

A DETAILING OF THE TWO CREATIONS AND THE ATTAINMENT OF THE TWO HAPPINESSES

*Tafşıl Al-Nash'atayn
wa Tahşıl Al-Sa'adatayn*

Al-Raghib Al-Asfahani



THE ROYAL ISLAMIC STRATEGIC STUDIES CENTRE

ENGLISH ISLAM SERIES • BOOK NUMBER 33

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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Abu Al-Qasim Al-Hussein bin
Muhammad Al-Mufaddal
Al-Raghib Al-Asfahani

Translated by Lamya Al-Khraisha



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by Abu Al-Qasim Al-Hussein bin Muhammad

Al-Mufaddal Al-Raghib Al-Asfahani

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Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	vii
CHAPTER I: <i>Man's Knowledge of his Soul</i>	5
CHAPTER II: <i>Mentioning the Different Genuses of Existent Things and Man's Position In Relation To Them</i>	12
CHAPTER III: <i>The Elements by which Man has Come into Existence</i>	16
CHAPTER IV: <i>The Potentialities that are Gathered in Man</i>	22
CHAPTER V: <i>How Man is Created One Thing After Another Until He Becomes a Complete Human Being</i>	25
CHAPTER VI: <i>Man's Manifestation Amidst Emblematic Existent Things and His Particularization With Some of Their Power Little by Little</i>	31
CHAPTER VII: <i>What is the Essence of Human Beings?</i>	35
CHAPTER VIII: <i>Why Human Beings are Uniquely Created for Both Abodes</i>	39
CHAPTER IX: <i>Analogies of the Essence of Human Beings and their Conceptualization</i>	41
CHAPTER X: <i>Human Beings are the Purpose of the Entire World which was Created for Them</i>	52
CHAPTER XI: <i>The Purpose for which Human Beings were Created</i>	56
CHAPTER XII: <i>The Disparities Between Human Beings and their Different Stations</i>	71
CHAPTER XIII: <i>The Reasons for Disparities Between People</i>	76
CHAPTER XIV: <i>Explaining Prophetic Lineage and Why it is Preferred over the Rest of Creation</i>	82
CHAPTER XV: <i>How God Guides Everything to its Benefit</i>	86
CHAPTER XVI: <i>Man's Happiness & his Inclination Towards It</i>	90
CHAPTER XVII: <i>Man's State in this World and What He needs to take as Provision from It</i>	101
CHAPTER XVIII: <i>The Relationship Between Intelligence and Sacred Law and Their Need for Each Other</i>	110

CHAPTER XIX: <i>On the Virtue of Sacred Law</i>	115
CHAPTER XX: <i>Clarifying that the One Who Does not Practice Sacred Law and Worship his Lord Is Not Human</i>	123
CHAPTER XXI: <i>What is Related to Sacred Law From the Actions of Human Beings</i>	129
CHAPTER XXII: <i>How to Achieve Worship</i>	132
CHAPTER XXIII: <i>The Types of Worship From Knowledge and Action</i>	134
CHAPTER XXIV: <i>The Purpose of Worship Being the Purification of the Soul and Bringing About its Health</i>	143
CHAPTER XXV: <i>Clarifying the Sicknesses and Impurities that Can Only be Removed by Sacred Law</i>	148
CHAPTER XXVI: <i>The Potentialities Whose Sicknesses and Impurities Must be Removed and the Meanings Achieved Through That</i>	155
CHAPTER XXVII: <i>Man is Naturally Disposed to Rectify His Soul</i>	157
CHAPTER XXVIII: <i>Why Vice is Prevalent in Man and Why He Delays Practicing Virtue</i>	161
CHAPTER XXIX: <i>People's States and Stations in Acquiring Praiseworthy and Blameworthy Actions and Their Means</i>	165
CHAPTER XXX: <i>How Human Beings Turn Back from the Path of Both Good and Evil</i>	170
CHAPTER XXXI: <i>The Extent Possible to Acquire Happiness</i>	180
CHAPTER XXXII: <i>Asserting the Certitude and Virtue of Death and what Follows of Happiness</i>	191
CHAPTER XXXIII: <i>The Virtue of Human Beings When They are Honoured Above the Angels</i>	201
<i>Endnotes</i>	203

INTRODUCTION

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful
On Him we depend, He is sufficient for us
and an excellent Guardian is He*

All praise is to God ﷻ who sent His servant with prophecy, and Who taught us through the tongue of His Prophet ﷺ how to praise Him and gave us desire for what is with Him. We ask Him to give benedictions upon our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his family, and to guide us with the clearest of proofs to the most successful of paths, with the strongest of arguments on the clearest of roads.

So said Abu Al-Qasim Al-Raghib:

This is an epistle on the Detailing of the Two Creations and the Attainment of the Two Happinesses.

