every hope and enough for every assurance. Though the servant be heavily burdened by offenses, He is clement and forbearing.

The Pir of the Tariqah said in his whispered prayers, "O God, no matter how sinful we are, You are forgiving. No matter how ugly our deeds, You are the concealer. O King, You have the treasure of bounty, without equal or help. It is worthy that You pass over our disloyal acts."

*Nūn. By the Pen.* *Nūn* is the inkwell, and the Pen is a pen of light. The writer is the Forgiving Lord. He wrote with the Pen in the emerald Tablet, He wrote with the ink of light, He wrote on the notebook of carnelian, He wrote the story and the deeds of the created things. He wrote the heart of the recognizer with the Pen of generosity, He wrote with the ink of bounty, He wrote on the notebook of gentleness, He wrote the attribute and description of the honorable: *He wrote faith in their hearts* [58:22]. He wrote in the Tablet, and He wrote it all for you. He wrote in the heart, and He wrote it all in His description. He did not show what He wrote for you to Gabriel. How could He show what He Himself wrote to Satan?

Some of the commentators have said that *Nūn* is a fish on the water below the seven layers of the earth. Because of the burden of the earth is so heavy, the fish became bent. It became like the *nūn* [ن], its head lifted up from the east and its tail from the west. When it wanted to complain about the heavy burden, Gabriel shouted at it. It became so afraid that it forgot the heavy burden of the earth, and it will not dare to move until the resurrection. When the fish carried the burden and did not complain, the Lord of the Worlds gave it two bestowals of eminence: One is that He swore an oath by it, so it became the place of the oath of the Lord of the Universe. The other is that He held back the knife from its neck. All the animals of earth are sacrificed with a knife, but not the fish. Thus the world's folk may know that whenever someone carries a burden, his suffering will not be wasted.

O chevalier! If the fish carried the burden of the earth, the faithful servant carried the burden of the Patron's Trust: *And man carried it* [33:72]. When the fish lifted up the burden of the earth, it became secure from the knife of punishment. What wonder if the faithful person who lifts up the burden of the Trust becomes secure from the knife of severance?

## Surah 69: al-Ḥāqqa

### **69:1-2 *The Realizing! What is the Realizing?***

What is the resurrection? That resurrection is real, and it is what will be. It is true, and it is what will happen. Everyone will reach what is suited for him and will receive the reward for the good and evil in his register.

It is said that the resurrection is two, one today and one tomorrow. Today's is death, as has come in the report: "When someone dies, his resurrection arrives." Whoever is certain of this resurrection is always terrified and fearful of death. He is always burnt and melted in fear of this resurrection. He keeps himself busy with the provisions of the road and the makings of that journey.

The great ones of the religion have said that the Adamite is one of two: either like a beast held in a stable, or like a bird imprisoned in a cage. The poor wretch who is like a beast fears and trembles because of death. He knows that when the beast is taken out of the stable, it will be quickly slaughtered. The chevalier who is like a bird is constantly waiting for death, for the happiness and ease of the bird lies in the breaking of the cage. Thus that chevalier said,

"When will I be released from this cage  
to make a nest in the divine garden?" [DS 371]

As for tomorrow's resurrection, that is the resurrection when all the people from the first to the last will be gathered in that plain of awe, as the Exalted Lord says, "*And We will muster them such that We leave none of them behind*" [18:47]. It is a tremendous day, a difficult work, a limitless harshness. The portico of magnificence will be set up, the scales of justice hung, the narrow path of rightness pulled out, the paradises of beauty adorned, the hell of awesomeness stirred up. This is the day when the curtains will be lifted, the secrets made apparent, the crowns of levity thrown in the dust, the hats of folly taken off. Fancies will be cleared of water and dust, and the rewards of good and evil will be placed next to each other.

## Surah 71: Nūḥ

**71:13-14** *What is it with you that you do not hope for God with dignity? And He created you in stages.*

“What has happened to you that you do not show gratitude for blessings and you do not recognize the rightful due of My nurturing, even though you know from what you were created and how you were created, state by state and stage by stage. First I brought a sperm drop from weak loins into a weak womb. I kept it in that *firm settledness* [77:21] and fortified place. Look at how I painted it with the pen of power. I turned that drop of water into blood and turned that blood into flesh. Then I brought forth bones and joined them together. When the formed and determined frame was completed, I commanded the subtle spirit to go into the body, like a sultan to a castle or a phoenix to its nest, so that it might give a robe of honor to each bodily part: seeing to the eye, speaking to the tongue, hearing to the ear, taking to the hand, walking to the feet. O servant, I adorned you beautifully, *in the most beautiful stature* [95:4]. I refined your stature, I created you more beautiful than all the beings, and I sculpted you more lovely than all the existent things.”

No idol like your form is sculpted in the country,  
no cypress with your stature is planted in Kishmar.<sup>1</sup>  
When your picture is painted before Azar’s idol,  
Azar’s painted idol shatters in shame.

The wise Enactor, the generous Lord, added to the beauty of form and showed you the marvels of power in your own created disposition. He adorned your heart with *tawḥīd*, scouring away the rust of denial. What do you say about His wisdom and His mercy? Is it suitable that He burn what He himself adorned and trimmed? No, of course not. When you ponder this state and reflect on the artisanry of the Creator, you will say with the tongue of thanksgiving,

“He sculpted me from a drop of sperm,  
He appointed me to serve Him in His bounty  
He lifted my head above all creatures—  
thanks be to God for acting so beautifully toward me!”

Having reminded them of all the blessings and generosity of the Real, Noah heard no gratitude. It only increased them in unbelief and denial, so he turned his face away from them and said,

**71:28** *My Lord, forgive me and my parents, and those who enter my house with faith, and the faithful men and women.*

“*My Lord, forgive me and my parents, and those who enter my house with faith:* O Lord, forgive me and the two who gave birth to me, and everyone who enters into my covenant with faith. *And the faithful men and women:* and the faithful among the community of Aḥmad, the men and the women, who will come into existence at the end of the era as the best of all communities and approved by You, the Lord.”

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<sup>1</sup> A village in Khorasan said to be where Zoroaster planted cypress trees.

## Surah 73: al-Muzzammil

**73:1-2** *O enwrapped in thy robe, stand at night save for a little.*

“O prophet made pure! O master most pure! O greatest messenger! O emulated by mortal man! O luminous moon in the tower of majesty! O most manifest pearl in the jewel box of messengerhood! O you whose name is the title of the book of majesty! O you whose decrees are the embroidery on the robe of messengerhood, whose speech is the capital of the religion, whose announcements are the ornament of the Shariah! O arranger of the collar of prophethood! O disseminator of the announcement of messengerhood! O confirmer of the pillars of guidance! O unveiler of the secrets of friendship! O founder of the path of the Shariah! O raiser of the *mi<sup>c</sup>rāj* of the Haqiqah!

“*Stand at night:* Get up and do the night prayer. Be awake some of the night, interceding for the community; and sleep some of the night, giving ease to your soul. O master, if you sleep all night, your community will be neglected, and if you stay awake all night, you will suffer, but I do not want your suffering. When you stay awake I will forgive some of the disobedient because of your wakefulness so as to confirm the truth of intercession. While you sleep I will forgive the rest to realize mercy. O master, when you found the robe of My proximity, you found it in sleep. So also at night be in My service. Just as you found the robe at night, so also give thanks for that robe by serving at night.”

O chevalier! The servant is shown no greater generosity than when he rises furtively from his warm bed on a dark night and enters into whispered prayer at God’s threshold with weeping and pleading, lifting up the story of his own pain to Him. He says in the tongue of need before the Presence of Mystery, “O God, give me access so I may lift up the story of my pain to You. I weep before Your threshold and I am joyful in hope mixed with fear. O God, receive me so that I may turn myself over to You. Gaze at me once so that I may throw the two worlds into the ocean.”

My dear, be awake and aware at night, for night is the scented garden of the friends and the springtime of the recognizers. Night is the meadow of the lovers and the light of the truthful. Night is the joy of the yearners and the ease of the spirits of the obedient.

**73:4** *And recite the Qur’an with measured recitation.*

“O Muḥammad, at night recite the Qur’an in order and with measure. In the night prayer recite the Qur’an aloud so that My friends may nurture their spirits in the playing fields of holiness to the tune of intimacy in the pleasure of listening to My speech and the comfort of My message so that they may perfume and refresh their secret cores. O Muḥammad, say to My friends, ‘When you want to whisper secretly with Me, turn your faces to the kiblah of the Shariah and step into the presence of the prayer.’”

“The praying person is whispering with his Lord.” The prayer is to tell secrets and knock at the door of hope. The prayer is the cause of salvation and whispering with the Friend. The prayer is the utmost limit of struggle and the beginning of contemplation. The prayer is to snatch oneself away from the hand of the soul, to strive in servanthood, and to praise the Friend. Through the prayer friends appear differently from enemies and familiars are separated from strangers. “Between the servant and unbelief stands abandoning the prayer.”

The person of faith saying the prayer is like a rosebush. Recognition in him is like the scent, and the prayer is like the roses. Anyone can pick the rose from the bush and tear apart its petals,

but no one can reduce its scent and take away its fragrance. In the same way, Satan can whisper in the outward prayer so as to snatch something away from it, but he cannot take away recognition from the inwardness.

**73:8** *And remember the name of thy Lord and devote thyself to Him devoutly.*

Devotion is one of the states of the travelers, those who, in their states of encounter and unveilings, have reached the point that paradise with all its trees and streams does not enter into the beauty of their imagination; hell, with all its fetters and shackles, trembles in fear at the burning in their breasts. The viper of this world's avarice cannot put its fangs into the days of their delight, thorns from the thickets of envy and pride fail to catch in their skirts, dust from the desert of the commanding soul does not sit on the robe of their submission, smoke from the abyss of caprice never reaches their eyes. They look at people with the eye of heedfulness, they speak with the tongue of tenderness, they become familiar with the heart of mercy. They are kings in attribute and beggars in form, sultans of the road in the garment of the indigent, travelers who have nothing of distance, fliers without the causality of wings and feathers, drunk with the wine of passion, alive with the life of proximity.

A group who have cleared away everything other than Us,  
striking the fire of their hearts' grief into the spheres.  
Distant from everything outside of Us,  
they reached the Throne, their tents set up in the dust.

**73:9** *Lord of the east and the west, there is no god but He, so take Him as a trustee.*

Since you know that He is the God of the world and the world's folk, that He is their keeper, nurturer, work-knower, and guardian, consider Him your trustee and caretaker, for He is more sufficient than all caretakers. Come totally outside your rushing and running, your preoccupations, and entrust yourself totally to Him. Turn away from all and lean on His assurance. Lift your heart away from creatures and put aside self-governance. Put all of your self in the hands of His predestination so that the road of seeking may become clear to you. He is one Lord, and He wants a servant who is one in aspiration and one in seeking. These words will be not set in place by a man of every door and every place.

Be the man whose feet are on the ground  
and whose aspiration's head is in the Pleiades.

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The unique man has no use for middling passion;  
middling passion is not fit for the unique man.  
Either passion, or blame, or the road of safety—  
the arrow of trial has no target but man's spirit.

**73:10** *And be patient with what they say, and keep apart from them beautifully.*

*We indeed know that thy breast is straitened by what they say [15:97]. And be patient with beautiful patience [70:5]. So be patient, as the possessors of resoluteness among the messengers were patient [46:35]. Be patient with thy Lord's decree, for surely thou art in Our eyes [52:48].* In several places in the Qur'an that paragon of the world is commanded to have patience, for patience is the antidote to the poison of trial. The mark of the folk of love and friendship is patience.

Patience in tribulation is no great work, for it is indeed people's habit. The manly man is he who is patient in blessings and keeps his feet on the road of servanthood. He does not step outside of the blessings written for himself. Nimrod, Korah, Pharaoh, Haman, and their likes were drowned in the ocean of destruction only as a result of impatience.

In blessings the Adamites have ungratefulness and ingratitude. Their feet do not remain in the blessings; rather, they pass beyond their limit and bring forth impudence and exultation. This is why the Exalted Lord says, "*No indeed; surely man is rebellious because he sees himself without*

*needs*” [96:6-7]. Hence the final end of their work in this world is this: “*How many a city We destroyed who exulted in their delightful life*” [28:58]; and in the afterworld, what the Lord of the Worlds says in this surah: “*Surely with Us there are shackles and hellfire, choking food and a painful chastisement*” [73:12-13].

## Surah 74: al-Muddaththir

**74:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

You effaced my name and my body's traces:  
I became absent from me and You remained.  
In my annihilation my annihilation was annihilated  
and in what is beyond me I found You.<sup>1</sup>

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As long as your fear is coupled with dust  
your affirmation will not turn away from negation.  
As long as you do not reject both poverty and wealth,  
your *tawhīd* will not be disengaged from associates.

Disengage your secret core from both houses so that the dust of the threshold of *in the name of God* may sit on the face of your days and you may become endlessly felicitous. All the meanings of mortal nature and the thoughts of nature will burn in the fire of love. As soon you say His name, your breast becomes aware of talk of Him. Take one step beyond yourself so that the beauty of this name may take off the mask of exaltedness and disclose itself to your heart. It was the grief and happiness of this name that shone on the throne of Solomon so that the jinn, birds, and wild animals fastened the belt of serving him. It was a sliver of the reality of this name that shone on the pinnacles of the Mount such that layer by layer it fell apart. It will be because of the greatness of this name that God will say to His Messenger on the Day of Resurrection, "You go and intercede for those who have no account with Us, and leave the rest to Us, for We will bring them all under Our protection." The burnt ones among the folk of *tawhīd*, the disobedient and destitute, will place their feet in the Fire and say, *in the name of God*. The Fire will flee and say, "Pass by, O man of faith, for your light has extinguished my fire."

**74:1-2** *O enwrapped in thy cloak, stand up and warn!*

"O source of bounteousness, O rising place of beauty, O chosen by the Majestic! O you who have pulled the cloak of mortal nature over your head and covered yourself with the rug of human nature. If you want proximity to Me, *stand up* through Me and drop from yourself everything other than Me. Rise up from yourself and rise up from your own rising up! Flee to the sanctuary of My exaltedness! Lift off the cloak of mortal nature from yourself, remove the rug of human nature from the road of the heart so that the heart may be a vast plain! Let it fly like a bird in the world of desire on the air of seeking until it arrives at the nest of proximity."

A great man was asked, "What is the meaning of proximity?"

"If you mean the servant's proximity to the Real, expressing that is easy and alluding to it simple: It is service in seclusion, hidden from the people; the unveiling of the Haqiqah, hidden from the angels; immersion in companionship, hidden from oneself.

"If you are talking about the Real's proximity to the servant, that cannot be put into words, nor do expression and allusion have any access to it. It is nothing but what He Himself says: '*Surely I am near* [2:186]: Unsought, uncalled, unperceived, I am near. Compared to My closeness, the

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<sup>1</sup> A slightly different version of the second line is found in the divan of Ḥallāj.

eye's blackness is distant from the eye's whiteness, for I am nearer than that, and the breath is far from the lips, for I am nearer than that. I am not near to your intellect's preserve, for I am near to My own attributes in the description of My own firstness."

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "If people were to see the light of proximity in the recognizer, they would all be burned away, and if the recognizer were to see the light of proximity in himself, he would burn away. The knowledge of proximity does not fit into tongue and ear. It is a narrow road, and proximity disdains companionship with the tongue's water and clay. Whenever proximity shows its face, how can the universe and man wait around?"

As long as you are with you, what good is this talk to you?

For this is the Fountain of Life, the world disowned.

*O enwrapped in thy cloak, stand up and warn!* "O trustworthy Gabriel, O cherubim of the heavens, O proximate of the threshold! Give good news to creation that Muḥammad Muṣṭafā has been clothed in the garment of prophethood and mounted on the steed of messengerhood. O heaven, you burn candles! O Inhabited House, you become the prayer-niche of the folk of faith! O revered and honored Kaabah, you be the kiblah of the army of the folk of the submission! O dust of the earth, you be the mosque of the folk of *No god but God*, for that paragon of the world and master of the children of Adam has been singled out for this eminence-bestowing address: "*O enwrapped in thy cloak, stand up and warn!*"

Take care not to have the opinion that before he was addressed like this, he was not a prophet. He said, "I was a prophet when Adam was between water and clay, spirit and body." There was still no water and no dust when the throne of the covenant of prophethood's good fortune was set up and that paragon sat on that throne. The spirits of the 124,000 prophets were standing in service, and the four captains, who were the elect of prophethood's threshold—Abū Bakr, °Umar, °Uthmān, and °Alī—were lined up to serve him.

Muṣṭafā said, "O pure faith! Come down into the chamber of Abū Bakr's heart and stay concealed until he enters into the loins. When I stick up my head from the midst of the earth of Hijaz, you come from the chamber of Abū Bakr's breast to the tip of his tongue and set up the covenant with me before the world's folk know. Then I will place this crown of honor on his head: 'Abū Bakr and I were created from one clay, but I preceded him to prophethood, without harming him. Had he preceded me, that would not have harmed me.'

"O exaltedness of the submission! Tighten the belt of courage and come down into the breast of °Umar, and reconcile him with me. Then I will draw this sigil on his days: 'Had I not been sent as prophet, you would have been sent, O °Umar!'

"O self-purification! You place the crown of shame on your head and tighten the belt of contentment and come down into the breast of °Uthmān so that in the house of the world I may keep his allegiance and write out this inscription: "*It is they who are the faithful in truth*" [8:4].

"O knowledge! You put on the garment of intellect and go into the monastery of °Alī's heart. Stand in wait until tomorrow when the intellect of the prophets enters by the door of my chamber. I will gaze upon him, and he will make knowledge a mirror and intellect an eye. He will look into the mirror and recognize me, and I will proclaim this for him: 'You are to me as Aaron was to Moses.'"

## Surah 75: al-Qiyāma

### **75:1 No! I swear by the Day of Resurrection.**

The Lord of the Worlds swears an oath by the Day of Resurrection. That is the day when the pavilions of the rightful due of lordhood will be opened, the carpet of majesty and tremendousness spread, and the banner of all-compellingness brought out to the desert of all-subjugatingness. The portico of magnificence will be raised, the scales of justice will be hung, and the harshness of the exalted all-compellingness will make everyone confounded and senseless. The prophets will come in their perfection and put away talk of their knowledge: “*We have no knowledge*” [5:109]. The angels of the Dominion will come and strike fire to the monasteries of their worship: “We have not worshiped You with the rightful due of Your worship.” The recognizers and *tawhīd*-voicers will come and disown their own recognition: “We have not recognized You with the rightful due of Your recognition.”<sup>1</sup>

What great remorse—if on that day His bounty does not take your hand! What tremendous affliction—if in that assembly His generosity does not come to your aid! If His solicitude does not take your hand, what good will obedience have done? If He shows the face of His justice, that will be your destruction.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “O God, You know that I do not have these days by myself. I do not light the candle of guidance with my sufficiency. What comes from me? What opens up from my doing? My obedience is through Your success-giving, my service through Your guidance, My repentance through Your kind favor, my gratitude through Your beneficence, my remembrance through Your inspiration. All is You! Who am I? If not for Your bounty, what do I have?”

### **75:2 No! I swear by the blaming soul.**

Among the words of the commentators is that the *blaming soul* is the soul of the person of faith which is always in remorse for its own days and blaming itself for its own shortcomings. It strikes fear and dread into itself and looks upon itself with the eyes of disdain and abasement and says,

O soul mean in aspiration and deluded,  
on whatever stone I strike you, you come up false.

O you who fell short in the road of seeking the Real at the first step! O you who were cut off in the desert of the Law’s prescription despite a thousand steeds! O you who have never seen the tip of the hair of good fortune despite a thousand candles and lamps! O you who fell into the treasury of Tibet but did not catch the scent of musk! O you who dove into the ocean with all the divers without finding anything at all but losing your own self! O you who came late and went back early! O you who bought the mirage of delusion in place of the wine of joy and sold your heart and religion for a price! *They deemed the life of this world more worthy of love than the next world* [16:107].

You’ll see when the dust clears away  
if you’re seated on a horse or an ass.

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How long making the abode of delusion an abode of joy!  
How long making the abode of flight an abode of lodging!

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1 This paragraph is derived from RA 54.

Wait until the jolt of Seraphiel's trumpet  
 hides your pretty face and shows your ugly character!  
 One swat of the Lion for a world full of carrion-eaters,  
 one blast of the Trumpet for a hundred thousand Pharaoh-natures! [DS 182, 184]

A great man was asked, "Where does the road begin?"

He said, "Not with you. When you go off to the side, the road begins everywhere."

There is never a day when this call does not come from the World of Infinity: "O you whom We called but you turned away from Us! O you whom We called, morning and night, to the good fortune of companionship, but you pulled your feet back from Our street! It is We whom you cannot avoid. If you show Us disdain, with whom will you get along? If you cannot be an elephant, at least be no less than a gnat, which has the form of an elephant and says, 'Though I don't have an elephant's strength to carry a load, at least I will have the form of an elephant and will not throw my load on someone else.'"

When the faithful servant pulls the blaming soul into discipline and gives it its rightful due of rebuke and advice, and when success-giving helps him, then the blaming soul will soon turn into the *serene soul*. The Lord will address it and welcome it with the attribute of ennobling and exalting: "*O serene soul, return to thy Lord* [89:27-28]: O serene soul at rest and at ease with Our companionship, until today you came by the road of the soul. Now come by the road of the heart so that you may reach Us. The heart is given access to Our threshold, but nothing else is ever given access.

"The blood of the sincerely truthful was purified and made into a road—  
 unless the spirit takes a step in this road, you will have no access.

"Then, when you reach Us, you will find this robe:"

**75:22-23 *Faces that day will be radiant, gazing upon their Lord.***

The servant with faith is like a falcon. When they catch a falcon and want to make it worthy for the hand of the king, they sew its eyes shut for a while. They put a tie on its foot and keep it in a dark house, separate from its mate. For a time they afflict it with hunger so that it becomes weak and emaciated. It forgets its homeland and gains the nature of being left aside. Finally they open up its eyes. They light a candle and beat a drum for it. They put a piece of meat in front of it and they make the hand of the king its resting place. The falcon says to itself, "In the whole world, who has this honor that I have? A candle before my eyes, the beating of a drum my tune, bird meat my food, the king's hand my place!"

In a similar way, when they want to clothe the faithful servant in the robe of bosom friendship and let him drink the wine of love, they do so with the same practice. For a time they keep him in within the four walls of the grave. They take away his hands' holding and his feet's walking. They remove sight from his eyes and leave him in this state for some time. Then all of a sudden they beat the drum of the resurrection. The servant lifts his head from the dust of the grave, opens his eyes, and sees the light of paradise: *Their light running before them* [57:12]. He forgets this world, drinks the wine of union, and sits at the table of everlastingness. Just as the falcon opened its eyes and saw itself on the hand of the king, the faithful servant opens his eyes and sees himself in the *seat of truthfulness* [54:55]. He hears the greeting of the King and sees the vision of the King. The servant is happy and joyful in the midst of blessedness, nearness, and the most beautiful, gazing on the beauty and majesty of the Real. This is why the Lord of the Worlds says, "*Faces on that day will be radiant, gazing upon their Lord.*" The faces of the faithful and the obedient, the faces of the sincerely truthful and the witnesses, the faces of the passionate and the yearners, will be shining like the moon and sparkling like the sun. They will gaze happily and joyfully on the Lord of the world's folk, the Caresser of the friends, the Heart-opener of the yearners. What a sweet day is the day of union! The happiness of that day is never ending, the good fortune of that day is boundless—the day of kindness and bounteousness, the day of giving and bestowal, the day

of the gaze of the Possessor of Majesty, the day of happiness and victory, the servant subsisting and the Patron bearing the cup. From the side of generosity goes forth the call, “The house is your house, and I am your neighbor.”

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “The recognizer’s portion in paradise is three things: listening, drinking, and seeing. Concerning the listening He says, ‘*They will be made happy in a garden*’ [30:15]. Concerning the drinking He says, ‘*And their Lord will pour for them a pure wine*’ [76:21]. Concerning the seeing He says, ‘*Faces on that day will be radiant, gazing upon their Lord.*’ Hearing is the portion of the ears, drinking the portion of the lips, and seeing the portion of the eyes. Hearing is for the finders, drinking for the passionate, and seeing for the lovers. Hearing increases revelry, drinking opens up the tongue, and seeing snatches away attributes. Hearing turns the object of seeking into hard cash, drinking discloses the mystery, seeing makes the recognizer solitary. Hearing reaches the servant’s seven bodily parts: the ears are like his cupbearer, drinking is all hearing, and vision sees His face beneath every hair.”

## Surah 76: al-Insān

### **76:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

This is the name of the Compeller. In the realms of His beginninglessness He was one in the attribute of His all-compellingness, and in the eras of His endlessness He will be solitary in the description of His dominion, for His beginninglessness is His endlessness, and His all-compellingness is His dominion. He is unitary in description, self-sufficient in Essence, everlasting in attributes. Nothing is similar to Him in His Essence and His attributes, no diversion stirs Him in the establishment of His artifacts, no negligence befalls Him in His knowledge and wisdom, no blunder occurs for Him in His speech and words, for He is wise and not diverted, knowing and not negligent, generous in affirming and effacing. Truthfulness is His words, the creatures His creation, and the kingdom His possession.

In the name of Him in whose majesty and tremendousness intellects are dazzled, in the name of Him in the world of whose causeless will intelligence is dizzy, in the name of Him the proof of whose magnificence is His very magnificence, in the name of Him the evidence for whose being is His very being, in the name of Him whose praise and laudation are expressed by His permission and whose remembrance and mention by His command. In the name of Him whose seeking is through His pulling and whose finding is through His solicitude.

Which soul do you see that is not melted in His severity? Which heart do you see that is not caressed by His gentleness? Which spirit has not been clutched by the claws of His falcon's exaltedness? Which secret core is not drunk with the wine of His love? Which eye is not waiting to see Him? Which ear is not hoping to hear His words? Go, pass by the nook of the dervishes to see the burn of seeking for Him. Go to the street of the tavern-goers to see the pain of not finding Him. In the church of the Christians is the elation of seeking Him, in the synagogue of the Jews the desire to find Him, in the fire-temple of the Zoroastrians the pain of being held back from Him.<sup>1</sup>

I see so many hearts given away, the Heart-holder one,  
countless seekers of the Friend, the Friend one.

O God, the whole world wants You. What does the work is what You want. Happy is the one You want, for even if he turns back from You, You will be waiting in his road.<sup>2</sup>

### **76:1** *Has an era come upon man when he was not a thing remembered?*

The commentators say that *man* here means Adam and that *era* alludes to the days when he was thrown down for forty years as a body without spirit between Mecca and Taif. Someone may ask what wisdom there was in leaving Adam like that for forty years between Mecca and Taif and in delaying his creation. The answer is that although Adam was made outwardly from clay, with which there is no need for delay, delay is needed with the heart. I am not talking about the delay of power, but rather the delay of greatness. Adam was not like the other created things, which were created with “*Be!*”, so it comes to be [2:117]. In creation Adam was the root, and the other creatures were his followers. He created whatever He created for Adam's sake, and He created Adam for Himself: “You I created solitary for the Solitary.”

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1 This paragraph is derived from RA 35-36.

2 This is a saying of the Pir of the Tariqah (according to Maybudī under 41:1).

“In Adam’s makeup there must be a heart that recognizes Me, a tongue that praises Me, an eye that sees Me, a hand that takes the cup of union, a foot that walks in My road. If I were to bring him into existence in an instant, I would make My power apparent. By putting many years in the midst, I make apparent his greatness and magnificence. I would rather make the greatness of My friends apparent than show My own power.”<sup>3</sup>

What good fortune and generosity the Exalted Threshold placed before Adam! He brought him into the road with a hundred thousand endearments and exaltations, placing the embroidery of *Surely God chose Adam* [3:33] on the cape of his good fortune. He fixed the prosperous mole of *I have blown into him of My spirit* [15:29] on the beautiful cheek of his chosenness. He clothed him in the elevated robe of *what I created with My two hands* [38:75]. He conveyed him to a station where He gave him the wine of love in the row of chosenness on the carpet of witnessing. From the tip of the Pleiades to the end of the earth, He made him the trustee of greatness. He commanded the angels of the Dominion to prostrate themselves before him. Then, despite all this honor done toward him, his greatness, level, and rank had still not appeared. His greatness did not appear until he was addressed by the declaration, “*And Adam disobeyed*” [20:121]. This is because caressing at the time of conformity is no proof of honor. Caressing at the time of opposition is the proof of exaltation and honor.

When Adam was put on the throne of beauty and perfection, with the crown of prosperity on his head and the robe of honor on his breast, why would it be surprising if the angels and the spheres were to serve him? The surprise is that, after he fell to the lowland of his slip and the inscription *And Adam disobeyed* was written out for him, then, despite this disobedience and opposition, he saw on his head the crown of *Then his Lord chose him* [20:122].

When a man has a wife and is her companion, he does not know that he loves her, for the love is hidden by the blessings and companionship. Wait until they fall into separation! It is then that friendship appears. Adam was the friend, but his friendship was hidden by the blessings of paradise. Not everywhere that has blessings also has friendship. Byzantium is full of the blessings of gold and silver, but not an iota of love. So, when the veil of paradise was lifted from before Adam, the reality of love became apparent.

When Iblis was Iblis, no one knew he was Iblis, nor did he know. He appeared as a worshiper and a prostrator, the belt of his service bound, his face washed with the water of conformity. When his foot slipped, it became apparent that he was neither friend nor servant. Adam the Chosen was the friend, but the friendship was concealed by blessings. When his foot slipped, it became clear that he was both friend and servant.<sup>4</sup>

**76:5 *Surely the pious shall drink of a cup whose mixture is of camphor.***

In truth tomorrow in paradise the good people and the good men will drink wine from the cup of gentleness, a wine in the color of camphor with the scent of musk, a wine in worthy measure—nothing less than worthy measure, nothing added to it. Less and unworthy are both defects, but paradise is free of defects.

**76:6 *A fountain from which drink the servants of God, making it gush forth with a gushing.***

This is a spring that flows forth from the region of paradise, and it flows forth at the paradise-dwellers’ command. They will make it flow as they want wherever they want, up or down, over the palaces and chambers, over the rugs and carpets, flowing on the *silk and brocade* [18:31], overflowing, traveling, and inanimate. No cloth will become wet from it, nor will it pass over anything opaque. Eyes will be open while shut. Camphor will be in the ginger, ginger in the camphor, the latter released from its cold, the former far from its heat, each one kept in equilibrium. It will not be the artifact of creatures, nor will they be kept back from it: a wine without opacity, a drinker without intoxication, a cup-bearer who sees—the wine of intimacy in the cup of holiness in the

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3 These two paragraphs are drawn from RA 235.

4 Much of the discussion from the last three and a half paragraphs is inspired by RA 150-52.

session of finding on the carpet of witnessing from the hand of the Friend in face-to-face vision itself, without any trouble in the midst.

O chevalier, wine is that wine, poured by the hand of the Unseen into the cup of the heart and drunk by the eye of the spirit.

The people became drunk with the passing of the cup  
but I became drunk with the one who passed it.

“The wine made a group drunk, but for me it was seeing the cupbearer. Hence they were annihilated in that drunkenness, and I subsisted in this drunkenness.”

A great man was shown in a dream that Ma<sup>°</sup>rūf Karkhī was circumambulating the Throne and the Exalted Lord was saying to the angels, “Do you recognize him?” They said they did not. He said, “That is Ma<sup>°</sup>rūf Karkhī, drunk from Our love. He will not become sober until his eyes fall on Me.”

When friendship makes someone drunk,  
the world is debased before his aspiration.  
In his friendship nonbeing is made being,  
and he is made drunk with the wine of union.

Wines are two: one is today, the other tomorrow. Today’s is the wine of intimacy, tomorrow’s the wine of the cup. Today the wine flows from the source of gentleness, tomorrow the *pure wine* will come from the hand of the All-Merciful:

**76:21** *And their Lord will pour for them a pure wine.*

Whoever does not have the wine of love today will not have the *pure wine* tomorrow. Today they swallow down the wine of love from the cup of recognition, tomorrow they drink the *pure wine* in the presence of the Forgiving King—today the wine of love in the paradise of recognition, tomorrow the *pure wine* in the paradise of approval.

Today the paradise of recognition is the heart of the recognizers. Its walls are faith and submission, its floor self-purification and recognition, its trees glorification and reciting the formula of *tawhīd*, its rivers godwariness and trust, its abodes and palaces knowledge and abstinence, its rooms and views truthfulness and certainty, its approval approval of the decree. Today when someone has adorned the paradise of his heart with obedience and worship, tomorrow he will have the paradise of approval. The walls of that paradise are silver and gold, the floor ruby and emerald, the soil musk and ambergris, and the rivers water, milk, wine, and honey. The wine is *Tasnīm* [83:27], *fine wine* [83:25], and *Salsabīl* [76:18], the food the *flesh of birds* [56:21] on the table of everlastingness, the servants the serving boys and slaves, the sympathizers houris and wide-eyed maidens, the kind companions Muḥammad and Abraham, the comrades Abū Bakr, °Umar, °Uthmān, and °Alī. The sitting place will be *goodly dwellings* [9:72] and the gazing place the *seat of truthfulness* [54:55]. The Palisades of Holiness will be the place of seeing the Real’s majesty and beauty.

Tomorrow all the faithful will see the Real, but each in the measure of his own recognition. “God discloses Himself to the faithful generally and to Abū Bakr specifically.” Since no one has the recognition of Abū Bakr, no one will share with him in that vision.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “What sort of pleasure is there in shared seeing? There must be a session empty of the intrusion of others, the Friend disclosing Himself and the gazer annihilated in what is seen. The eye that gazes on Him is never shut, the eye that sees Him has no partner. The one called by Him is never unfortunate, the one brought near to Him has no place in the two worlds, the one made His companion has no need for paradise, the one drunk with Him has only Him to pour: *And their Lord will pour for them a pure wine.*”

## Surah 77: al-Mursalāt

**77:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

In the name of *God*. When someone mentions this word, he will attain to delight in Him in this world and the next; when someone recognizes it, he will throw away his lifeblood in seeking Him. When this word sits in the heart, it divests it of every occupation, and when a servant perseveres in its remembrance, it will make him secure from every terror.

In the name of Him who is king over all kings and whose kingship is not through retinue and army. He is far-seeing, near-knowing, and aware of the hidden. He sees all things, knows every work, and is aware at every moment—whether a loud call or the heart’s secret, a bright day or a dark night. In the name of Him who in His gentleness yearns for those who yearn for Him, who in His good Godhood made a covenant and compact with the servant.

How could water and clay have the gall to love You  
had You not chosen them with Your beginningless gentleness? [DS 211]

Were it not for His gentleness, who would dare to dream about His remembrance? Were it not for His solicitude, who could reach His Presence?

The Pir of the Tariqah said in his whispered prayers, “O God, which tongue reaches Your praise? Which intelligence is up to Your description? Which gratitude is equal to Your beautiful doing? Which servant can discharge Your worship? O God, whatever You see from us You see as faulty. Whatever activity You see You see as falling short. Despite all this, the rain of Your kindness is not held back, and nothing grows but the rose of generosity. Since You are so kind to the enemy despite Your anger, what can be the measure of the benefit of those approved, what can be the end of the custom of the lovers? What can be the limit of the station of the recognizers, what can be the shore of the happiness of the friends?”

## Surah 78: al-Naba<sup>o</sup>

**78:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

This is the name of a King whose servants are beautified by obeying Him and whose servitors are adorned by worshiping Him. He is not beautified by the obedience of the obedient nor adorned by the worship of the worshipers. The adornment of the worshipers is the waistcoat of their obedience, the adornment of the recognizers is the robe of their recognition, the adornment of the lovers is the crown of their friendship, and the adornment of the sinners is washing their faces with the rain of heedfulness.

This is the name of a Lord whose name is heart-brightening, whose love is world-burning. His name is the adornment of sessions and His praise the capital of the indigent. His laudation is the finery of tongues, His craving the worth of hearts, His encounter the ease of spirits, His approval the joy of secret cores. The indications of *tawhīd* are His signs, the waymarks of solitariness His banners, the marks giving witness to the Shariah His allusions, the covenants of the Haqiqah His good news. His Essence and attributes are eternal and uncreated. He alone has ability without “but,” He alone has knowledge without “if.” His ability is such that He is able for every work, His knowledge such that He knows every thing. He is obtained in recognition and present in perception, distant in the ruling power of tremendousness, near through proofs and bounty, apparent in the explication of kindness, and hidden from the perception of supposition.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “I know not Your measure and am incapable of what is worthy of You. I wander in my misery, day by day in loss. How then is someone like me?! But such am I. I lament at gazing into the darkness—will anything remain of me? I do not know. My eyes look to a day when You remain and I am not. Who will be like me if I see that day? And if I see it, I will sacrifice my spirit to it.”

## Surah 79: al-Nāzi<sup>c</sup>āt

**79:1** *By those that pluck harshly, by those that draw fiercely.*

These verses allude to the artifacts of power, the marvels of creativity, and the subtleties of wisdom in the creation of the creatures. All are the place of the gaze of the common people and the cause of their finding the road. The common people gaze with the eye of the head on the artifacts and marvels and they see the traces of mercy and power. They take the artisanry as the evidence of the existence of the Artisan. They start their traveling from the causes so as to reach the Presence of the Causer. To this allude His words, “*Have they not gazed upon the dominion of the heavens and the earth?* [7:185]. *Have they not gazed upon the heaven above them?* [50:6]. *Have they not traveled in the earth to gaze?* [30:9]. *So gaze on the traces of God’s mercy* [30:50]. *He it is who shows you His signs* [40:13]. *We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in their souls until it is clear to them that He is the Real* [41:53].”

Then the recognizers of the road and the sincerely truthful of the threshold have another state and another gaze. They gaze at the Artisan with the eye of the secret core and see the secrets of solicitude. They gaze at the Innovator with the eye of the heart and see the lights of guidance. They gaze at the Real with the eye of the spirit and see the flag of existence. They gaze at the Witnessed with the eye of witnessing and see the Friend face-to-face.

O indigent man! How long will you look at the artifacts and wonders? Look once at the Artisan and Wonder-Worker to see the marvels of the subtleties. From the artifacts and wonders you see what arises from Him. From the Artisan and Wonder-Worker you see what is worthy of Him. When someone gazes only at the marks giving witness to His artifacts, he has not stepped into the road of the chevaliers. No whiff has reached his nostrils of this talk. It is often the case that there are neither artifacts nor wonders, neither creatures nor attachments, neither time nor the earth, neither place nor the emplaced, neither Throne nor Carpet, neither Heaven nor Samak, neither sphere nor angel, neither moon nor Fish, neither entities nor traces, neither face-to-face vision nor reports—the Real is present and the Haqiqah is there. The Self-Standing lasts, similar to nothing. He was, is, and will be, without beginning or end, without alteration or transition. He is described by the attributes of majesty and beauty. Everything created is coming not to be and undergoing annihilation. In the majesty of His exaltedness the Creator is that which will be and subsist. *All that is upon it undergoes annihilation and there subsists the face of thy Lord, Possessor of Majesty and Generous Giving* [55:26-27]. *Everything is perishing but His face* [28:88].

Wait, O chevalier, until they open up this blue dome and roll back this dust-colored carpet. They will break Pleiades’ necklace, blacken the face of moon and sun, and smash Arcturus on the Fish. Then this promise will be hard cash:

**79:6-9** *On the day when the trembler trembles and the successor follows it, hearts on that day will be quivering, their eyes humbled.*

O indigent man! Today’s disregard is tomorrow’s loss. You have been given an ornament and some capital. The ornament is your soul and the capital is your breath. Put your soul to work and do not waste your breath! Keep the one flourishing and trade with the other so that tomorrow you may see the profit of the trade. How beautifully that chevalier said it in these lines!

“And if today in this domicile you have a state of loss,  
what fine capital and fervor you’ll see tomorrow!”

If you come from the field of appetite to the portico of intellect,  
    you’ll see yourself like Saturn in the seventh sphere.  
If you stroll toward the Holy Presence with exaltedness,  
    you’ll see steeds coming forth from the city of the Lord.” [DS 705-6]

## Surah 80: <sup>c</sup>Abasa

**80:5-6** *As for him who deemed himself without need, to him dost thou attend.*

“This man has shown himself to have no need for Me and worshiped another in place of Me, and he is deluded by his wealth and blessings: *He reckons that his wealth will make him last forever* [104:3]. He fancies that the property will keep him in this world forever. He does not know that the wealth is the cause of his punishment and increase in his chastisement.”

One of the great ones of the religion said, “Gold, silver, and the various sorts of wealth are not this world itself, but the vessels and containers of this world. In the same way, the servant’s movements and stillnesses and his acts of obedience are not the religion itself, but the vessels and containers of the religion. Religion is all burning and pain, and this world is all remorse and cold wind. All the gold, silver, and sorts of wealth that belonged to Korah were not reprehensible. But, when the rightful due of the Real was sought from him, he refused and would not discharge it. The pull of his heart toward gold, silver, and the wealth of this world was reprehensible.

“There is many a person who has not seen a penny in his dreams but who tomorrow will be the Pharaoh of the folk of this world, for his heart is defiled by avarice for this world. And there is many a person who has been given possession of the wealth of this world who tomorrow will give back his heart without any apparent scar from this world.”

The final end of a man who keeps the religion and lets go of this world is what He says at the end of the surah:

**80:38-39** *There will be faces that day shining, laughing, joyous.*

As for the final end of the man who keeps this world and lets go of the religion, it will be as He says:

**80:40-42** *And there will be faces that day dusty, overspread with darkness—those are the unbelievers, the depraved.*

## Surah 81: al-Takwīr

### **81:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

In the name of *God*, a word the hearing of which is everyone's springtime, whether disobedient or obedient, noble or base. When someone listens to it with the ears of humility, he will abandon the goodliness of slumber, and when someone listens to it with the ears of the lovers, he will abandon the sweetness of food and drink.

Once Majnūn ibn °Āmir, the one who had fallen for Laylā, saw the inscription of Laylā's name on a wall. He became entranced with her name's inscription. For seven days and nights he sat contemplating the writing without food or drink. Someone asked him, "O Majnūn, you have not eaten or drunk for seven days and nights. How could you do that?"

He said, "Poor man! When someone is happy with the name of his friend, how can he remember food and drink?" Then he said,

"You have come to learn the secret of Laylā—  
you will find me stingy with Laylā's secret."

This is the state of one created thing claiming passion for another created thing. What then do you say about someone whose soul's kiblah is the Presence of the Divine Holiness and whose heart is overpowered by love for the Eternal Essence? What fault would there be if he did not remember food and drink while remembering His name?

Abū Bakr Shibli said, "The remembrance of my Lord is the food of my soul, the praise of my Lord is the garment of my soul, shame before my Lord is the drink of my soul. My soul is a sacrifice to my heart, my heart a sacrifice to my spirit, my spirit a sacrifice to my Lord."

Moses sat for forty days waiting for the speech of the Real without any thought of food or drink. Then, when he was seeking Khidr in the grammar school of knowledge, after a half day he was impatient without food and drink and said, "*Bring us our food*" [18:62].

This state is the result of passion, and passion is not acquired through knowledge, cleverness, and the fatwa of intellect. Passion is a thing that comes, not a thing to be learned. When someone has not gone on the road, what does he know about its way stations? When someone is not a confidant of passion, why does he ask for the marks of the Friend's sanctuary?

I became the confidant of passion and the world became my sanctuary,  
I shouted out the passionate man's "Here I am!" from spirit and heart!

### **81:1-3** *When the sun is enwrapped, and when the stars become opaque, and when the mountains are set moving...*

Muṣṭafā said that if someone wants to see the Greatest Resurrection as hard cash, such that the states of the resurrection may become apparent to him, he should be told to recite *When the sun is enwrapped* so that the harshness and difficulty of that day may be known to him. How much can be shown of the terror and difficulty of that day? The fire of unneediness will be lit in the vestiges and traces of the realm of being and the head of the passing days will be lopped off by the sickle of severity. The world of new arrival will be made *scattered dust* [25:23], and the sword of harshness will be struck against the top of the spheres. The dust of the others will be swept from the skirt, and the harness of making nonexistent will be pulled over the head of the steed of existence. The

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luminous sun will be blackened and enwrapped, the shining stars will fall from heaven like rain, the mountains with their hardness and firm fixity will begin to run, having become weightless in fear of the Real. In terror of the resurrection the world's folk will give up their treasures and valuables and turn their backs on them. The beasts, birds, and predators for whom the Law is not prescribed will give up their spirits. The oceans of the world will be opened to each other and become boiling water and filth to chastise the enemies. Everyone and everybody will be paired and joined with his own deeds.

## Surah 82: al-Infiṭār

### 82:6 *O Man! What has deluded thee about thy generous Lord?*

Look at this wonder—a threat mixed with gentleness. He asks the question, and in the question itself He instructs the servant how to answer by saying “*thy generous Lord.*” He reminds the servant of the name Generous so that the servant will say, “Your generosity deluded me about You. Were it not for Your generosity, I would not have done what I did. You saw, but You curtained. You predestined, but You gave respite.”

My Patron says, “Are you not ashamed  
of the ugly acts I see from you?”  
I said, “O Patron, benevolence!  
Your bounty has corrupted me.”

Yahyā Mu‘ādh said, “On the Day of Resurrection the creatures from first to last will be put in that station of harshness and awesomeness and questioned. If I am addressed by the side of All-compellingness and the Exalted Threshold, ‘*What has deluded thee about Me?*’, with God’s success-giving and the Lordly confirmation I will answer, ‘Your former and latter kindness deluded me’”: It is the old and new beautiful doing and the hidden and evident caresses that I have found from Your bounty and kindness that have deceived my eyes!

Abū Bakr Warrāq said, “If it is said to me, ‘*What has deluded thee about thy generous Lord?*’, I will say, ‘The generosity of the Generous deluded me.’”

It was said to Fuḍayl, “If God places you before Himself on the Day of Resurrection and says, ‘*What has deluded thee about thy generous Lord?*’, what will you say?”

He said, “I will say, ‘The curtain You let down has deluded Me.’” This was put into verse by Muḥammad ibn Sammāk:

O you who conceal your sins! Are you not ashamed  
before God, who is with you in your solitude?  
You have been deluded by your Lord’s giving respite  
and all His curtaining of your ugly deeds.

This has come in a sound hadith: “Surely God will bring the person of faith close, then place His wing over him and curtain him. He will say, ‘Do you recognize this sin? Do you recognize that sin?’

“He will say, ‘Yes my Lord’ until he confirms his sins and he sees in himself that he will perish.

“He will say, ‘I curtained them for you in the world, and I forgive you for them today.’”

## Surah 83: al-Taṭfif

**83:20-21** *A book inscribed, witnessed by those given proximity.*

*Those given proximity* are the folk of proximity. I am not talking about the proximity of distance, but the proximity of friendship. Today they are near, and tomorrow they will be near, living above the Throne. It is not that today they are far and tomorrow they will be near, or today they are absent and tomorrow they will be present. Today they are exactly what they will be tomorrow, and tomorrow they will be exactly what they are today.

He who is given proximity is he whose ears will not be distracted by the sound of the Trumpet, nor his eyes by paradise. When someone sees Him, what else will come into his eyes? When someone hears from Him, what else will enter his ears? When someone has found the good news of proximity with Him, how can he be happy with anything other than Him?

How can he who is given proximity be aware of the sound of the Trumpet, or be preoccupied by the terror of the Resurrection, or be touched by the smoke of hell, or cling to the bliss of paradise? Today the whole world is full of creatures, but they are with the One. Tomorrow all creatures will be drowned in bliss, but they will still be with the One.

In glorifying You enough for me is to describe Your beauty.

Of the eight paradises enough for me is union with You.

Everyone's heart has a different goal—

enough goal for my heart is Your image.

## Surah 84: al-Inshiqāq

### **84:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

This is the name of an exalted one whose cloak is His magnificence, whose brilliance is His elevation, whose elevation is His splendor, whose majesty is His beauty, whose beauty is His majesty; customary for Him is His gentleness, familiar from Him is His compassion, however He may apportion for the servant. For the servant is His servant. If He takes him far away, the decree is His decree. If He brings him near, the command is His command.

In speaking this name, the faithful are two sorts: The gaze of one group falls on the beauty of gentleness and generosity, and they become joyful. The gaze of the other group falls on the majesty of magnificence and eternity, and they lament. The joy of the former is in hope for union and the lamentation of the latter is in fear of separation. “When they look at majesty, they lose their wits, and when they look at beauty, they delight in life.”

O indigent man! You hear His name and are unaware of His majesty and recognize no trace of His beauty. But the Real says to you, “Begin your work today in My name so that tomorrow I may end your work according to your pleasure.” This is a name that is the intimate of the hearts of the exiles and the support and shelter of the disobedient. It is a name that brings the hearts of the recognizers to boil and the tongues of the disobedient to wailing and shouting. It is a name that in the two worlds exalts everyone who exalts it.

Bishr Hāfi was traveling on a highway. He found a piece of paper on which was written the name *God*. He picked it up and perfumed it with a scent. On that very night it was said to him, “You made My name sweet-smelling. I also will make your name sweet-smelling in the two worlds.”

### **84:1** *When heaven is split open.*

### **84:6** *“O Man! Thou art toiling to thy Lord with toil, and thou shalt encounter Him.”*

Some commentators have said that there is a transposition here, so the meaning is this: *O Man! Thou art toiling to thy Lord with toil, and thou shalt encounter Him when heaven is split open.*” In other words, “O child of Adam! The Day of Resurrection is the day of uprising and upstirring, the day of decision and judgment. God’s awesomeness and harshness and the resurrection’s hardness and tremendousness will split open the heavens. In humility and submissiveness the heavens will come under and acquiesce to the Real’s command, and so also the earths. On that day, O Adamite, you will see whatever you did in this world—the troubles you took and the good and the evil you stored away—and you will find a recompense appropriate to your own doing and speaking.”

O indigent man! If you want not to have wasted your life and not to be disgraced before witnesses tomorrow at the greatest gathering place and most tremendous courtyard, then put into practice today the advice that the Pir of the Tariqah used to give to his disciples: “Yesterday passed you by in your ignorance, and you cannot know what you will find tomorrow. Take advantage of today, for this is where you are and where you can act. Then tomorrow there will be no regrets.”

A man must be the owner of the present moment. The owner of the present moment is someone whose occupation at the moment goes by with neither thought of the past nor reflection on the future. Reflecting on days past and pondering days future are to waste the moment. Anyone who recognizes his own present moment and accepts his moment will at once keep himself so busy with the religion that he will have no concern for yesterday and tomorrow. The great ones have said,

“The Sufi is the child of the moment.” The man who is a Sufi, that is, in a state of “limpidness” [ṣafāʾ], is the child of his own moment, far from everything familiar to his nature.

Ḥasan Baṣrī said, “I have found people who were chevaliers and generous with this world. They would give away the whole world without reminding anyone of the favor, but with their own present moments they were so stingy that they would not give one breath of their own days to their fathers or children.”

This is the same as those words spoken by the paragon of the world, the master of Adam’s children: “I have a moment with God embraced by no proximate angel, nor any sent prophet.”

One of the jurists of the community during the first period was preparing a composition to explain the Shariah and issues of jurisprudence. He was thinking about this when he heard the call of a bird, which interrupted his work. He said, “May its throat be cut!” At once the bird fell dead out of the sky. Sometimes images intrude on the state of the lords of the heart, and sometimes even if the whole world were to fall apart, they in their present moment would have no awareness whatsoever.

In Nīshāpūr Shaykh Abū Saʿīd Abu’l-Khayr sewed up the chains at the door of the house with felt so that when they were shaken, they would not intrude on his present movement. In this meaning someone sang,

Her face is wounded by the morning breeze  
like a mirror rusted by a touch of breath.  
I fear that if her friend should keep her naked  
the sharpness of a creature’s gaze would ruin her.

The Shaykh al-Islām Anṣārī said, “The present moment is that within which no one fits but the Real. In it the men are three: The present moment of one is quick like lightning, the present moment of another enduring, the present moment of a third overpowering.

“The one like lightning washes and cleans, the enduring distracts and keeps busy, the overpowering slaughters and kills. The one like lightning is born from thought, the enduring comes from the pleasure of remembrance, the overpowering arises from hearing and gazing.

“The one that is lightning forgets this world such that the remembrance of the next world becomes clear. The enduring keeps preoccupied from the next world so that the Real is seen face-to-face. The overpowering effaces the descriptions of human nature such that nothing remains but the Real.”<sup>1</sup>

*O Man! Thou art toiling to thy Lord with toil, and thou shalt encounter Him.* Once Pir Bū ʿAlī Siyāh was walking in the bazaar. A beggar was saying, “By the rightful due of the Great Day, give me something!” The Pir fell down unconscious. When he came back to his senses, he was asked, “O Shaykh! What appeared to you at that time?”

He said, “The awe and tremendousness of the Great Day.” Then he said, “Oh my sorrow at the lack of sorrow! Oh my remorse at the lack of remorse! A world is busy with the vestiges and traces and has put aside the Presence of the Living, the Self-Standing. No one whatsoever is thinking about this verse: *Thou art toiling to thy Lord with toil, and thou shalt encounter Him.*”<sup>2</sup>

Someone sits himself down in front of the bride of nature and busies himself with gold and ornaments, color and scent. Then he wants the sultans of the Shariah and the kings of the Haqiqah to give him access to the pavilions of the secret and the tent of piety. What an idea! Someone puts on the shirt of disloyalty and pulls out the blade of caprice and then wants to join the chevaliers of the Tariqah in the row of limpidness and the dome of subsistence! No, never!

How will your inwardness travel with the steeds of kings?  
Not until your thoughts mount on the steed of aspiration.  
How long will you sit like a woman in hope of color and scent?  
Fix your aspiration on the road and set out like a man! [DS 205]

1 *Ṣad maydān*, no. 91 (327).

2 The story of the Pir is based on RA 422-23.

If you want your eyes to be anointed tomorrow with the collyrium of the gentle subtlety of *Faces that day will be radiant* [75:22], anoint the eye of your intellect today with the collyrium of the dust under the hooves of the Burāq of the Shariah and do not pull your feet out of the shackles and snare of Muḥammad, God’s messenger. Watch over your own states, persevere in performing the obligatory and supererogatory acts, demand of your feet that they discharge what is rightfully due to the Real, and take an accounting of your own soul, speck by speck and grain by grain in keeping with caution in the road of the religion. Then tomorrow the realities of this verse will be unveiled to you:

**84:8-9** *He shall surely be called to account with an easy accounting and he shall return joyful to his folk.*

The unseen subtleties will appear to you from behind this curtain:

**84:19** *You shall surely ride stage after stage.*

You will be taken to this elevated place:

**84:25** *They shall have a reward unfailing.*

A reward that is not cut off and not curtailed.

It has also been said that *you shall surely ride stage after stage* alludes to the stations of Muṣṭafā. Before the Exalted Lord placed his pure and luminous spirit in the oyster of dust, He kept him in three stations: the station of proximity so that he would find familiarity, the station of gentleness so that he would find expansiveness, and the station of awe so that he would find courtesy. He took care of his business with His gentleness, He caressed him with His proximity, and He melted him with His awe in the crucible of fear. Then, when he came into the world, whoever gazed upon him found fear from his station of awe, hope from his station of familiarity, and love from his station of proximity.

Some of the commentators have said that *stage after stage* alludes to the degrees and way stations of his elevation and proximity on the night of the *miʿrāj*. The Real attracted his secret core, his secret core attracted his spirit, his spirit attracted his heart, and his heart attracted his soul. The engendered being began to seek the soul, the soul began to seek the heart, the heart began to seek the spirit, the spirit began to seek the secret core, the secret core began to seek the contemplation of the Real. The engendered being shouted out, “Where is the soul? I have no rest without the soul.” The soul began to shout, “Where is the heart? I have no rest without the heart.” The heart began to shout, “Where is the spirit? I have no rest without the spirit.” The spirit began to shout, “Where is the secret core? I have no rest without the secret core.” The secret core began to shout, “Where is the contemplation of the Real? I have no rest without the contemplation of the Real.” *Then he drew close* in his soul, *and he came down* in his heart, *until he was two-bows’ length away* in his spirit *or closer* [53:8-9] in his secret core. This is the meaning of His words, “*You shall surely ride stage after stage.*”<sup>3</sup>

3 This paragraph is derived from a much longer passage on the significance of the *miʿrāj* in RA 319-20.

## Surah 86: al-Ṭāriq

### **86:4** *Over every soul there is a guardian.*

This is the answer to the oath, “By heaven and the night star!” [86:1]. He swears an oath that there is no one without a guardian but that he has a guardian and defender. This is just what He says in another place: “Surely there are over you guardians” [82:10]. Over you there are guardians, that is, angels who are scribes and writers. He has entrusted you to them so that they may write down your words and deeds and then present them to Muṣṭafā, as has come in the report: “Your deeds will be presented to me. When any of them is beautiful, I will praise God for it, and when any is ugly, I will ask God to forgive you.”

When the *tawhīd*-voicing, believing person of faith knows that the Real is his guardian and protector, he must put on the clothing of watchfulness and pay attention to his own states, words, and deeds. He must keep the courtyard of his breast pure of the stain of heedlessness. He should make *Does he not know that God sees?* [96:14] his constant litany, keep *There are over you guardians* [82:10] before his eyes, and turn *We were not heedless of creation* [23:17] into the imprint on the seal-ring of his certainty.

It is said that there was a depraved woman in Mecca who said, “I will turn Ṭāwūs Yamānī away from the road of obedience and pull him into disobedience.” Ṭāwūs was a man of beautiful face, sweet character, and good nature. The woman came to Ṭāwūs and began talking with him in a joking way. Ṭāwūs knew her goal. He said, “Yes, be patient, until we reach such a place.” When they reached that place, he said, “If you have a goal, this can be the place for it.”

The woman said, “Glory be to God! How is this the place for that work? It is a gathering place for people to watch.”

Ṭāwūs said, “Does not God see us in every place? O woman, are you ashamed of being seen by the people, but not ashamed before God who is watching us?” These words took hold in that woman and opened up the ambush of solicitude to her. She repented and became one of God’s friends.<sup>1</sup>

### **86:5** *So let man consider of what he was created.*

Let the human individual look carefully at himself: From what was he created and why was he created? God created a face that is suited for prostration, eyes suited for taking heed, a body suited for service, a heart suited for recognition, a secret core suited for love. So *remember God’s blessings upon you* [2:231], for He adorned your tongues with the Shahadah, your hearts with recognition and felicity, and your bodies with service and worship.<sup>2</sup>

### **86:6-7** *He was created of gushing water, emerging from between the loins and the chest.*

When the human individual was created, he was created from water thrown and spilled, a water that came forth from the back of the man and from the bones within the woman’s breast. First he was a sperm drop, which God then made into a clot with His power. Then with His will He built tissue, with His desire He made bones appear, and with His munificence He clothed the bones in the cloak of flesh. When He wanted to display you to your mother and father, He adorned you in a

<sup>1</sup> After the first paragraph, this is drawn from RA 375.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the passage is from RA 376.

beautiful form in the oyster shell of the womb, just as a slave-trader adorns a slave girl at the time of presenting her. In the same way, after He turns you into dust in your grave He will adorn you for the Day of Presentation to the messengers and the Lord of the Worlds. God says, “*They will be presented to their Lord in rows*” [18:48].

When you turn a pot full of water upside down, nothing stays inside. The Lord of the Worlds put the sperm drop into the womb and turned it upside down with His power.

So glory be to Him who compounded Adam with a composition that contains everything created in the macrocosm! The exalted Lord created some creatures in the form of prostrators, like snakes, fish, and crawling things. He created some in the form of those who bow, like cattle and predators; some in the form of standers, like trees and plants; some in the form of sitters, like the unshakeable mountains. All of these are compelled to prostrate, bow, and sit, and they receive no praise for that. But He created the Adamite in a form that has the power to prostrate, bow, sit, and stand, and in that He gave him choice and ability, so he is worthy of praise and laudation: *The repenters, the worshipers, the praisers, the journeyers, the bowers, the prostrators, the commanders to the honorable and prohibitors of the improper, the keepers of God’s bounds—give good news to the faithful!* [9:112]. Glory be to Him who creates the son of Adam to manifest power, gives him provision to manifest generosity, makes him die to manifest all-compellingness, and then brings him to life to manifest reward and punishment! *So blessed is God, the most beautiful of creators!* [23:14].<sup>3</sup>

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3 This passage is derived from RA 376.

## Surah 89: al-Fajr

### 89:3 *By the even and the odd!*

*By the even!* By all the creatures of the cosmos! For He created them all in pairs, two by two, whether linked to each other or opposed to each other, like male and female, day and night, light and darkness, heaven and earth, ocean and land, sun and moon, jinn and mankind, obedience and disobedience, felicity and wretchedness, exaltation and abasement, power and incapacity, strength and weakness, knowledge and ignorance, life and death.

He created the attributes of creatures like this—opposed to each other or paired with each other—so that they would not resemble the attributes of the Creator, for His exaltation has no abasement, His power no incapacity, His strength no weakness, His knowledge no ignorance, His life no death, and His subsistence no annihilation. Hence, He is *the odd*: alone and unique. The rest are all *the even*: paired with each other.

Some of the scholars have said that *the even* are Mount Safa and Mount Marwa, and *the odd* is the Kaabah. *The even* are Holy Mosque and the mosque of Medina, and *the odd* is the Aqsa Mosque. *The even* are day and night, paired with each other, and *the odd* is the Day of Resurrection, which has no day and night. *The even* are the soul and spirit, which are linked today, and *the odd* is the spirit tomorrow when it is separate from the frame. *The even* are desire and intention, and *the odd* is aspiration, a stranger without anyone. *The even* are the renouncer and the worshiper, each other's comrades, and *the odd* is the desirer, who travels alone, without comrade and companion.

Isolated from friends in every land—  
the greater the sought, the fewer the helpers.

Abraham claimed to be a desirer and said, “*And I will withdraw from you and what you call upon apart from God* [19:48]. *Surely they are an enemy to me, save the Lord of the Worlds* [26:77]. *Surely I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth, unswerving* [6:79].” Wherever in the world there was a link or a joining, he disowned it. He raised up his voice: “*Surely I am going to my Lord; He will guide me*” [37:99]. A little something remained with him, but he did not know it. “The ransomed slave stays a slave so long as a dirham is owed.” The corner of his heart was preoccupied with his child. The command came, “Make him a sacrifice for Me! O Abraham, if you claim to be a desirer, a desirer must be *odd*, without any links; he must be alone and travel alone. This child is your link. Remove him from your heart! Make him a sacrifice so that you will be a truthful desirer.”

It has been said that the sign of truthfulness in desire is that one rises up from himself and considers his own being as nonbeing, as the Pir of the Tariqah said: “O God, my being is my loss—shine Your being on me once! O God, my disobedience is heavy on me—rain down the river of Your munificence on me! O God, my sins are concealed beneath Your clemency—spread the curtain of Your pardon over me!”

It has also been said that the desirer's desire is his want in taking up the road. A man's desire arises from his rising up, and his rising up arises from his recognition. As long as he does not recognize, he does not rise up; as long as he does not rise up, he does not want; and as long as he does not want, he does not seek. All of these are way stations of servanthood and stages of worship.

When the desirer traverses these way stations, the object he seeks turns into his seeker. From the Unseen this call reaches his spirit:

**89:27-28** *O serene soul, return to thy Lord, approving, approved!*

Three hundred sixty gazes come from the Holy Dominion and with each gaze the request, “*Return!*: Is it not yet time to come back to Me and make do with Me? Is it not yet time to be Mine?”

“O falcon taken to the sky, come back, don’t go!  
My fingers hold the end of your thread!

“And beware! When you come, do not come by way of this world, lest your feet sink in the mud, and do not come by way of the soul, lest you not reach Us. The heart has access to Our Threshold, and nothing else has any road or access.”

A great man was asked, “What is the road to the Real?”

He said, “It is not step by step, rather heart by heart, and spirit by spirit. Go by the spirit to reach the Threshold, go by the heart to reach the Gate.”

The blood of the sincerely truthful was purified and made into a road—  
unless the spirit takes a step in this road, you will have no access.

Happy will be the day when they break this cage and call back the captive bird, removing the customs of dust-dwellers from the road of those given proximity. The satan concealed in the form of Adamic nature will leave and the angelic substance will show the face of its beauty. Enemy will be separated from friend.

My dear, do not suppose that Azrael has been sent to turn you away from what you are. He pulls the wrap of human nature away from the heart’s face and looks at the heart’s scars. If he sees the mark of recognition in the scars of servanthood, he goes back with respect and says, “I cannot intervene in this quarry, for these goods belong to the Real.” He says, “O Exalted Lord! I do not have the gall to intervene there.” Such a man is one of those concerning whom the Splendid Qur’an reports, “*God takes the souls at the time of their death*” [39:42]. My dear, be careful not to be one of those whose souls Azrael is ashamed to take. Rather, be one of those into the presence of whose spirit Azrael does not dare to enter.

A great man was asked, “How is it with the spirits in the road of the Real at the time of extraction?”

He said, “They are like prey caught in a trap, with the hunter just arrived, knife in hand.”

He was asked, “How are they when they reach the Real?”

He said, “Like prey hung from saddle-straps.”

O dervish! If one day you become the prey of His trap and are killed by Him, by the exaltation of the Exalted, you will not be tied to any other than the battlements of the Throne. “When someone loves Me, I kill him, and when I kill him, I am his wergild.”

Have you ever seen a king who takes the hand of a poor man,  
caresses him and takes him in his embrace,  
then makes him his agent and the general of his army,  
then kills him and sets forth his corpse?

## Surah 91: al-Shams

**91:7-8** *By the soul and that which proportioned it and inspired it with its depravity and godwariness.*

The poor Adamite who does not recognize his own exaltedness and eminence! Of this dust-dwelling frame he finds his way only to a name, a body, a trace. He does not know what is the secret of *And We honored the children of Adam* [17:70], what is the wisdom of *And He created you in stages* [71:14], what is the explication of *in the most beautiful stature* [95:4], or what is the face-to-face vision in *And He formed you, so He made your forms beautiful* [40:64].

O chevalier! Of the human makeup and the Adamic individual, first think about the form! What artisanry the Lord of the worlds has shown with a drop of spilled water! What diverse paintings have been achieved through “*Be!*”, *so it comes to be* [2:117]! Mutually similar limbs, opposites like unto each other—each one He has made in its own scale. He has adorned each limb with one sort of beauty, not more than its limit, not less than its measure. To each He gave an attribute, and in each He placed a strength: senses in the brain, splendor on the forehead, beauty in the nose, sorcery in the eye, sauciness on the lips, comeliness in the cheek, perfect loveliness in the hair. It is not apparent whether the artisanries in the natures are more beautiful, or if the governance in the form-giving is sweeter. He has created so many marvels and wonders from a drop of water! The intelligent man gazes on His artisanry, but the heedless man is asleep.

Once you have looked with the outward eye on the marks giving witness to His power, look also with the inward eye on the subtleties of His wisdom. Then you will see the proofs of love and the traces of solicitude. The mortal nature is the world of form, but the heart is the world of the attributes. The mortal nature is the heart’s shell, but the heart is the shell of the center point that is the secret core. It is such that the orbs and bodies of the cosmos are bewildered by the form of the Adamic nature, the Adamic nature is bewildered by the form of the heart, the heart is bewildered by the center point of the secret core, and the secret core stays on the borderline between annihilation and subsistence. Sometimes it is in the courtyard of annihilation, sometimes in the robe of subsistence. When in annihilation, it is nothing but burning and need, and when in subsistence, it is all caresses and mysteries. When in annihilation it says, “Who is more miserable than I?”, and when in subsistence, “Who is greater than I?”

When my gaze falls on my own clay,  
I see nothing worse in the world.  
When I pass beyond my attributes,  
I look at myself from the Throne.

## Surah 94: al-Sharḥ

**94:1-4** *Did We not expand for thee thy breast, and lift from thee thy burden that weighed down upon thy back, and raise up for thee thy mention?*

Know that when God brought the creatures from the concealment of nonexistence to the confines of existence with the command “*Be!*” and when He scattered over them the treasuries of mercy and the gardens of blessings, He showed largesse to that master of the world, that greatest child of Adam, through exalted bounties, generous gifts, and various sorts of favor. From the beginning of the cosmos to the annihilation of the children of Adam, all creatures are his followers. The first thing desired by the beginningless gentleness was he. He is the king, and the rest of the creatures are his army and horse. He is the dear guest, and the dear ones are all his followers and hangers-on. Look carefully at the edict of his splendor and the book of his good fortune to see if the specification and explicit statement of this announcement of generosity and elevation was given to any other prophet.

*Did We not expand for thee thy breast?* “O paragon of the universe! O honored chosen one! O foremost messenger! O ennobled eminent one! Did We not brighten your heart with the light of recognition, give it courtesy and rectification with the subtleties of contemplation and unveiling, give it goodliness and proximity with the generous gifts of exaltedness and elevation, and give your clay the cape of adornment and the robe of elevation?”

“O master! The goal of creation was to unveil the sign of your perfection, the flag of your majesty, and the form of your beauty. ‘But for thee, I would not have created the spheres. But for thee, the world would have neither bottom nor top.’

“O master! You were the first in prophethood and the last to be sent out. You are the manifest in union and the nonmanifest in blessings. You are the first of all creatures in nearness and familiarity and the last in judgment and felicity. You are the manifest in sinlessness and greatness and the nonmanifest in the majesty of state.”

In the reports about the *miʿrāj* it has come that Muṣṭafā said, “The All-Compeller said to me, ‘Ask, O Muḥammad!’

“I said, ‘My Lord, You took Abraham as a bosom friend, You gave David a *tremendous kingdom* [4:54] and forgave him his slip, You bestowed on Solomon *a kingdom such as no one after me will have* [38:35], You *spoke to Moses directly* [4:164], You *raised Idris to a high place* [19:57], You taught Jesus *the Torah and the Gospel* [3:48] and You made him *heal the blind and the leper and give life to the dead with Your permission* [3:49].’

“My Lord said to me, ‘O Muḥammad, I took thee as a beloved just as I took Abraham as a bosom friend. I spoke to thee as I spoke to Moses, directly. I *sent thee to all people as a good-news bringer and a warner* [34:28]. I *expanded for thee thy breast*, I *lifted from thee thy burden*, and I *raised up for thee thy mention*, so I will not be mentioned without thy being mentioned along with Me. I bestowed upon thee *seven of the oft-repeated and the tremendous Qur’an* [15:87] and did not bestow them on any prophet before thee. I bestowed upon thee the concluding verses of the Surah al-Baqara and did not bestow them on any prophet before thee. I bestowed upon thee *the abundance* [108:1]. I bestowed upon thee the eight whose names are the submission, the emigration, the struggle, the prayer, the charity, the fasting of Ramadan, commanding the honorable, and forbidding the improper. And I made you an opener and a seal.’”

The chieftain of the engendered beings, the master of the masters, is saying this: “On the night of proximity and generosity, the night of nearness and familiarity when I was taken on the *mi‘rāj*, I reached the Exalted Presence and this call came from the Presence of All-Compellingness: “O Muḥammad, speak so that I may listen! Ask so that I may bestow!”

He said, “When this generous address and infinite caress reached me, my tongue began to flow with felicity, my heart found the luster of mastery, my secret core saw the exaltation of increase, and I became bold in the Presence, having found the intimacy of solace and the robe of good fortune. I said, ‘O Lord, every prophet has received a bestowal from You. You gave Abraham bosom friendship, You spoke to Moses without intermediary, You conveyed Idris to a high place, You gave David a tremendous kingdom and forgave his slip, You gave Solomon a kingdom the worthiness for which You gave no one after him, and You taught Jesus the Torah and the Gospel in his mother’s belly and made it easy for him to bring the dead to life.’”

When Muṣṭafā finished talking, an address came in answer from the Exalted Threshold: “O Muḥammad, though I gave Abraham bosom friendship, I gave you love. Though I spoke to Moses without intermediary, there was a veil in the midst—he heard the words but did not see the speaker. With you I speak without intermediary and without veil; you hear the words and you see the speaker. Though I conveyed Idris to heaven, I made you pass through the heavens and conveyed you to the presence of *two-bows’ length* in the way station of *He drew close* and the seclusion of *or closer* [53:8-9]. Though I gave David the tremendous kingdom and forgave his slip, I gave your community the kingdom of contentment and forgave their sins with your intercession. Though I gave Solomon the empire, I gave you the seven oft-repeated, the tremendous Qur’an, and the conclusion of the Surah al-Baqara, which I gave to no prophet but I gave to you; and I responded to your supplications at the end of Surah al-Baqara.

“Outside of these I honored you with three traits. With these three traits I made you more excellent than the folk of heaven and earth. First, *did We not expand for thee thy breast?* Second, *and lift from thee thy burden?* Third, *did We not raise up thy mention for thee?* We opened up your empty breast and limpid heart and made them vast for accepting the traces of power and for holding firm to the Unseen and the assurance of the Real.

*“And lift from thee thy burden:* The burden of the community’s sins was weighing down upon your back and making you weak, and you were unsettled and without ease in sorrow for the disobedient. We put aside that burden from you, We forgave all their sins, and We gave your heart stillness and quiet.

*“And raise up for thee thy mention:* We lifted high your name, mention, and fame, for We bound it to Our own name and paired it with the formula of *tawḥīd*. O Muḥammad, whenever the sun of your having been raised up shone on someone, he took a portion: From your status and being raised up Adam the chosen found the rank of chosenness. Because of you Idris found the rank of chieftainship. In relation to you the Bosom Friend found the good fortune of bosom friendship. Through your love Moses found the exaltedness of speaking with God. By being your door-keeper Jesus found confirmation and help.”

The command came to the proximate angels of the Presence and the beings of the realm of creativity: “All of you place the brand of love for Muḥammad on your hearts, strike the fire of yearning for him in your spirits, and attest to his messengerhood and prophethood! With the effusion of munificence We have brought him into existence at the end of the cycle, made him the leader of the world’s folk, and placed him on the throne of good fortune at the forefront of messengerhood. All those reached by his gaze will be exalted and raised up. All those who have faith in him will have lucky stars. All those who wear the bells of his community around their necks will have his love and affection in the heart and will walk straight in his Shariah and Sunnah. Today they will be purified of faults and their sins will be expiated, and tomorrow they will drink from the Pool of Abundance. Their place will be the perfumed paradise, and their robe of honor will be vision and the approval of the Greatest Lord.”

## Surah 95: al-Tīn

### **95:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

The hearts of the recognizers recognize God, the spirits of the sincerely truthful are familiar with God, the understandings of the *tawhīd*-voicers are lifted up to the courtyards of His majesty, the souls of the worshipers are qualified by incapacity to worship Him as is His rightful due, the intellects of the first and the last folk acknowledge the incapacity to recognize His majesticness.

In the perception of the majesty of the Lord's name, the intellects of the intelligent are dazzled, and in the shine of His beauty the glow of those who are exalted is darkened. In perceiving the attributes of His perfection the understandings of the lords of astuteness are incapacitated. The people of the world have all put their spirits into the auction of passion but have taken no profit other than sorrow and bewilderment. He made the whole world happy with scents and talk but gave no one a drop of the cup of His own exaltedness.

O You in whose trial are captive  
those who talk of friendship with You!  
All the passionate of the world are distracted  
by the realm of Your exalted magnificence.

### **95:1-3** *By the fig, by the olive, by Mount Sinai, and by this secure land!*

At the beginning of this surah, God swears an oath by four created things in order to introduce this:

### **95:4** *Surely We created man in the most beautiful stature.*

*Man* is Adam. In other words: "I created Adam in the most beautiful form and chose him out from among all the creatures. I wrote the inscription of love on him and made him worthy of My carpet. I made apparent in his frame the elements of sense perception, the pearls of holiness, and the sources of intimacy. Then I gave this command to the proximate angels of the Presence and the beings of the realm of creativity: 'Put your foreheads on the ground before his throne and prostrate yourselves before him like servants, for he is the chief and you are the serving-boys. He is a friend, and you are servants.'"

Dust be on the heads of those who do not know the exaltedness of their father Adam, who do not recognize his eminence, status, and rank! In this dust-dwelling frame they find their way only to a name, a body, a trace. They are not aware that Adam himself is another world.

The worlds are two. One is the world of the horizons, the other the world of the souls. This is in His words, "*We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in their souls*" [41:53].

The world of the souls is Adam and those born of Adam. Just as the world of the horizons has earth and heaven, sun, moon, and stars, light and darkness, thunder and lightning, and so on, so also does the world of the souls. Its earth is belief, its heaven recognition, its stars thoughts, its moon reflective thought, its sun perspicacity, its light obedience, its darkness disobedience, its thunder fear and fright, its lightning hope and wishing, its clouds aspiration, its rain mercy, its trees worship, its fruit wisdom. Who is the king of this world? The heart. Who is this king's vizier? The intellect. His army is the senses, his serving-boys hands and feet, his spies ears, his watchers eyes, his spokesman tongue, his summoner thought, his messenger inspiration, his envoy knowledge, his sultan the Real. Pure and great is the Lord who brought such an artifact into appearance from

a handful of dust and made manifest His power by creating it!

Even more marvelous is that He created a cosmos from a pearl, He created Jesus son of Mary from a wind, He created the camel of Šālih from a stone, He created a serpent from Moses' staff, He created heaven from a smoke, He created the angels from a light, fragrant musk from a deer's navel, pure ambergris from the sea-cow, the basis of silk from a worm, limpid honey from a fly, red roses from thorns, healing halva from a plant. The Real is showing that, "The creator without cause am I, the enactor without tool am I, the all-subjugating without artifice am I, the all-forgiving without delay am I, the all-curtaining of every slip am I."

"*Surely We created man in the most beautiful stature.*" He made Adam's creation in stages. One time He says, "I created him from dust: *as the likeness of Adam—He created him from dust*" [3:59]. Another place He says He created him from clay: "*I am creating a mortal from clay*" [39:71]. In another place He says He created him from an extraction: "*We created man from an extraction*" [23:12]. In another place He says "*of fetid mud*" [15:26]. In another place He says, "*from dried clay, like pottery*" [55:14].

The meaning is that first he was dust, then became clay, and then He turned that into an extraction. He was an extraction that He turned into fetid mud. He was fetid mud that He turned into dried clay. He was dried clay that He turned into an animate thing. He was a dead thing that He turned into a living thing. He was pottery, and He turned him into flesh, skin, fat, and bone. He was an ignorant thing that He made knowing. When He conveyed him to the state of perfection, He praised Himself: "*Surely We created man in the most beautiful stature.*"

In the same way Adam's child was a sperm-drop that He turned into a clot, a clot that He turned into a tissue, a tissue that He turned into bones and flesh. He was a dead thing that He turned into a living thing, an ignorant thing that He made knowing. Then He praised Himself: "*So blessed is God, the most beautiful of creators!*" [23:14].

He makes dust and sperm drop pass from state to state until there occurs for them what He ruled and decreed in the Beginningless. In the same way He makes the felicitous and the wretched pass from state to state—sometimes in obedience, sometimes in disobedience; sometimes in sessions of learning, sometimes in sessions of wine-drinking; sometimes happy and sometimes weeping—until the end of their lifetimes when the numbered lifespan is completed and the beginningless decree arrives—either to the Garden or to the Fire. If he is a hell-dweller,

**95:5** *Then We shall restore him to the lowest of the low.*

If he is bound for paradise,

**95:6** *They shall have a wage unfailing.*

May God bestow honor with His bounty and generosity!

## Surah 96: al-<sup>c</sup>Alaq

### **96:19** *Prostrate thyself and draw near.*

The servant has no state in which he is closer to the Exalted Presence and the largesse of mercy than the state of prostration. When the servant puts his head down in prostration, he becomes a banner of light from the top of his head to the furthest ends of the world. The line of his light's brightness goes from the crown of his head to the highest, and mercy pours down on his head from the highest.

Muṣṭafā said, "There is no pride along with prostration." Whenever someone prostrates himself, he becomes far from pride and finds the eminence of the humble at God's threshold. When the servant humbles himself in the prostration, his reward is that the Real bestows upon him special favor and proximity. This is why He says, "*Prostrate thyself and draw near.*" In the state of prostration the servant has togetherness, but in every other state he is dispersed. In the state of standing and bowing he is near the gaze of people, but in the state of prostration he is farther from their gaze. The farther someone is from the people, the closer he is to the Real. The less weight someone has in the eyes of the people, the more weight he has in the eyes of the Real.

It is said that when the Lord of the Worlds commanded the angels to prostrate themselves before Adam, the first to prostrate himself was Seraphiel. When he lifted his head from prostration, the Compeller of the universe made the divine books and heavenly revelation appear on his forehead, such that his forehead became the tablet for God's books.

How marvelous! When someone prostrated himself by command to Adam, the form of God's books appeared in his forehead. When a person of faith prostrates himself to God for seventy years, why should it be strange that he be exempted from the fire of punishment? Seraphiel prostrated himself to Adam at the Real's command, and speech appeared written on his forehead. He wrote faith in the heart of the faithful person, as He says: "*He wrote faith in their hearts*" [58:22]. In terms of allusion He is saying, "Someone prostrated himself to someone beneath Me by My command, so I made unwritten speech appear on his forehead. When someone prostrates himself to Me for seventy years by My command, how can I take away the faith written in his heart?"

The Prophet said, "When you bow, magnify God, and when you prostrate yourself, strive in supplicating Him, for He will respond to you."

## Surah 98: al-Bayyina

**98:5-6** *They were commanded only to worship God, purifying the religion for Him as unswerving ones, and to perform the prayer and pay the alms tax; that is the enduring religion.*

In this verse God commands the servants to worship and to have self-purification in worship. Self-purification in worship does the work of color in jewels. A jewel without color is a worthless stone. Worship without self-purification is to knock oneself out without reward.

Self-purification is a fire lit up in the faithful person's breast such that everything less than the Real that enters the breast is burnt away. With the rope of self-purification his hands are tied back from forbidden things, so he touches nothing but the licit. He does not look upon others with the eyes and does not think about this world and the afterworld in the breast. The strength of appetite acquiesces to him. The purifier is he in whom his own soul is bewildered. He has bid farewell to avarice, and niggardliness has been put to flight. The root of envy has been pulled out of his breast, and he is a brother to the world's people. He has put pride out of his head, donned the clothing of humility, and loosed the tongue of good advice. The rose of tenderness has bloomed and the causes of dispersion have left his road. When his feet reach this point, he has reached the top of the road of self-purification.

One of the pillars of worship is to perform the obligatory and recommended acts, as He says: *"And to perform the prayer and pay the alms tax; that is the enduring religion."* The lasting religion is that they should put the prayer on its feet at the proper time. They should perform the stipulations and pillars. They should have humility and humbleness in their hearts: *those who are humble in their prayers* [23:2]. They should keep God's gaze before their eyes, for "The praying person is whispering with his Lord." At the time of the *takbīr* he should turn his face to the world of magnificence. He should give flight to Satan with the words, "I seek refuge in God." He should hunt auspiciousness and blessing with the net of *in the name of God*. He should make the Surah al-Fātiḥa the key to good things. By reciting the surah He should take on the conduct of the angels. In the row of the prayer he should remember the rows of the folk of limpidness. In the bowing he should be reverent, in the prostration reach the place of witnessing, and in the bearing witness He should contemplate the Real. He should send the ease of blessings to the spirit of the Prophet, and with his own greeting of peace make people safe from his trial. Someone who prays like this is following the Messenger, and a prayer like this demands to be accepted. Its result is the approval of the forgiving Lord. This is why He says at the end of the surah, *"God approves of them, and they approve of Him. That is for him who fears his Lord"* [98:8].

## Surah 101: al-Qāriʿa

**101:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

*In the name of God* is a word that makes him who has faith in it secure from the disappearance of blessings. He who mentions it wins the bliss of this world and the afterworld. He who recognizes it and believes in it will be felicitous with a felicity that is never wretched, he will find a kingdom that never decays, and he will subsist in exaltedness and elevation.

This is the name of the Renowned, whose name is the reminder of spirits, the everlasting happiness of hearts, the repose of the spirits of the friends, and the ease of the sorrowful. It is the title-page of a book which is a mark of the Friend and whose purport is the eternal love. This book is the remedy for unsettledness and the security against severance. It is both polo-ball and bat, its steed yearning and its field His love. Burning for Him is the rose, and recognizing Him the garden. It is the book from which the tree of *tawhīd* drinks water and whose fruit and produce is friendship with the Real. God says, “The servant does not cease remembering Me nor I remembering him until he loves Me and I love him.”

One of the great ones said, “When I remember who I am, I feel lowly, but when I recall to whom I belong, I boast. When I look at myself and see my own doing, I ask who is more miserable than I. When I look at You and see myself as Your servant, I ask who is greater than I.”

When my gaze falls on my own clay,  
I see nothing worse in the world.  
When I pass beyond my attributes,  
I look at myself from the Throne.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “When I look at myself, I become all burning and need. When I look at Him, I become all caresses and mysteries. When I look at myself I say,

“My two eyes full of water, my liver full of fire,  
my hands full of wind, my head full of dust!

“When I look at Him I say,

“What does the Throne do that it does not carry my saddlecloth?  
In my heart I carry the saddlecloth of Your ruling and decree.  
The scent of the spirit comes to my lips when I speak of You,  
the branch of exaltedness grows from my heart when I suffer Your trial.” [DS 933]

## Surah 102: al-Takāthur

### **102:1** *Vying for increase distracts you.*

This is an address of admonishment and assertion. He is saying, “O child of Adam! Why do you boast of relationships that will soon be severed? Why do you vainly lift your heads over your many relatives, your property, and your position? Why are you deluded by the fact that you have been given respite and left without shame? Will you not look back before you reach the four walls of the grave, thrown down in exile and aloneness? Will you not apologize? You are not on guard because you are not aware. In no way do you take the road to wholesomeness and deliverance, for you are drunk on avarice and appetite.”

### **102:3-4** *But no, you will know. Then but no, you will know.*

Indeed, you will know. You will see into your own work on the day when knowing and seeing have no profit, when repentance and apology are useless.

### **102:5** *But no. Did you but know with the knowledge of certainty.*

If you had *the knowledge of certainty* and *the eye of certainty* that you must pass over the steep road of death and you must prepare what you need for the journey of the resurrection, then surely your boasting and vying for increase in property and provisions would be less and your eagerness for obedience and worship would be more.

### **102:6-7** *You shall surely see the Blaze, then you shall see it with the eye of certainty.*

This *surely* is that of an oath. The Lord of the Worlds is swearing an oath and saying, “In truth, you servants will all see hell with *the eye of certainty*, a seeing without supposition or doubt.” This is just what He says elsewhere: “*And none of you there is but will enter it*” [19:71]. The person of faith will see it while passing by, and the unbeliever will see it as a settling place.

Muṣṭafā said, “The best thing cast into the heart is certainty, and certainty is faith, all of it. Surely God in His equity and justice placed repose and joy in certainty and approval, and He placed concerns and sorrow in doubt and anger.”

He is saying, “The best seed that is planted in the faithful person’s breast is the seed of certainty, and all of faith is certainty. Certainty is a fortified fortress for faith and a firm cord for the possessor of faith. With beautiful gentleness, perfect generosity, bounty without inclination, justice without iniquity, and gentleness without cause, the Real placed all ease and comfort, all security and unconcern, all happiness and revelry, in the right hand of certainty and the garden of approval. Then with a decree without ulterior motive and a knowledge without suspicion, He placed all grief and misfortune, suffering and tribulation, in doubt and disapproval.

It has also been said that certainty has three pillars: the knowledge of certainty, the eye of certainty, and the truth of certainty. The knowledge of certainty settles down in the breast, the eye of certainty settles down in the secret core, and the truth of certainty settles down in the spirit.

The knowledge of certainty discourses on faith, the eye of certainty gives marks of self-purification, and the truth of certainty throws into the rightful due of recognition.

Blessedness belongs to him who walks in the world of certainty’s knowledge! Nearness belongs to him who sees a trace of the face-to-face vision of certainty’s eye! The most beautiful belongs to him who finds awareness of the reality of certainty’s truth!

## Surah 103: al-<sup>c</sup>Aṣr

### **103:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful,*

When someone whose heart has recognition hears the word *in the name of God*, the lights of his heart glitter, all his distress disperses, and the radiance of his kernel is bewildered in His majesty. When someone whose heart has faith recognizes this word, he loves it from within his mindful heart and departs from slumber in seeking it, abandoning for its sake every concern and desire.

It is commonly said by the leaders of the religion and the ulama of the Shariah that whatever is in the lordly books and scriptures—the pages of Adam and the scriptures of Seth, Idris, Abraham, and Moses—is gathered together in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Psalms. The explication and mark of whatever is in these books is found in the tremendous Qur’an and the splendid Furqān. Whatever is gathered together and heard in the Qur’an is in the Surah al-Fātiḥa. Whatever is in the Surah al-Fātiḥa is in these four words: *in the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful*. Whatever is in these four words is in the letters of *in the name of God*. Whatever is in these letters is in the form of the *in* [◡]. Whatever is in the form of the *in* is inside the purse of its dot.

It has also been said that the Qur’an is arranged like the Throne and the dot of the *in* is like a dust mote. Now open the eye of the secret core and gaze on the forms and the surahs! Observe the utmost tremendousness in the Qur’an and the Throne and the mark of power in the dust mote and the dot. Relative to power do not consider anything tremendous, and relative to wisdom do not call the existence of anything lowly or tiny. He created the Tremendous Throne, and under each of its pillars are 360,000 worlds full of proximate and holy angels. He created the lowly dust mote such that the trace of its form is seen with the senses, but the hand cannot touch or feel it. The dust mote is masked, but the light of the sun brings it face-to-face. The Throne is veiled, but the light of the Qur’an explicates it. As long as there is no light, no one sees the dust mote, and as long as there is no mark, no one knows the Throne.

In the creation of the Throne there is wisdom, for it is the roof of the world, the greatest prayer-niche, the mirror of power, the utmost limit of form, the kiblah of the cherubim, the place circumambulated by the proximate angels, the treasury of subtleties, the source of rarities, the rising place of lights, the gathering place of influences. And in the creation of the dust mote there is wisdom, for it is the explication of perfect power, the mark of the manifestation of creativity, the mirror for taking heed, the witness to the unneediness of exaltedness, the explication of the motivation for taking into account, the mark of the severity and power of the Compeller. Thus you will know that the artisanry of the wise Artisan is not aimless, His work not foolish, and He does not play games. In whatever He does there is a secret, for in His wonder-working there is no caprice or folly. “Resolutions come in the measure of the resolute.”

### **103:1-2** *By the era! Surely man is in loss.*

The Real swears an oath by the days and the time, which are the locus of taking heed for the gazer and the trace of the power of the Powerful: The Adamite is always in decrease and loss, his life in ruins. He is destitute and bewildered in the passing days. Every day that passes him by in his heedlessness is one part of his decreasing life, bringing him closer to the Last Day. He travels in decrease and fancies that he is increasing. He brings forth disobedience as ready cash and throws off obedience for tomorrow.

You said you'd do the work fully tomorrow.

Who gives you the assurance of tomorrow?

God's Messenger, who was the paragon and the best of creation, the chosen and pulled up by the Real, said that he never got up in the morning expecting to reach the evening, and he never slept in the evening expecting to reach the morning; that he never put a morsel in his mouth supposing that he would finish eating it before he died. That paragon often used to say in supplication, "O Lord, give me a life in the sweetness of obedience, give me a death pure of alienation and slipping, and bring me into Your Presence neither shamed by my deeds nor embarrassed by the passing days."

## Surah 104: al-Humaza

**104:3** *He reckons that his wealth will make him last forever.*

They fancy that they will be in this world forever and that their wealth will always stay with them.

**104:4** *But no, he will be thrown into the Crusher.*

It will not be like what they fancy and will not be as they hope. In truth, at the resurrection they will be thrown into hell. They will be held captive in abasement and misery in the depths of the Crusher, their hands and feet fettered, stretched with a chain of seventy gaz, without hope for the mercy of the Real.

**104:5** *And what will let thee know what is the Crusher?*

And how would you know, O Muḥammad, how hard are the depths of the Crusher? And how burning is its fire!

**104:6** *The lit-up fire of God.*

If a speck of that fire were to appear in this world, it would burn all the folk of this world. The mountains would melt and the earth would sink down. So, what is the state of someone who is in the midst of this fire? He has the attribute that the Lord of the Worlds says:

**104:7-9** *Roaring over the hearts, coming down on them in outstretched columns.*

In the tongue of the folk of allusion and in keeping with the tasting of the folk of understanding, *the lit-up fire of God* is what the Pir of the Tariqah said: “It is a fire set by the limpidness of love that spoils the delights of life and strips away solace. Nothing can hold it back short of the encounter.”

This is the state of that chevalier of the Tariqah, Ḥallāj, who said, “They struck *the lit-up fire of God* in my inwardness seventy years before it burned.” Then the kindling of the present moment of “I am the Real” sent out sparks. The sparks fell on that burnt one and took flame, so nothing was left of him but sparks.

O assemblies of the Muslims! Where is a heart burnt by *the lit up fire of God* so that at the time of dawn a fire may catch in it from the flint of “God descends” and they may say, “Is this the one burned by the fire of love?” With the tongue of his state the lover says,

“I keep on throwing the spirit-incense on the fire of passion.

The spirit is Your servant—it is not that I am generous.

When passion for You has burned away my spirit,

I will contrive to find a hundred spirits more.”

## Surah 109: al-Kāfirūn

### 109:1 Say: “O unbelievers!”

°Abdallāh ibn °Abbās said that no surah is more difficult and harsher for Satan than this surah, because it is sheer *tawhīd* and disavowal of associationism.

*Tawhīd* is of two sorts: the *tawhīd* of attestation and the *tawhīd* of recognition. The *tawhīd* of attestation is to say one, and the *tawhīd* of recognition is know one.

“To say one” is to bear witness to God’s oneness and purity in Essence and attributes. In Essence He is pure of spouse, child, and partner, and in attributes He is pure of similar, equal, and pointer. His attributes are not intelligible, their “how” is not understood, comprehended, or limited. They are outside of imagination and understanding, and no one knows how they are.

“To know one” is to know that He is one in blessings and bounties, that the giver and bestower is He, and that He is one in apportioning and beneficence. It is He who is one in word and deed, He who is one in bounty and gentleness, He who is one in mercy and favor. He is one—gratitude and favors belong to no one but Him. No one has power and strength but He, and no one has withholding and bestowal but He.

When the rays of the sun of *tawhīd* shine on the faithful, *tawhīd*-voicing servant, his mark is that he is watchful over his rest and his movement. He does not take one breath without the permission of the Shariah and the Tariqah. He weighs his outwardness in the scales of the Shariah and pulls his inwardness into the playing field of the Tariqah. He keeps his center point pure of relying upon either of them, for, as has been said, “The felicitous person is he who has an outwardness conforming to the Shariah, an inwardness following the Haqiqah, and a secret core quit of relying on his Shariah and his Haqiqah.” If he should rely one iota on himself, this is sheer Zoroastrianism and utter Judaism.

O chevalier, if you fill up everything from the highest of the high to what is beneath the earth with acts of obedience and worship, that would not be equal to letting go of one iota of your selfhood so that you do not see yourself. As long as you do not consider yourself last of all in the whole world, you will not be worthy for this road.

Abu’l-Qāsim Naṣrābādī was asked, “Do you have anything of what the past shaykhs had?”

He replied, “I have the pain of not finding it.”

In short, you must have a heart in which there is either the pain and affliction of not finding or the happiness and exaltation of finding. “God hates the healthy and carefree.”

Jesus son of Mary did not settle down anywhere and traveled around the world. When he was asked about the cause of that, he said, “I hope that I will put down my foot in a place that was reached once by the feet of someone sincerely truthful, and that the place may then intercede for my sins.”

If the pain of all the world’s friends and sincerely truthful were collected together, it would not reach the pain of the feet of pure Jesus, yet such was his need and burning in this road!

“Our treasuries are full of acts of obedience, so you must have a bit of poverty and brokenness.”<sup>1</sup>

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1 Beginning with “When the rays of the sun of *tawhīd*,” the paragraphs are derived from RA 258-60 (on the basis of which I have made some minor corrections to the text).

## Surah 111: al-Masad

### **111:1 *Perish the hands of Abū Lahab, and perish he!***

What did Abū Lahab do in the Beginningless that his portion was the brand of deprivation? What did Abū Bakr bring forth in the Beginningless that the crown of felicity and generosity was placed on the head of his passing days? You say that Abū Lahab came to be wretched because he was an unbeliever and that Abū Bakr came to be felicitous because he was a submitter. The reality is the opposite. Know that unbelief lies in wretchedness, not wretchedness in unbelief, and submission lies in felicity, not felicity in submission. This is a work that was over and done with in the Beginningless.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, “Alas for the decree that has gone before me! Alack for the words spoken by the Self-Seer! I do not know if I should live happy or distraught. I fear what the Powerful said in the Beginningless.”

The dog of the Companions of the Cave had the color of unbelief, and the garment of Balaam Beor had the embroidery of the religion. But beginningless wretchedness and felicity were waiting in ambush from both directions. Hence, when good fortune showed its face, the form of that dog’s skin was placed on Balaam: *So his likeness is the likeness of a dog* [7:176]. And Balaam’s cloak was put on that dog, for it was said, “*They were three, and the fourth of them was their dog*” [18:22].

## Surah 112: al-Ikhlāṣ

**112:0** *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.*

This is the name of Him whose existence is the Beginningless and whose fixity is the Endless. No moment precedes Him and no term encompasses His majesty. He created heaven without pillar and put down the earthly cradle without bending. He thanks those servants who obey Him and accepts those who desire and aim for Him. He knows the hidden secrets of everyone, whether bowing or prostrating, standing or sitting, deviating or *tawhīd*-voicing. He is the help of the grieved, the cave of the weak, the support of the disobedient, the aid of the prisoner, the backing of the poor. He fulfills everything He promises, and He is one, but not in number. He is solitary, single, not preceded by parent and not followed by child. He is Self-Standing, *Self-Sufficient*. *He begets not, nor was He begotten, and equal to Him is none* [112:2-4].

The name of a Lord who is one and unique; one in Essence and peerless in attributes, separate from defects and worthy of lordhood; His tremendousness is a shawl, His magnificence a cloak. He is solitary, single, beautiful, majestic, and not like us. He is all-merciful, ever-merciful, all-knowing, ever-knowing, driver of judgments and decree, all-curtaining, all-forgiving, all-compeller, all-subjugator, magnificent without how or why. He is splendidous, requiter, praiseworthy, and lovingly kind; caresser of servants, caretaker, worthy of every laudation. His beautiful doing is eternal, His command exalted, His covenant gentle, His kingship without disappearance or annihilation. He is pure of defect, far from imagination, beyond reasoning, described by the attributes, recognized by the names.

We scattered praise on Your good face,  
we sacrificed spirit, heart, and eyes, all three.  
Whatever You do, we give You our heart's approval,  
whatever You decree, even against our life, is fine.

**112:1-2** *Say: "He is God, One; God, the Self-Sufficient...."*

"O Muḥammad! The estranged have asked you about My lineage. Say: 'God, One.'" *God* is one and unique, one in Essence and attributes, one in exaltedness and power, one in divinity and lordhood, one in beginninglessness and endlessness. He is worthy of Godhood, knower of God-work, generous and lovingly kind, gentle and ever-merciful, the good God. He is the knower of secrets and whispers, the holder of the highest horizon, the creator of the Throne and the earth, near to everyone familiar, worthy of every laudation, the light of solicitude, apparent in the hearts of His friends, hidden from the eyes, manifest through artisanry.

O far from the eyes, You and my heart are in one place!  
You are apparent to the heart but not to the eyes.

*God, the Self-Sufficient*. It is He from whom sufficiency is sought in needs and in whom refuge is sought in turns of fortune. *The Self-Sufficient* is He whom the servants need and require. The hope of the disobedient and the destitute is in Him, the remedy of trials comes from His generosity, the happiness of the poor is in His majesty and beauty. Blessed is he whose intimate is His name, exalted is he whose portion is remembering Him, happy is the heart that is bound to Him, pure the tongue that is mentioning Him, delighting in life is he whose days pass in love and affection for Him!

One person is joyful in paradise, another in the Friend. The Friend is the portion of him whose aspiration is all He.

I have an eye, all of it filled with the form of the Friend.  
 Happy am I with my eye so long as the Friend is within it.  
 Separating the eye from the Friend is not good—  
 either He's in place of the eye, or the eye itself is He.

*The Self-Sufficient* is He who is hallowed beyond comprehension by the knowledge of created things, the perception of their eyes, or the view of their recognitions. *The Self-Sufficient* is He in whose majesty intellects are bewildered, in whose beauty intelligences are distracted, in perceiving whose secret core understandings are incapable, from whose command thoughts are turned upside down, from whose severity livers are bloodied, and from whose recognition hearts melt.

The Pir of the Tariqah said, "The others are lost in His existence, and the traces and vestiges are effaced in the witnessing of His rightful due."<sup>1</sup>

An existence whose limits open up to nonexistence is a metaphorical existence, not the existence of the Haqiqah. O poor man, read the verse of your nonexistence from the tablet of eternity and raise the flag of your nonbeing in the world of His Being. Become confounded in the contemplation of the eternal Witness and become unaware of your own awareness. Put your being into bowing and prostration, and tear the cloak of metaphorical existence before the existence of the majesty of the Haqiqah. Say to Him,

"When I'm with myself, I'm less than nonexistence, less.  
 When I'm with You, I'm the whole world.  
 Take me and keep me, gratis,  
 even if gratis I'm expensive."

It has also been said that every verse of this surah is a commentary on the previous verse. When it is said, "Who is *He*?", you should say "*God*." When it is said, "Who is *God*?", you should say "*One*." When it is said, "Who is the *One*?", you should say, "*the Self-Sufficient*." When it is said, "Who is *the Self-Sufficient*?", you should say, "*He who begets not, nor was He begotten*." When it is said, "Who is it that *begets not, nor was He begotten*?" You should say, "*equal to Him is none*."

It has also been said that He unveils the secret cores with His word *He*, He unveils the spirits with His word *God*, He unveils the hearts with His word *One*, and He unveils the souls of the faithful with the rest of the surah.

It has also been said that He unveils the enraptured with His word *He* and He unveils the *tawḥīd*-voicers with His word *God*. He unveils the recognizers with His word *One*, the ulama with His word *Self-Sufficient*, and the intelligent with His words *He begets not, nor was He begotten, and equal to Him is none*.<sup>2</sup>

"O Muḥammad, say to the enraptured: *He*. That is enough intimation and allusion for them. Do not speak of name and attribute, for they are jealous. They cannot see or hear anyone mentioning the name and attribute of the Friend, even though He is all of their heart, eyes, and tongue." This is as they say:

In my passion for You the work reached the point  
 where I won't let my own eyes see Your face.

"Say to the recognizers: *God*. Their feet are on the carpet of solitariness. They are so drowned in the name *God* that they do not have any concern for negating others.

"Say to the *tawḥīd*-voicers: *One*, for their spirits take help from the light of *tawḥīd* and the repose of their spirits is in finding *tawḥīd*.

1 The saying, according to RA 165, is by Qushayrī. The next paragraph and the poetry are also from RA 165.

2 These three paragraphs are from LI 6:351 (partly quoted and partly translated).

“Say to the knowers: *God, the Self-Sufficient*. They have taken the baggage of their need to the threshold of the self-sufficiency of the Possessor of Majesty. They will not come back without gifts.

“Say to the intelligent: *He begets not, nor was He begotten, and equal to Him is none*. You who have intelligence, at least perceive and know that He has no wife or child, no family or relatives, no likeness or similar: *Nothing is as His likeness, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing* [42:11].

“O Muḥammad! I called you ‘beloved,’ and the meaning of love is conformity and being the friend’s deputy in every state. O Muḥammad! When your enemy speaks bad of you, I will answer. When he speaks bad of Me, you too should answer and discharge the rightful due of love in the meaning of conformity. The unbeliever ʿUqba called you a poet. I answered for your sake and as your deputy: *‘It is not the words of a poet’* [69:41]. When they speak ill of Me, you answer them: *‘Say: He is God, One.’* Ḥārith called you a soothsayer. I answered: *‘It is not the words of a soothsayer’* [69:42]. When someone calls Me ineffectual, you answer: *‘God, the Self-Sufficient.’* Walīd Mughayra called you a sorcerer: *‘This is naught but sorcery passed along’* [74:24]. I answered with a threat: *‘I shall roast him in Saqar’* [74:26]. Abū Lahab said to you, ‘May you perish!’ I answered: *‘Perish the hands of Abū Lahab’* [111:1]. You also, if the Magi say I have a peer and a spouse, answer *‘He begets not, nor was He begotten.’*”

## Surah 113: al-Falaq

**113:1** *Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the daybreak.*

The road of the common servants, in keeping with the outwardness of this verse, is continually to seek refuge in the Lord of the world's folk from the evil of the bad, the deceit of the deceivers, the envy of the enviers, and the bad things that happen in the world. This is why Muṣṭafā said, "Seek refuge in God from the effort of trial, the grasp of wretchedness, the ugliness of the decree, and the schadenfreude of enemies." He also used to say, "O God, I seek refuge in Thee from incapacity, indolence, cowardice, miserliness, senility, and the chastisement of the grave. O God, I seek refuge in Thee from poverty, paucity, and abasement, and I seek refuge in Thee from wronging and being wronged. I seek refuge in Thee from dissension, hypocrisy, and ugly character traits."

Such is the path of the common faithful: putting the outwardness of the Shariah into practice and, at the time of trial, lifting up the hands in supplication and pleading and asking for well-being from the Real. As for the road of the chevaliers of the Tariqah and the lords of the Haqiqah, it is surrender and approval. To this He alludes with His words, "*Except for him who comes to God with a sound heart*" [26:89].

It has been said, "Leave the governance to Him who created you and you will be at ease." Leave the governance of the work to the Lord of the work. Surrender intervention in created things to the Creator. Put aside the road of protest. Do not oppose and meddle. Do not turn away from His threshold. Consider Him your trustee, guarantor, and care-taker. Then you will have acquiesced to this command: "*Take Him as a trustee*" [73:9].

Whenever surrender to Him and approval of Him come together in a heart, that person will be joined with soundness as hard cash and that breast will be exempted from the blights of mortal nature. Surrender is the degree of Ishmael and Abraham. Abraham was addressed with the word "*Submit!*," and he answered, "*I submit*" [2:131]. His son saw the mark of surrender from his father and, by his father's teaching, he put on the garment of surrender. The splendid Qur'an reports the surrender of father and son: "*When the two of them submitted*" [37:103]. In this world surrender is the peg of the religion and in that world it is the key to the Abode of Peace. Approval is that you be a servant who is pleased and happy with everything that happens, and you await God's decree. Surrender is that you turn over the work of the created things to the Creator.



## Glossary

The Glossary provides most of the important terms used in the text along with their Arabic and/or Persian originals. I have usually not mentioned derivatives from the same root (e.g., “abasement” may translate not only the mentioned *dhillā*, but also *tadhallul*; and “abaser” translates *mudhill*). Many terms occur only once or twice in the text, and unless they are especially important, I have not listed them. The Qur’anic references indicate passages in which Maybudī defines the term or discusses it in detail.

- abandonment. *khidhlān*, *mahjūrī*  
abasement. *dhillā*  
abidance. *qiwām*  
ability. *tawān*  
ablution. *wuḍūʿ*, *ghusl*. 4:43, 5:6  
abrogation. *naskh*  
absence. *ghayba*  
abstinence. *parhīzgārī*  
acceptance. *qabūl*, *padhīruftan*  
accident. *ʿarad*  
accounting. *ḥisāb*  
acknowledgment. *iʿtirāf*. 7:100  
act. *fiʿl*. 10:35  
Adamite. *ādamī*. See man  
admonishment. *tanbīh*  
admonition. *mawʿiẓa*  
adornment. *taḥliya*, *ārāyish*, *zīna*. 1:5, 24:31, 33:54  
adversary. *khāṣm*  
adversity. *shidda*  
advice. *naṣīḥa*, *pand*  
affection. *mawadda*, *mīhr*  
affinity. *munāsaba*  
affirmation. *ithbāt*. 13:39  
affliction. *muṣība*  
afterworld. *ʿubqā*  
agonies. *sakarāt*  
aim. *qaṣd*  
all-compelling, all-compeller. *jabbār*. all-compellingness. *jabarūt*  
all-curtaining. *sattār*  
all-forgiving. *ghaffār*  
all-subjugating. *qahhār*  
allowed. *mubāḥ*  
allusion. *ishāra*  
alms-giving, alms tax. *zakāt*  
alteration. *taghayyur*

ambiguity. *shubha*  
angels. *malak, firishta*. 35:1, 37:1, 50:17-18  
animosity. *‘adāwa*  
annihilation. *fanā’*  
antagonism. *khuṣūma*  
apology. *‘udhr*. 12:52  
apostate. *murtadd*  
apparent. *āshkārā, paydā*  
appetite. *shahwa*  
apportioning. *qisma, qadar*. apportioner. *qassām*  
approach, means to. *wasīla*. 5:35  
approval. *riḍā, riḍwān, pasand*. 3:15  
argument. *hujja*  
arrival. *wārid, wuṣūl*. new arrival. *hudūth*  
arrogance. *nakhwa, takabbur*  
artifice. *hīla*  
artisan. *ṣāni<sup>c</sup>*. artisanry. *ṣun<sup>c</sup>*. artifacts. *ṣanā’i<sup>c</sup>*  
ascription. *iḍāfa*. 26:22  
asking. *su’āl*. 2:219  
aspiration. *himmat*. 35:1  
associate. *sharīk*. associationism. *shirk*. 4:48  
assurance. *ḍamān*  
at-ness. *‘indiyya*  
attachment. *‘alāqa, ta‘alluq*  
attestation. *iqrār*  
attraction. *jadhba*. 8:24, 10:22, 24:35  
attribute. *ṣifa, na<sup>c</sup>t*. 2:78, 10:35, 64:1  
avarice. *hirs*  
aversion. *nifra*  
awareness. *iṭṭilā<sup>c</sup>, hushyārī, āgāhī*  
awe, awesomeness. *hayba*. 2:180  
backbiting. *ghība*  
backsliding. *tarāju<sup>c</sup>*  
balance. *tarāzū*  
balancing. *wazn*  
balm. *marham*  
beauty. *ḥusn, jamāl, nīkū’ī*. 12:20, 21:101, 40:64, 42:26. beautiful deeds. *ḥasanāt*. 6:160.  
beautiful doing. *iḥsān, nīkūkārī*. 2:195, 3:134, 7:29, 16:90, 50:1  
beginning. *badw, bidāya*  
being. *hastī, būd, hast, kawn*. realm of being. *kawn*. engendered beings. *kā’ināt, mukawwanāt*  
belief. *i‘tiqād, girawīdan*  
beloved. *maḥbūb, ma<sup>c</sup>shūq, jānān*  
beneficence. *in‘ām*  
benevolence. *rifq*  
bestowal. *mawhiba, minḥa, bakhshāyish, nawāl*. generous bestowal. *karāma, ikrām*  
betrayal. *khiyāna*  
bewilderment. *ḥayra*. 43:71  
blame. *malāma, dhamm*  
blessedness. *tūbā*  
blessings. *ni‘ma, baraka*. Patron of Blessings. *wālī-ni‘ma*  
blight. *āfa*  
bliss. *na‘īm*

boasting. *fakhr, iftikhār*  
 body. *tan, jasad*. 20:55, 22:5, 24:26. bodily. *jismānī*  
 bold. *gustākh*  
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- 2:268 Satan promises you poverty and commands you to indecency, and God promises you forgiveness from Him, and bounty. 92**
- 2:269 He gives wisdom to whomsoever He wills. 93**
- 2:272 And whatever good you expend shall be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged. 94
- 2:273 for the poor, who are constrained in the path of God .... And whatever good you expend, surely God knows it. 93. 408**
- 2:274 Those who expend their wealth night and day, secretly and openly.... 95**
- 2:277 Those who have faith and do wholesome deeds, who perform the prayer and give the alms tax... 95**
- 2:283 Let him who has been entrusted deliver back his trust. 143
- 2:284 To God belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Whether you show what is in your souls or you hide it, God will bring you to account for it. 96. 343**

- 2:285-86 The Messenger has faith in what was sent down to him from his Lord.... “Our Lord, take us not to task if we forget or make mistakes.... 97. 49, 333, 462**
- 3:6 He it is who forms you in the wombs as He wills. 99**
- 3:7 He it is who has sent down upon thee the Book, wherein are firm verses, which are the mother of the Book, and others ambiguous.... We have faith in it; all is from our Lord. 100. 35, 143**
- 3:8 Our Lord, let not our hearts stray after Thou hast guided us, and give us mercy from Thee. 101**
- 3:10 As for the unbelievers, their possessions will not take away their need for God, neither their children.... 101**
- 3:14 Adorned for people is love of appetites, like women, children, heaped-up heaps of gold and silver, horses of mark, cattle, and tillage.... 102. 249**
- 3:15 Shall I tell you of something better than that?... and approval from God. 103**
- 3:17 The patient, the truthful, the devoted, the spenders, those who ask forgiveness at dawn. 104**
- 3:18 God bears witness that there is no god but He—and the angels, and the possessors of knowledge—upholding justice.... 105. 176, 405**
- 3:19 Surely the religion with God is the submission. 106**
- 3:28 Let not the faithful take the disbelievers as friends instead of the faithful.... And God warns you of Himself, and God is clement to the servants. 106. 27**
- 3:30 On the day when every soul shall find the good it has done made present.... God warns you of Himself.... 107. 169**
- 3:31 Say: If you love God, follow me; God will love you and forgive you your sins. 107. 50, 144, 500**
- 3:33 Surely God chose Adam and Noah and.... 173, 194, 439, 526**
- 3:35 I dedicate to Thee what is in my belly as someone free. 112**
- 3:37 So her Lord accepted her with a beautiful acceptance.... found provision with her. 112**
- 3:39 while he was standing, praying in the sanctuary. 148**
- 3:40 does whatsoever He wills. 96, 134**
- 3:41 He said, “My Lord, appoint for me a sign.” .... 110**
- 3:42 He has chosen thee and made thee pure, and He has chosen thee above the women of the worlds. 111**
- 3:45 When the angels said, “O Mary, surely God gives thee the good news of a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah....” 111**
- 3:48 And He will teach him the Book, the wisdom, the Torah, and the Gospel. 112. 489, 545**
- 3:49 heal the blind and the leper and give life to the dead with permission. 545**
- 3:54 And they deceived, and God deceived, and God is the best of deceivers. 113**
- 3:59 as the likeness of Adam—He created him from dust. 548**
- 3:60 The truth is from thy Lord, so be not among the doubters. 113**
- 3:64 Say: “O Folk of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you... not take others of us as lords apart from God.” 113**
- 3:73 Do not have faith in any but those who follow your religion. Say: “Surely the guidance is God’s guidance”... Say: “Surely the bounty is in God’s hand.”... 113**
- 3:74 He singles out for His mercy whomsoever He will. 114**

- 3:79 It belongs to no mortal man that God should give him the Book..., “Be servants of me instead of God!” But, “Be you lordly ones...!” 115**
- 3:81 And when God took the compact of the prophets... “You shall surely have faith in him and you shall surely help him.”... They said, “We assent.” He said, “So bear witness.” 116. 108**
- 3:85 Whosoever wants a religion other than the submission, it will not be accepted from him. 117**
- 3:89 Except for those who repent after that and make wholesome. 117
- 3:95 So follow the creed of Abraham, an unswerving man, and he was not of the associaters. 45
- 3:97 The people’s duty to God is to visit the House. 306
- 3:102 O you who have faith, be wary of God as is the rightful due of His wariness. 118. 343, 508**
- 3:104 Let there be a community of you inviting to the good. 118**
- 3:105 And do not be like those who became dispersed and disagreed. 119**
- 3:110 You are the best community brought forth to mankind.... 207, 439
- 3:119 Ha! There you are: You love them, but they do not love you.... Die in your rage! 119. 308, 491, 505**
- 3:120 If something beautiful touches you, it vexes them, and if something ugly strikes you.... 120
- 3:123 God surely helped you at Badr while you were abased. 120**
- 3:131 Be wary of the Fire that has been prepared for the unbelievers. 118
- 3:133 Hurry.... a garden whose breadth is the heavens and the earth, made ready for the god-wary. 240, 327
- 3:134 Those who spend in prosperity and adversity.... God loves the beautiful-doers. 120**
- 3:136 How excellent is the wage of the doers! 48, 446
- 3:144 Muḥammad is only a messenger.... What, if he dies or is killed, will you turn back on your heels?.... 121**
- 3:148 God gave them this world’s reward and the beauty of the next world’s reward, and God loves the beautiful-doers. 122**
- 3:152 Among you are those who desire this world, and among you are those who desire the next world. 122**
- 3:155 Satan made them slip for something they had earned, but God has surely pardoned them. 301
- 3:159 It was by a mercy of God that thou wert soft with them.... consult with them in the affair.... Surely God loves those who trust. 123. 80**
- 3:163 They are degrees with God. 263, 441
- 3:169 Count not those who were killed in God’s path as dead.... 124**
- 3:171-72 They rejoice in blessings from God and bounty, and that God does not leave to waste the wage of the faithful.... 125**
- 3:175 Fear Me if you have faith. 218
- 3:179 And God will not inform you of the unseen. 142
- 3:180 Let not those who are niggardly with the bounty that God has given them reckon that it is better for them. 126**
- 3:185 Every soul shall taste death.... The life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion. 248, 281, 402
- 3:186 You will surely be tried in your possessions and your selves.... 483

3:190 signs for those who possess the kernels. 161

**3:191 Who remember God, standing and sitting and on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth. 126. 321**

**3:194 Our Lord, and give us what Thou hast promised us through Thy messengers. 127**

**3:195 And their Lord responded to them, “I will not waste the deed of any doer among you.... I shall surely acquit them of their ugly deeds....” 127**

**3:200 O you who have faith! Be patient, vie in patience, be steadfast, and be wary of God. Perhaps you will prosper. 128**

**4:1 O people, be wary of your Lord, who created you from one soul, created from it its mate, and scattered forth from the two many men and women. And be wary of God.... 129. 118, 443**

4:3 Marry the women who seem goodly to you. 74

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**4:12 For you half of what your wives leave, if they have no children. 131**

**4:17 It is for God to turn only toward those who do the ugly in ignorance and then soon turn. Those—God will turn toward them.... 132. 339**

**4:18 This turning will not belong to those who keep on doing ugly deeds.... 132**

**4:19 O you who have faith, it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will.... it may be that you are averse to something within which God has placed much good. 133**

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**4:23 Forbidden to you are your mothers and daughters, your sisters.... 134**

**4:28 And man was created weak. 134. 339, 452**

**4:31 If you avoid the great sins prohibited to you, We will acquit you of your ugly deeds and admit you to a generous admitting place. 135**

**4:32 Do not wish for that whereby God has preferred some of you over others. Men shall have a portion.... But ask God of His bounty. 135. 394**

**4:34 The men stand over the women through that with which God has preferred some of them over others and that which they expend of their wealth. 136**

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**4:43 O you who have faith! Do not approach the prayer when you are intoxicated.... Surely God is pardoning, forgiving. 139**

**4:48 Surely God does not forgive that anything be associated with Him, but less than that He forgives for whomsoever He wills. 140. 74**

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4:51 demons and idols. 142

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**4:58 Surely God commands you to deliver trusts back to their owners. 142**

**4:64 We sent not any messenger but that he should be obeyed by God’s leave. 143**

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- 4:69** Whosoever obeys God and the Messenger....the prophets, the sincerely truthful, the witnesses, and the wholesome.... 144
- 4:78 Say: All is from God. 162
- 4:80 Whoso obeys the Messenger has obeyed God. 45, 235
- 4:82 What, do they not ponder the Qur'an? 96, 250
- 4:86** When you are greeted with a greeting, greet with one more beautiful than it, or return it. 145
- 4:94** O you who have faith! When you strike forth on the path of God, look clearly.... 146
- 4:100** Whosoever emigrates in the path of God will find in the earth many a road and expanse. 146
- 4:103** When you have completed the prayer, remember God.... 147
- 4:110 Whoever does something ugly or wrongs himself, and then asks forgiveness of God, he will find God forgiving, ever-merciful. 26, 63, 162, 229
- 4:113 He taught thee what thou didst not know. Surely God's bounty upon thee is magnificent. 489, 510
- 4:114** No good is there in much of their whispering.... We shall give him a tremendous wage. 149
- 4:119** Surely I will misguide them and fill them with wishes. 149
- 4:121 Their refuge is Gehenna. 149
- 4:122 We shall enter them into gardens underneath which rivers flow.... 149
- 4:125** Who is more beautiful in religion than he who submits his face to God while he is a beautiful-doer...? And God took Abraham as a bosom friend. 149. 44, 181
- 4:126** To God belongs everything in the heavens and everything in the earth, and God encompasses everything. 151
- 4:131** To God belongs everything in the heavens and everything in the earth, and We have charged those who were given the Book before you, and you, to be wary of God. 152
- 4:132** To God belongs everything in the heavens and everything in the earth, and God is sufficient as a trustee. 152
- 4:136** O you who have faith! Have faith in God and His Messenger. 152
- 4:145 in the lowest reach of the Fire. 505
- 4:153 They said, "Show us God openly," and the thunderbolt took them because of their wrongdoing. 209
- 4:160** And for the wrongdoing of those who are Jews, We forbade them certain good things. 153
- 4:162** But those who are firmly rooted in knowledge. 153
- 4:163** Surely We have revealed to thee as We revealed to Noah, and the prophets after him. 154
- 4:164 spoke to Moses directly. 545
- 4:170** O people, the Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord, so have faith; that is better for you. But if you disbelieve.... 154
- 4:171 The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was but God's messenger, and His word that He cast to Mary, and a spirit from Him. 112
- 4:173 He will give them their wages in full and He will increase them from His bounty. 236, 493
- 4:174** O people, a proof has come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light. 155
- 4:175** As for those who have faith in God and hold fast to Him, He will make them enter into mercy from Him, and bounty.... 155

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**5:1 O you who have faith!.... God decrees whatsoever He desires. 156.** 96, 134, 369

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5:12 If you have lent to God a beautiful loan. 84

5:18 We are God's children and His loved ones. 184

5:23 And in God put your trust, if you have faith. 124, 245

5:27 God accepts only from the godwary. 369

5:33 who wage war against God and His Messenger, striving for corruption in the earth. 321

**5:35 O you who have faith! Be wary of God, and seek the means of approach to Him. And struggle in His path. Perhaps you will prosper. 162.** 153, 277

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5:65 Gardens of bliss. 240

5:67 And God will protect thee from the people. 472

5:73 God is the third of three. 83

5:75 And his mother was a sincerely truthful woman. 112

**5:83 And when they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, thou seest their eyes overflow with tears because of the truth they recognize.... 166**

5:85 God rewarded them for what they said with Gardens.... That is the recompense of the beautiful-doers. 166, 434

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**5:90 O you who have faith! Wine, arrow-shuffling, idols, and divining arrows are a filth and of the deeds of Satan. 167**

**5:95 O you who have faith, do not slay game when you are ritually consecrated. 167**

**5:98 Know that God is intense in punishment and that God is forgiving, ever-merciful. 168**

**5:100 Say: "The vile and the goodly are not equal, even if the manyness of the vile stirs you to admiration." 168**

**5:101 O you who have faith, do not ask about things which would harm you if they were made to appear to you. 169**

**5:105 O you who have faith! Against you are your own souls. Those who are misguided cannot hurt you if you are guided. 169**

5:109 We have no knowledge. 509, 522

- 5:120 To God belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. 448
- 6:0 In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful. 171**
- 6:1 Praise belongs to God who created the heavens and the earth and made the darknesses and the light. 172**
- 6:2 He it is who created you from clay. 173**
- 6:3 And He is God in the heavens and in the earth. 174**
- 6:12 Say: "To whom belongs what is in the heavens and in the earth?" Say: "To God. He has written mercy against Himself." 174**
- 6:13 And His is whatsoever dwells in the night and the day.... 174**
- 6:14 Say: "Shall I take as friend other than God, the Originator of the heavens and earth, who feeds and is not fed?" 175**
- 6:17 And if God touches thee with harm, none can remove it but He. 175**
- 6:18 And He is the Severe over His servants. 176**
- 6:19 Say: "What thing is greater in bearing witness?" Say: "God." 176**
- 6:28 No, what they had been concealing beforehand now appears to them.... 176**
- 6:40 Say: "Do you see: Were God's chastisement to come.... would you supplicate other than God, if you are truthful?" 177**
- 6:41 No, He it is whom you will supplicate, so He will remove that for which you supplicate Him if He will, and you will forget what you associated with Him. 177**
- 6:42 Indeed We sent to nations before thee, and We seized them with misery and hardship that perhaps they would plead. 178**
- 6:52 And drive not away those who supplicate their Lord morning and evening, desiring His face. 178. 321, 381**
- 6:54 And when those who have faith in Our signs come to thee.... Your Lord has written mercy against Himself, that whosoever of you does an ugly deed in ignorance... He is forgiving, ever-merciful." 180. 10, 163, 267, 373**
- 6:59 With Him are the keys to the Unseen—none knows them but He. 21
- 6:75 So also We were showing Abraham the dominion of the heavens and the earth.... 180. 374**
- 6:76 When night darkened over him, he saw a star. He said, "This is my Lord."... 180. 34, 41, 42, 43, 282, 376, 421**
- 6:78 Then when he saw the sun rising.... 180**
- 6:79. Surely I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth... 180. 43, 220, 376, 421, 422, 435, 542**
- 6:89 So if they disbelieve, we have already entrusted it to a people who do not disbelieve. 164
- 6:90 So emulate their guidance. 465
- 6:91 They measured not God with the rightful due of His measure.... Say "God," then leave them.... 182. 3, 65, 160, 163, 172, 176, 202, 241, 346**
- 6:93 Who does greater wrong than he who forges a lie against God?... Wert thou to see when the wrongdoers are in the throes of death. 182. 224**
- 6:95 Surely God is the splitter apart of the grain and the date-stone. 183**
- 6:96 Splitter apart of the dawn; and He has made the night as a stillness. 183**

- 6:98 He it is who has configured you from one soul. 183**
- 6:99 And He it is who sent down out of heaven water.... Gaze at their fruits when they fructify and ripen.... 183**
- 6:111 Were We to send down the angels to them.... they would still not have faith, unless God willed. 184**
- 6:112 Thus have We made for every prophet an enemy, satans of jinn and men. 185. 255**
- 6:114 What, shall I want other than God as a judge? 185**
- 6:116 Wert thou to obey most of those in the earth, they would misguide thee from the path of God. 186**
- 6:117 Surely thy Lord knows better who is misguided from His path and He knows better who are the guided. 283
- 6:120 Leave aside the outward of sin and its inward. 186**
- 6:122 What, is he who was dead, and We gave him life, making for him a light whereby he walks among the people, like one who is in the darknesses...? 186**
- 6:124 God knows better where to place His message. 115
- 6:125 Whomsoever God desires to guide, He expands his breast to the submission. 187**
- 6:126 This is the path of thy Lord, straight. 187**
- 6:134 Surely what you are promised will come. 188**
- 6:135 You shall surely know whose outcome shall be the Abode. 188
- 6:149 And to God belongs the conclusive argument. 220
- 6:151 indecencies, both the outward and the inward. 394
- 6:153 Surely this path of Mine is straight, so follow it. And do not follow the paths, lest they disperse you from His path. 119
- 6:160 Whoso brings a beautiful deed shall have ten the like of it, and whoso brings an ugly deed shall be recompensed only with its like. 188**
- 6:161 Say: "As for me, my Lord has guided me to a straight path." 189**
- 6:162 Say: "My prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death, belong to God." 189**
- 7:8 The weighing that day is true. 191**
- 7:11 We created you, then We formed you, then We said to the angels, "Prostrate yourselves before Adam." 191**
- 7:14 Grant me respite till the day they are raised up. 487
- 7:19 O Adam, dwell thou and thy spouse in the Garden, and eat from wheresoever you will, but come not near this tree. 193**
- 7:20 Then Satan whispered to them to show them their shameful parts that were hidden from them. 195**
- 7:22 And when they tasted the tree, their shameful parts were shown to them. 195**
- 7:23 "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If Thou dost not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers." 196. 161, 173, 319, 336**
- 7:29 Say: "My Lord has commanded justice. Set your faces in every place of prostration and supplicate Him.... Just as He began you, so you shall return." 196. 307**
- 7:30 A group He guided, and for another group misguidance was the rightful due. 197
- 7:31 O children of Adam! Put on your adornment at every place of prostration. 198**

**7:32 Say: “Who has forbidden the adornment of God?” 198**

7:34 When their term comes, they shall not put it back by an hour, nor put it forward. 186

7:37 Those—their portion of the Book will reach them. 505

**7:43 We shall strip away all the rancor that is in their breasts....** We would not have been guided had God not guided us.... **This is your Garden.... 198.** 32, 306, 325

**7:46 And upon the Ramparts are men who recognize everyone by their marks. 199**

**7:54 Surely your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then sat upon the Throne....** Surely His are the creation and the command.... **199.** 137, 174, 368, 384

**7:55 Supplicate your Lord in pleading and secret. 200**

7:56 *Supplicate Him in fear and want.* Surely God’s mercy is near the beautiful-doers. 201

**7:57 He it is who looses the winds... water, bringing forth thereby all the fruits. 201**

**7:58 As for the goodly land, its plants come forth by the leave of its Lord. As for that which is vile, they come forth only scantily. 202.** 269

**7:80 And Lot, when he said to his people, “What, do you bring an indecency with which none in the worlds has preceded you?” 202**

**7:96 Had the folk of the towns had faith and been godwary, We would have opened up for them blessings from heaven and earth. 202**

**7:99 Did they feel secure from God’s deception? 203**

**7:102 We found nothing of covenant in most of them; indeed, We found most of them ungodly. 203**

7:117 Cast thy staff! 285

7:120 So the sorcerers were cast down in prostration. 404

7:128 The outcome belongs to the godwary. 274

**7:142 And We promised Moses thirty nights.... So the appointed time of his Lord was completed in forty nights.... “Take my place among my people.” 203**

**7:143 When Moses came to Our appointed time ... “Show me, that I may gaze upon Thee.” ... “Thou shalt not see Me...” Then, when his Lord disclosed Himself to the mountain.... Moses fell down thunderstruck. ... “Glory be to Thee! I repent to Thee!” 204.** 27, 91, 109, 284, 301, 302, 314, 360, 386, 397, 421, 485

**7:144 O Moses, surely I have chosen thee over the people through My messages and My speaking. So take what I have given thee, and be one of the thankful. 206**

**7:145 And in the tablets We wrote for him of everything an admonition... and command thy people to take their most beautiful. I shall show you the abode of the ungodly. 206.** 197

**7:146 I shall turn away from My signs those who are proud in the earth without the Real.... Were they to see the way of rectitude, they would not take it as a way. 207**

**7:148 And the people of Moses, after him, took of their ornaments a calf, a body that lowed. Did they not see that it did not speak to them? 208**

**7:150-51 He threw down the Tablets.... He said, “My Lord, forgive me and my brother.” 208**

**7:155 And Moses chose his people, seventy men, for Our appointed time.... “Thou art our Friend, so forgive us and have mercy upon us, and Thou art the best of forgivers!” 209**

**7:156 And write for us in this world the beautiful, and in the next world. We have turned to Thee.... My mercy embraces everything.** So I shall write it for those who are wary of Me. **209.** 24, 369

7:157 Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet. 34

**7:159 Among the people of Moses is a community that guides by the truth and does justice thereby. 210**

**7:160 And We cut them up into twelve tribes, communities....and twelve springs gushed forth from it. All the people knew their drinking places. 211**

**7:168 And We cut them up into communities in the earth. Among them are the wholesome and among them other than that. And We tried them with the beautiful things and the ugly things. 211**

**7:172 When your Lord took from the children of Adam.... "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes indeed." 212. 65, 116, 201, 216, 283, 391, 449**

7:176 So his likeness is the likeness of a dog. 506, 557

7:179 Those are like cattle. No, they are further astray. 213

**7:180 And to God belong the most beautiful names, so supplicate Him by them, and leave those who deviate concerning His names. 213**

7:185 Have they not gazed upon the dominion of the heavens and the earth? 163, 242, 250, 449, 530

7:187 They ask thee about the Hour, when it will come. 74

**7:189 He it is who created you from one soul and made of it its spouse.... 214**

7:198 Thou seest them looking at thee, but they do not see. 16, 114, 414

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7:201 Surely the godwary, when a visitation from Satan touches them, remember, and then see clearly. 143, 172, 263

**7:204 And when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it and give ear.... 216**

**7:205 And remember thy Lord in thyself. 216. 366**

**7:206 Surely those who are with thy Lord do not have too much pride to serve Him. 216**

**8:2 The faithful are only those whose hearts quake when God is remembered. 218. 18, 27**

**8:3-4 Those who perform the prayer and expend from what We have provided them.... They have degrees with their Lord and forgiveness and a generous provision. 218. 58, 159, 521**

**8:7 And when God promised you one of the two parties would be yours, and you wished that the one not armed would be yours. 219**

**8:9 When you sought the aid of your Lord, He responded to you. 219. 49, 307**

**8:17 Thou didst not throw when thou threwest, but God threw; and that He may try the faithful with a beautiful trial. 219. 39, 213, 232, 254, 278**

**8:24 O you who have faith, respond to God and the Messenger when he invites you... God comes between a man and his heart.... 220. 85, 231**

**8:29 O you who have faith, if you are wary of God, He will appoint for you a criterion.... And God is the possessor of a tremendous bounty. 222. 29**

8:30 to confine thee, or kill thee, or expel thee. 321

8:34 Surely His friends are only the godwary. 274, 456

8:37 So that God may distinguish the vile from the goodly. 70

8:38 If they desist, He will forgive them what is past. 215, 455

**8:41 And know that, whatever booty you take, a fifth is for God, and for His Messenger and for kinsfolk, orphans, the indigent, and the son of the road.... 222**

8:45 And remember your Lord often. 110

- 8:50** Wert thou to see when the angels take those who disbelieve, beating their faces and their backs.... 224
- 8:64 O Prophet, God suffices thee. 43
- 8:67 You desire the chance goods of this life, and God desires the afterworld. 147, 179
- 8:72** Surely those who have faith, emigrate, and struggle with their possessions and their souls in God's path... they are friends of one another. 226
- 8:74** Those—they are the faithful in truth. Theirs is forgiveness and a generous provision. 226
- 9:21 Their Lord will give them the good news of mercy from Him, approval, and the Gardens. 244
- 9:25** God has already helped you in many homesteads, and on the Day of Hunain, when you admired your own multitude. 227
- 9:28 The associaters are impure. 74, 248
- 9:30 The Messiah is the son of God. 16, 349
- 9:33 to make him prevail over every religion. 397
- 9:40 The second of two, when the two were in the cave.... Grieve not; surely God is with us. 6, 211, 333, 367, 472
- 9:60** The freewill offerings are for the poor, and the indigent.... and the son of the road.... 227
- 9:72 And goodly dwellings in the gardens of Eden; and approval from God is greatest.... 103, 124, 527
- 9:73 O Prophet! Struggle against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be hard with them. 123
- 9:75 And among them is he who made a covenant with God: "If He gives us of His bounty, we will surely give charity...." 435
- 9:77 for having failed God in what they promised Him and for having lied. 435
- 9:100** And the preceders, the first among the emigrants and the helpers and those who followed them in beautiful doing—God approves of them, and they approve of Him. 228. 165, 254, 292, 390
- 9:102** And others who acknowledged their sins; they mixed a wholesome deed with another that is ugly. Perhaps God will turn toward them. Surely God is forgiving, ever-merciful. 228. 290
- 9:103 Take charity from their wealth, thereby to make them pure and to purify them. 149
- 9:106** And others who are made to hope for God's command; either He will chastise them or He will turn toward them. And God is knowing, wise. 228
- 9:108 In it are men who love to make themselves pure, and God loves those who make themselves pure. 74
- 9:111** Surely God has bought from the faithful their souls and their possessions so that they may have the Garden.... So rejoice in your sale you have made to Him. 230. 254, 308, 491, 505
- 9:112** The repenters, the worshipers, the praisers, the journeyers, the bowers, the prostrators, the commanders to the honorable and prohibitors of the improper.... 232. 163, 410, 420, 452, 541
- 9:118 Then He turned toward them so that they would repent. 440
- 9:119** O you who have faith, be wary of God and be among the truthful! 233. 369
- 9:128** Now there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves... eagerly desirous is he for you, clement and ever-merciful toward the faithful. 233. 487
- 10:0** In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful. 236
- 10:2** Give good news to those with faith that they have a footing of truthfulness with their Lord. 236. 244, 328, 446, 448
- 10:4** To Him is your place of return, all together—God's promise in truth. 236

**10:5 He it is who made the sun a radiance and the moon a light. 237**

**10:7-8 Surely those who do not hope for Our encounter... it is they whose refuge will be the Fire for what they were earning. 237, 414**

**10:9 Surely those who have faith and do wholesome deeds, their Lord will guide them in their faith. 238**

**10:10 And their greeting therein will be “Peace!,” and the last of their supplication will be “Praise belongs to God, the Lord of the Worlds.” 238, 372**

**10:22 He it is who makes you journey on land and sea... they supplicate God, purifying the religion for Him: “If Thou savest us from this, we shall surely be among the thankful.” 239, 250**

**10:25 And God invites to the Abode of Peace, and He guides whomsoever He will to a straight path. 240, 179, 241, 354, 451**

**10:26 Those who do the beautiful shall have the most beautiful and an increase. 241, 331, 445, 453**

**10:35 Say: Is there any of those whom you associate who guides to the Real? 242**

**10:42 Among them are those who listen to thee. 242**

**10:58 Say: “In the bounty of God and His mercy—in that let them rejoice, for it is better than what they gather.” 243, 361, 372, 420**

10:61 Thou art not upon any task, neither dost thou recite any of the Qur’an, nor do you do any deed, unless We are witnesses over you when you go forth into it. 242

**10:62 Surely God’s friends—no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they sorrow. 243**

**10:64 For them is good news in the life of this world and the next world. 244**

**10:71 And recite to them the story of Noah when he said to his people.... 244**

10:84 Then trust in Him, if you are submitters. 245

10:101 Say: “Gaze at that which is in the heavens and the earth.” 96

**10:105 Set thy face to the religion. 245**

**11:1 Alif Lām Rā<sup>3</sup>. 247**

11:6 There is no creature crawling on the earth but that its provision rests on God. And He knows its lodging place and repository. 216, 368

**11:12 Perhaps thou art putting aside some of what is revealed to thee... that they say, “Why has a treasure not been sent down upon him...?” 247**

**11:15 Whoso desires the life of this world and its adornment, We shall pay them in full for their deeds therein, and therein they shall not be defrauded. 248, 249**

**11:17 And what of him who is upon a clear sign from his Lord? 249**

**11:23 Surely those who have faith, do wholesome deeds, and are subservient to their Lord—it is they who will be the companions of the Garden, dwelling within it forever. 249**

**11:24 The likeness of the two groups is that of the blind and deaf and the seeing and hearing. Are they equal in likeness? 250**

11:36 None of your community will have faith except those who already have faith. 112, 185

**11:37 Make the ship through Our eyes and Our revelation. 250**

11:46 Ask Me not for that of which thou hast no knowledge. 397

11:69 He brought a roasted calf. 330, 348

11:75 Surely Abraham was clement, a sinner, penitent. 437

11:79 Surely Thou knowest what we desire. 393

11:88 In Him I trust and toward Him I am penitent. 437

**11:90 And ask forgiveness from your Lord, then repent to Him. Surely my Lord is ever-merciful, loving. 251**

11:108 as a gift unbroken. 452

11:113 Do not lean upon those who do wrong, lest the Fire touch you. 114

11:114 And perform the prayer at the two ends of the day and in the near part of the night. Surely beautiful deeds take away ugly deeds. 149

11:120 With all the stories of the messengers that We recount to thee, We make thy heart firm. 358

**12:3 We will tell thee the most beautiful of tales. 252**

**12:4 When Joseph said to his father, “O my father, surely I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon. I saw them prostrating to me.” 252. 254**

**12:15 So when they went with him and agreed to put him at the bottom of the well, We revealed to him, “Surely thou shalt inform them of this affair of theirs when they are unaware.” 253. 260**

**12:20 They sold him for a paltry price. 253**

12:21 Give him generous lodging. 25

12:30 The governor’s wife has been trying to seduce her chevalier. He smote her heart with love. 297, 433

12:31 She gave each of them a knife.... they admired him greatly.... a noble angel. 29, 55, 253

12:42 Remember me to your lord. 260

**12:43 The king said, “I see seven fat cows that seven lean ones are eating.” 254**

**12:52-53 That, so that he may know that I did not betray him secretly.... But I do not acquire my own soul. Surely the soul commands to ugliness. 254. 164, 427**

12:54 Surely today with us thou art emplaced, trustworthy. 142

12:55 Set me over the storehouses of the earth. 427

12:56 Thus did We establish Joseph in the earth. 404

**12:76 Thus We schemed for Joseph.... We raise in degree whomsoever We will. 257**

12:78 exalted. 34

**12:81 Return to your father and say, “O our father! Surely thy son has stolen.” 257**

**12:84 “Oh, my grief for Joseph!” And his eyes turned white because of the sorrow that he was suppressing. 258**

12:88 O exalted man, harm has touched us and our folk, and we come with scant goods. 343, 402

12:90 Surely whosoever is godwary and patient—surely God does not leave to waste the wage of the beautiful-doers. 369

12:92 No reproof is upon you today. 297, 402

**12:93 Go with this shirt of mine and cast it upon the face of my father so that he may come to seeing. 259**

**12:94 Their father said, “Surely I find Joseph’s scent.” 259**

**12:99-100 So, when they entered in upon Joseph, he embraced his parents.... “He acted beautifully toward me when He brought me out of prison ....” 260**

12:101 Thou art my friend in this world and the next. Receive me as a submitter and join me with the wholesome. 89, 106, 288-89, 427

12:108 Say: "This is my path. I invite to God upon insight, I and whosoever follows me." 154, 282, 462, 489

**13:1 Alif Lām Mīm Rāʾ. 261**

**13:2 God is He who lifted up the heavens without pillars that you see. 261**

**13:3 And He it is who spread out the earth and placed within it unshaking mountains. 261**

13:11 When God desires ugliness for a people, none can repel it. 505

**13:15 To God prostrate themselves all in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly. 262. 41**

**13:17 He sends down from heaven water, and the wadis flow in their measure.... As for the scum, it vanishes as jetsam.... 262**

13:20 They are loyal to God's covenant and do not break the compact. 283

13:21 Those who join what God has commanded to be joined and fear their Lord. 77

13:23 And the angels will enter unto them from every gate: "Peace be upon you!" 268

**13:28 Those who have faith and whose hearts are serene in the remembrance of God. 264. 18, 218**

13:29 Blessedness belongs to them, and a beautiful place of return. 241

**13:39 He effaces whatsoever He will, and He affirms. 265**

**14:2 God is He to whom belongs everything in the heavens and everything in the earth. 267**

**14:5 And We sent Moses with our signs: "Bring thy people out from the darknesses into the light and remind them of the days of God." 267. 212**

**14:7 When your Lord proclaimed, "If you give thanks, I will surely increase you." 268. 26**

14:10 He invites you so that He may forgive you some of your sins. 92, 240, 347

**14:23 Those who have faith and do wholesome deeds were given entry into the Garden. 268**

**14:24 Hast thou not seen how God has struck a similitude? A goodly word is like a goodly tree, its roots fixed, and its branches in heaven. 269. 35, 117, 193, 202, 391**

**14:25 It gives its fruit every season by the leave of its Lord. 269. 35, 117**

14:26 vile word. 193, 391

14:27 God does what He wills. 369

14:34 If you count God's blessings, you will not enumerate them. Surely man is a great wrongdoer, ungrateful. 114, 134

**14:35 And when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this land secure, and keep me and my sons away from worshiping idols." 269. 185**

14:36 Whoso follows me belongs to me. 109

**15:0 In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful. 271**

15:3 Leave them to eat, enjoy, and be diverted by hopes—they will soon know. 255

15:6 O thou unto whom the Remembrance has been sent down, surely thou art possessed. 17

15:9 Surely it is We who have sent down the Remembrance, and surely it is We who are its guards. 11

15:16 We set in heaven constellations and We adorned them for the gazers. 17

**15:20 And therein We placed for you livelihoods. 271**

**15:21 Naught is there but its storehouses are with Us. 271**

**15:22 And We sent forth the winds as pollinators. 272**

**15:23 Surely We give life and We make die. 272**

- 15:24 We indeed know those of you who go forward and We indeed know those of you who fall behind. 273**
- 15:26 Surely We created man of a dried clay of fetid mud. 273.** 194, 319, 420, 548
- 15:29 When I have blown into him of My spirit. 23, 173, 194, 318, 391, 526
- 15:39 I shall surely adorn for them what is in the earth. 122
- 15:42 Surely My servants, thou hast no ruling power over them. 54, 155
- 15:72 By thy life! 159, 175, 233, 291, 472
- 15:87 seven of the oft-repeated and the tremendous Qur'an. 545
- 15:88 Stretch not thine eyes. 485
- 15:92-93 So, by thy Lord, We shall surely ask all of them about what they were doing. 74
- 15:94 So shout out what thou art commanded, and turn away from the associaters. 186
- 15:97 We indeed know that thy breast is straitened by what they say. 472, 518
- 15:99 And worship thy Lord. 366
- 16:1 The command of God is coming, so do not seek to hurry it. 274**
- 16:2 He sends down the angels with the spirit from His command upon whomsoever He will of His servants: "Give warning that there is no god but I, so be wary of Me." 274**
- 16:6 And in them is beauty for you when you bring home to rest and drive forth to pasture. 275**
- 16:9 It is for God to point out the path; and some [paths] deviate. 275**
- 16:10-13 He it is who sends down water from heaven.... Surely in that is a sign for a people who reflect... signs for a people who use intellect... a sign for a people who remember. 275.** 410
- 16:14 He it is who subjected the sea so that you may eat from it fresh flesh. 276**
- 16:16 By the stars they are guided. 152
- 16:17 Is He who creates like him who does not create? 276.** 214, 452
- 16:32 Peace be upon you! Enter the Garden for what you were doing. 224-25, 331
- 16:41 Those who emigrate in God after they were wronged—We shall surely build for them something beautiful, and the wage of the next world will be greater. 276**
- 16:43 Ask the folk of remembrance if you do not know. 277.** 153
- 16:51 And God says, "And take not two gods. Surely He is only one God...." 277.** 113
- 16:66 And surely in the cattle there is a lesson for you: We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, between feces and blood, pure milk.... 278.** 301, 404
- 16:70 The worst state of life. 32
- 16:71 And God has given more bounty in provision to some of you than others. 278**
- 16:72 He has made for you from your wives children and grandchildren. 41
- 16:83 They recognize God's blessings, then they deny them. 279**
- 16:90 Surely God commands justice and beautiful doing and giving to kinsmen, and He prohibits indecency, the improper, and rebelliousness.... 279.** 196
- 16:96 What is with you runs out, but what is with God subsists. 280.** 232, 490
- 16:97 Whoever does a wholesome deed, male or female, while having faith, We shall surely give him to live a goodly life. 281.** 18, 91, 186, 249, 327, 374, 403, 475
- 16:107 They deemed the life of this world more worthy of love than the next world. 522

**16:110 Then surely thy Lord—toward those who emigrated after they were tormented, then struggled and were patient—surely thy Lord after that is forgiving, ever-merciful. 281**

16:114 And be grateful for the blessings of God, if He it is whom you worship. 186

**16:120-21 Surely Abraham was a community, devoted to God and unswerving, not among the associaters, grateful for His blessings. He chose him and guided him to a straight path. 282**

**16:123 Then We revealed to thee, “Follow the creed of Abraham, an unswerving man.” 282**

**16:125 Invite to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful admonition. 282. 489**

16:126 If you would punish, then punish with the like of that with which you were punished. 197

**16:128 Surely God is with those who are godwary and those who are beautiful-doers. 283. 196, 367**

**17:1 Glory be to Him who took His servant by night from the Holy Mosque to the Farthest Mosque. 284. 43, 155, 234, 281, 292, 344, 374, 386, 397, 421, 482**

**17:2 And We gave Moses the Book, and We made it a guidance for the Children of Israel. 286**

**17:4 And We decreed for the Children of Israel in the Book: “You will surely work corruption in the earth twice and you will become high with great height.” 286**

**17:7 If you do the beautiful, you will have done the beautiful for your own souls, and if you do the ugly, it will be against them. 286**

**17:8 Perhaps your Lord will have mercy upon you. And if you return, We will return. 287**

**17:11 Man supplicates for evil just as he supplicates for good. 287**

17:12 Then We effaced the sign of the night, and We made the sign of the day, giving sight. 17

**17:13 And every man, We have fastened his omen to his neck. And We shall bring forth for him, on the Day of Resurrection, a book he will meet wide open. 287. 224**

**17:14 Read thy book! Thy soul suffices thee today as a reckoner against thee. 288. 419**

17:18 Whosoever desires this hasty world. 179

17:19 Whosoever desires the afterworld and strives after it with proper striving while having faith—those, their striving shall be thanked. 147, 179

**17:23 And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and beautiful doing toward your parents. 288**

17:27 Surely the squanderers are the brothers of Satan. 120

17:37 Walk not in the earth exultantly. 28, 380

17:44 But you do not understand their glorification. 507

17:52 He will invite you, and you will respond to Him. 240

**17:53 And say to My servants that they should say what is more beautiful. 290**

**17:55 And We made some of the prophets more excellent than others. 290. 263**

17:57 They hope for His mercy and fear His chastisement. 115

17:65 As for My servants, thou shalt have no ruling power over them. 513

17:67 Gone astray are those whom you supplicate except Him. 487

**17:70 We indeed honored the children of Adam..., and We made them much more excellent than many of those We created. 291. 157, 161, 200, 250, 273, 399, 459, 544**

17:71 We shall invite all the people by their leader. 240

17:79 And of the night, keep vigil therein as a supererogatory act for thee! ... praiseworthy station. 284, 333, 377

- 17:81 The truth has come, and falsehood has vanished away. 108, 158, 403
- 17:84 Say: "Each acts according to his own manner." 293.** 79, 92, 512
- 17:85 They ask thee about the spirit....** You have been given no knowledge save a little. **293.** 182, 319
- 17:107 Say: "Have faith in it, or do not have faith." Surely those who were given knowledge before it, when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in prostration. 293.** 433
- 17:109 They fall down on their faces weeping. 293**
- 17:110 Call upon God or call upon the All-Merciful. 2
- 18:0 In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful. 295**
- 18:1 Praise belongs to God who sent down the Book to His servant and placed no crookedness therein. 295**
- 18:2-3 They shall have a beautiful wage, remaining therein endlessly. 296**
- 18:5 They say nothing but a lie. 296**
- 18:6 Perhaps thou art consuming thyself with grief in their tracks that they do not have faith in this talk. 296.** 179
- 18:7 Surely We have made all that is on the earth an adornment for it. 296**
- 18:10 When the chevaliers took refuge in the cave and said, "Our Lord, give us mercy from Thee and furnish us with right conduct in our affair." 296**
- 18:11 He sealed their ears in the cave. 300
- 18:13 We recount to thee their story in truth. Surely they were chevaliers who had faith in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance. 297**
- 18:14 And We placed a tie on their hearts when they stood up and said, "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth." 297.** 108, 298, 403
- 18:16 Take refuge in the cave. Your Lord will unfold for you of His mercy and furnish you with kindness in your affair. 298.** 297, 300
- 18:17 Thou wouldst have seen the sun, when it rose, turning aside.... while they were in a broad space in it.... Whomsoever God guides, he is guided, and whomsoever He misguides, you will not find for him a guiding friend. 298. 149, 297, 298, 300
- 18:18 Thou wouldst have thought them awake.... And their dog was stretching its paws at the doorstep. Hadst thou looked down upon them, surely thou wouldst have turned away from them.... 298.** 248, 300, 403
- 18:19 Now send one of you forth with this silver of yours to the city, and let him see which of them has the purest food. 300**
- 18:22 They were three, and the fourth of them was their dog. 506, 557
- 18:23-24 Say not of anything, "I will do it tomorrow," but only, "If God wills." And remember thy Lord when thou forgettest. 300.** 111
- 18:28 And keep thy soul patient with those who supplicate their Lord morning and evening, desiring His face. And let not thine eyes turn away from them.... And do not obey him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance. 94, 179, 228, 307, 317, 355
- 18:30 We leave not to waste the wage of those who do beautiful deeds. 95, 493
- 18:31 silk and brocade. 526
- 18:46 The subsisting things, the wholesome deeds, are better with your Lord in reward, and better in expectation. 232, 264

18:47 And We will muster them such that We leave none of them behind. 515

18:48 They will be presented to their Lord in rows. 541

**18:60 When Moses said to his chevalier, “I will continue on until I reach the meeting place of the two seas.” 301. 297**

18:62 Bring us our food. We have certainly met with weariness.... 71, 203, 301, 533

**18:65 And We taught him knowledge from Us. 302. 153, 277, 433, 489**

**18:67 “Surely thou wilt not be able to bear patiently with me.” 302**

18:71 Have you made a hole in it to drown its folk? 303

18:77 If you wanted, you could have taken a wage for it. 363, 465

18:78 This is separation between me and you. 363, 465

18:79 I desired to damage it, and behind them was a king. 303

18:81 We desired. 303

18:82 So thy Lord desired that they should reach their maturity. 303

18:104 Their effort was misguided in the life of this world, and they were reckoning that they were doing beautiful artisanry. 8, 383

18:105 On the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign them no weight. 191

18:107 Those who have faith and do wholesome deeds—the Gardens of Firdaws shall be theirs as hospitality. 434

**18:110 I am a mortal like you.... Whoever hopes for the encounter with his Lord, let him do wholesome deeds. 303. 233, 413**

**19:1 Kāf Hā’ Yā’ ‘Ayn Şād. 305**

**19:2 The mention of thy Lord’s mercy to His servant Zachariah. 307**

**19:3 When he supplicated his Lord secretly. 307**

19:23 And the birth pangs took her to the trunk of a date palm. 112

19:28 O sister of Aaron! Your father was not a man of ugliness. 112

19:30 Surely I am the servant of God—He gave me the Book.... 112, 349

**19:39 Warn them of the day of remorse. 307**

19:41 Surely he was sincerely truthful, a prophet. 434

19:48 And I will withdraw from you and what you call upon apart from God. 542

19:51 Surely he was purifier/purified and he was a messenger, and prophet. 38

19:52 And We brought him near as a confidant. 7, 109, 204, 421

19:54 Surely he was truthful in the promise. 434

**19:65 The Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between the two. So worship Him, and be patient in His worship. Dost thou know any named by His name? 308. 277**

19:71 And none of you there is but will enter it. 74, 351, 552

**19:85 The day We shall muster the godway to the All-Merciful in droves. 308. 238, 240, 292**

19:93 None is there in the heavens and the earth that comes not to the All-Merciful as a servant. 155

19:96 Surely those who have faith and do wholesome deeds, to them the All-Merciful will assign love. 309

20:2 We did not send down the Qur’an upon thee for thee to be wretched. 288

- 20:5 The All-Merciful sat on the Throne. 311. 200**
- 20:7 Even if thou speakest aloud, yet surely He knows the secret and the most hidden. 311**
- 20:8 God, there is no god but He. To Him belong the most beautiful names. 312**
- 20:9-10 Hast thou received the story of Moses when he saw a fire? 312**
- 20:12 Surely I am thy Lord. Take off thy shoes! 312**
- 20:14 Surely I am God; there is no god but I. 174
- 20:17 What is that in thy right hand, O Moses? 312**
- 20:18 It is my staff. 312
- 20:19 Throw it down, O Moses! 312
- 20:21 Take it and fear not! 285, 312
- 20:22 Clasp thy hand to thy side. It will come forth white without ugliness, as another sign. 313**
- 20:23 That We may show thee some of Our greatest signs. 313**
- 20:26 My Lord, open my breast and ease my task! 367
- 20:39 I cast upon thee love from Me. 205, 286
- 20:40 And We tried thee with trials. 313. 375**
- 20:41 I chose thee for Myself. 314. 20, 138, 204**
- 20:44 Speak to him with soft words. Perhaps he will remember or fear. 123, 368
- 20:46 I hear and I see. 416
- 20:55 From it We created you and to it We shall return you. 314**
- 20:73 And God is better and more subsisting. 473
- 20:74-75 Whoever comes to his Lord as an offender will have Gehenna, wherein he will neither die nor live, and whoever comes to Him faithful.... 315**
- 20:76 Therein dwelling forever; that is the recompense of those who purify themselves. 316**
- 20:82 Surely I am all-forgiving toward the one who repents and has faith and does wholesome deeds, and then is guided. 316**
- 20:83 “And what has made thee hurry from thy people, O Moses!” 317**
- 20:84 He said, “They are close upon my footsteps, and I hurried to Thee, my Lord, that Thou mayest approve.” 317**
- 20:98 Your god is only God, other than whom there is no god. 424
- 20:105-6 They ask thee about the mountains. Say, “My Lord will scatter them as ashes.” 318. 74**
- 20:110 They encompass Him not in knowledge. 290, 344
- 20:114 High indeed is God, the King, the Real. 311
- 20:115 And We made covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found in him no resoluteness. 318. 195, 317, 319, 428, 508**
- 20:121-22 And Adam disobeyed his Lord, so went astray. Then his Lord chose him, so He turned toward him and guided. 319. 173, 193, 194, 428, 526**
- 20:124 And whosoever turns away from My remembrance, he shall have a life of narrowness.... 320**
- 20:130 And in the hours of the night glorify, and at the ends of the day, that perhaps thou mayest approve. 472

**20:131** Extend not thine eyes to what We have given pairs of them to enjoy, the flower of this world's life.... 321

**20:132** And command thy family to the prayer, and have patience therein. We ask thee for no provision.... 322. 148

**21:19** To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth. Those who are with Him are not too proud to worship Him.... 324

**21:23** He will not be questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned. 324

**21:24** Or have they taken gods apart from Him? Say, "Bring your proof." 325

21:26 Nay, but they are honored servants. 405, 436

21:28 And they are apprehensive in fear of Him. 476

**21:30** Have not those who disbelieve seen that the heavens and the earth were all sewn up..., and from water We made every living thing? 325

**21:33** And He it is who created night and day, and the sun and the moon, each swimming in a sphere. 326

**21:34-35** We have not assigned everlastingness to any mortal before thee. If thou diest, will they be everlasting? Every soul shall taste death. 326

**21:37** Man was created of haste. I shall show you My signs, so seek not to hasten Me. 327. 194

21:51 We gave Abraham his rectitude from before. 282

21:60 They said, "We heard a chevalier mention them; he is called Abraham." 297

21:63 No, it was the large one of them that did it. 397

**21:69** We said, "O fire, be coolness and safety!" 327. 44

**21:78** And David and Solomon, when they gave judgment about the tillage. And We bore witness to their judgment. 328. 14

**21:79** So We made Solomon understand this, and to both We gave judgment and knowledge. 328

21:80 And We taught him the artisanry of garments for you. 489

**21:87-88** And Dhu'l-Nūn, when he went forth wrathful... "There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee! Surely I am one of the wrongdoers." So We responded to him.... 329. 82, 299, 423

**21:89** And Zachariah, when he supplicated his Lord, "My Lord, leave me not solitary." 330

**21:90** They were vying in good works and they were supplicating Us in eagerness and dread, and they were reverent toward Us. 330. 27, 307, 381

**21:101** As for those to whom the most beautiful has preceded from Us. 331. 163, 339, 424

**21:103** The greatest terror shall not make them sorrow, and the angels will receive them: "This is the day that you were promised." 331. 78, 240

**21:107** We sent thee only as a mercy to the worlds. 332. 16, 174, 234, 281, 344, 471

**22:1** O people, be wary of your Lord—surely the quaking of the Hour is a tremendous thing. 334. 225, 472

**22:5** O people, if you are in doubt about the Uprising, surely We created you of dust, then of a sperm drop, then of a blood clot, then of a lump of flesh, fully created and not fully created, that We might make clear to you. 335

**22:23** They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and pearls, and their clothes therein will be silk. 336

**22:24** And they will be guided unto the goodly in speech. 336

- 22:26** When We built for Abraham the place of the House: “Associate nothing with Me, and make My house pure for those who circumambulate....” 336
- 22:46 Surely it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts in the breasts. 258
- 22:52 But that Satan cast into his wish when he was wishing. 263
- 22:61** That is because God makes the night pass into the day and makes the day pass into the night, and God is hearing, seeing. 337. 17
- 22:62** That is because God is the Real and what they supplicate other than Him is the unreal, and because God is the high, the great. 337
- 22:63** Hast thou not seen that God sends down water from heaven, and then the earth becomes green? 337
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- 22:77** O you who have faith, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord! 338
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- 23:12 We created man from an extraction of clay. 192, 194, 489, 548
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- 23:17** We indeed created above you seven paths and We were not heedless of creation. 341
- 23:18** And We sent down from heaven water in a measure and settled it in the earth, and surely We are powerful over taking it away. 341
- 23:19** And therewith We made grow up for you gardens of palms and grape vines. 342
- 23:29 If you desire God and His Messenger. 179
- 23:52** Surely this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord, so be wary of Me. 342
- 23:55-56** Do they think that We aid them with possessions and children only that We may hurry good things to them? 342
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- 33:28 If you desire the life of this world and its adornment. 179
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- 33:35 Surely submitted men and submitted women, faithful men and faithful women... God has prepared for them forgiveness and a tremendous wage. 394**
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- 36:31 Have they not seen how many generations We destroyed before them? 414**
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- 37:83 And surely among his party was Abraham. 421**
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- 37:105 Thou hast been truthful to the vision. 42
- 37:107 And We ransomed him with a tremendous sacrifice. 148, 422
- 37:139 Jonah too was one of the envoys. 422**
- 37:140 When he ran away to the laden ship. 148
- 37:164 None of us there is but has a known station. 424. 482**
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- 38:39 This is Our gift, so bestow. 328
- 38:40 Surely he shall have nearness to Us, and a beautiful return. 37
- 38:42 Stamp thy foot: here is a cool washing place and drink. 148, 161
- 38:46 Surely We purified them with that which is pure. 37
- 38:71 When thy Lord said to the angels, “I am creating a mortal of clay.” 428**
- 38:75 what I created with My two hands. 526
- 38:76 I am better than he: Thou hast created me of fire and Thou hast created him of clay. 428. 161, 193, 336, 378, 467**
- 38:78 Upon thee shall be My curse until the Day of Doom. 185, 428, 510
- 38:85 I shall surely fill Gehenna with thee and whosoever follows thee, all together. 510
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39:10 Surely the patient shall be paid their wage in full, without reckoning. 465

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**39:33 And he who brought truthfulness and he who assented to it, those are the godwary. 434.** 484

39:36 Does God not suffice His servant? 472

39:38 God suffices me. 43

39:42 God takes the souls at the time of their death. 391, 543

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39:61 God will deliver those who were godwary in their place of security; ugliness will not touch them, neither shall they sorrow. 129

39:65 If thou associatest, thy deeds shall surely fail. 299

39:69 And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord. 181, 249, 319

39:71 I am creating a mortal from clay. 548

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**40:1 Hā' Mīm. 439**

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- 40:19 He knows the treachery of the eyes and what the breasts conceal. 33, 167
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- 40:41 O my people! What is it with me that I invite you to salvation and you invite me to the Fire? 119
- 40:60 Your Lord has said, "Supplicate Me; I will respond to you." 26, 63, 127, 200
- 40:64 God is He who made the earth for you a settledness and the heaven a building. And He formed you, so He made your forms beautiful.... 442.** 100, 161, 306, 404, 544
- 40:65 He is the Living, there is no god but He. 443**
- 41:0 In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful. 444**
- 41:1 Hā' Mīm. 444**
- 41:2 A sending down from the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful. 445**
- 41:10 He set in it unshakables from above it and He blessed it. 445**
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- 41:30 Those who have said, "Our Lord is God," then gone straight—the angels will descend upon them saying, "Fear not and grieve not, and rejoice...." 445.** 19, 27, 52, 218, 265, 297, 341, 399
- 41:31 We are your friends in this world's life and in the next world. 447.** 89, 192, 309, 391, 464
- 41:37 And of His signs are the night and the day, the sun and the moon. Do not prostrate yourselves to the sun and the moon, but prostrate yourselves to God, who created them. 447.** 96
- 41:44 It is a guidance and a healing for those who have faith. 11
- 41:46 Whoso does a wholesome deed, it is for himself. 449
- 41:53 We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in their souls until it is clear to them that He is the Real. 449.** 210, 313, 342, 530, 547
- 42:5 The angels are glorifying the praise of their Lord and asking forgiveness for those in the earth. 406
- 42:11 The Creator of the heavens and the earth, He made for you from yourselves pairs and from your cattle pairs.... Nothing is as His likeness, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing. 451.** 25, 214, 479, 507, 560
- 42:13 He has set down for you as the religion that with which He counseled Noah.... Uphold the religion, and scatter not regarding it. 108, 371, 421
- 42:19 God is gentle to His servants. 452.** 394, 419
- 42:20 Whosoever desires the tillage of the next world.... Whosoever desires the tillage of this world.... 179
- 42:25 He it is who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons the ugly deeds. 330, 369
- 42:26 And He responds to those who have faith and do wholesome deeds, and He increases them in His bounty. 453**
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- 42:40 The recompense of an ugly deed is an ugly deed the like of it. And whoso pardons and sets aright—his wage is upon God. 197
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- 43:6-7 How many a prophet We sent among the ancients, but a prophet never came to them except that they mocked him. 455**
- 43:8 So We destroyed those stronger than they in seizing, and the example of the first ones passed away. 456**

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43:15 Surely man is a clear ingrate. 360

43:18 What, one who is reared amidst ornaments? 173

43:35 The next world with thy Lord belongs to the godwary. 80

43:45 And ask those We sent. 472

43:51 Does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me? 467

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**43:68 O My servants, no fear is upon you today, neither will you sorrow. 457. 403**

43:70 You and your spouses, made happy. 417

**43:71 For them will be brought around platters and cups of gold. Therein will be whatever the souls hunger for and gives pleasure to the eyes. 457**

43:86 Except those who have borne witness to the truth while they are knowing. 339, 452

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**44:32 We chose them, with a knowledge, above the worlds. 459. 209**

**45:3 Surely in the heavens and the earth are signs for the faithful. 461**

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**45:5 And the difference of night and day, and the provision that God sends down from heaven... are signs for a people who use intelligence. 461**

45:13 He subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all together, from Him. 20

**45:18 Then We set thee on a wide road of the command, so follow it, and do not follow the caprices of those who know not. 462**

**45:19 Surely they will not make thee unneedy of God in anything. 462**

**45:21 Or do those who commit ugly deeds reckon that We will make them like those who have faith...? Ugly is what they reckon! 462**

**45:23 Who then will guide them after God? 462**

**45:34 Today We forget you just as you forgot the encounter of this day of yours; your refuge is the Fire. 462**

**46:2 The sending down of the book is from God, the Exalted, the Wise. 464**

**46:3 We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between the two except with the rightful due. 464**

46:29 When they were in [the Qur'an's] presence, they said, "Give ear!" 243

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47:15 Therein are rivers of water unstaling. 441

47:19 Know that there is no god but God. 433

47:37 If He asks you for them, then presses you, you are niggardly, and He brings out your rancor. 120

- 47:38 And God is the Unneedy, and you are the poor. 466. 408**
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