As for the two creations, one of them is mentioned in God's ﷻ Words:

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

*For verily you have known the first creation,
why then will you not remember?*

(Al-Waqi'ah, 56:62)

And the second creation [the Afterlife] is indicated in God's ﷻ Words:

ثُمَّ اللَّهُ يَبْدَأُ النَّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَةَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*Then God will create the subsequent creation. Surely God
is powerful to do everything.*

(Al-'Ankabut, 29:20)

As for the two happinesses, one of them is mentioned in God's ﷻ Words:

أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِي الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ

Remember My favour wherewith I favoured you.

(Al-Baqarah, 2:40)

And the second happiness is mentioned in God's ﷻ Words:

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سَعِدُوا ففِي الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا

شَاءَ رَبُّكَ عَطَاءٌ غَيْرَ مَجْدُودٍ

But as for those who [by virtue of their past deeds] will have been blest with happiness, [they shall live] in paradise, therein to abide as long as the heavens and the earth endure—unless your Sustainer wills it otherwise—as a gift unceasing. (Hud, 11:108)

I penned this for my honourable teacher, God bless him, when I saw him concerned about acquiring the humanity that will lead him to the two happinesses. May God ﷻ help him to benefit from them until he acquires both of them, guarding their meanings, and mindful of their particularities.

It is almost as if this word of ours, 'human being' (*insan*), is merely an utterance about a meaning that does not exist—a name for an unknown animal, like a wonderful phoenix ('*anqaa' muqhrrib*); and other such names that have no meaning. It is like what God ﷻ says about the attributes of the idols that are called gods:

إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَءَابَاؤُكُمْ مِمَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ

*These are nothing but names which you have named,
you and your fathers. God has not revealed
any warrant for them.*

(Al-Najm, 53:23)

And God ﷻ says:

مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا

*You do not worship, apart from Him anything
but [mere] names that you have named.*

(Yusuf, 12:40)

God made them names without there being a thing named (*bila musamma*). I do not mean by the ‘human being’ (*insan*) every animal that stands upright and has broad fingernails and smooth skin, and smiles, and those who:

Speak but speak out of their own desire (*hawa*).

Learn but they learned what hurt them, and did not profit them (Al-Baqarah, 2:102).

Know but know [merely] an outward aspect of the life of this world; but they, of the Hereafter, they are oblivious (Al-Rum, 30:7).

Write the Scripture with their hands then say, ‘This is from God’ that they may sell it for a small price (Al-Baqarah, 2:79).

Dispute with falsehood that they may refute thereby the truth (Al-Kahf, 18:56).

Believe but in *al-Jibt* and *al-Taghout* (Al-Nisa’, 4:51).

Worship, but they worship, besides God that which can neither hurt them, nor profit them (Yunus, 10:18).

Plot with discourse displeasing to Him (Al-Nisa', 4:108).

Come to perform the prayer but when they stand up to pray, they stand up lazily and to be seen by people, and they do not remember God save a little (Al-Nisa', 4:142).

Pray, but are of those who are heedless of their prayers (Al-Ma'un, 107:5).

Remember, but [even] when they are reminded, they are not mindful (Al-Saffat, 37:13).

Invoke but who call on another god along with God (Al-Furqan, 25:68)

Expend but do not expend without their being reluctant (Al-Tawbah, 9:54)

Judge but desire the judgement of the Age of Ignorance (Al-Ma'idah, 5:50).

Create but create calumny (ifkan).

For those, even if they are in the material form (*al-surah al-mahsusah*) human beings, in the intelligible form (*al-surah al-ma'qulah*), they are neither people (*nas*) nor resemble people (*nasnas*). As Amir al-Mu'mineen, Ali bin Abi Talib ؑ said: 'O you who resemble men but are not men.'

Indeed, they are the humans mentioned in God's ﷻ Words:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيْطَانِ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ
إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ ۗ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ

And so We have appointed to every Prophet an enemy, devils of mankind and jinn who inspire fine speech to each other in delusion; yet, had your Lord willed, they would never have done it. So leave them with what they fabricate. (Al-An'am, 6:112)

I do not consider Al-Buhturi's words far-fetched when he said that if we consider the character of human beings rather than their forms ...

Nothing remains from humanity except these remnants
you see the forms but they are not real

Nor are far-fetched the words of he who said:

The majority of people, if you really think about it
are like donkeys, dogs and wolves

Do not think that these lines of poetry are just poetic statements or figurative expressions. God ﷻ says:

أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ^٤
إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

Or do you suppose that most of them listen or comprehend? They are but as the cattle—nay, but they are further astray from the way.

(Al-Furqan, 25:44)

I have explained in this epistle the summation of existent things (*jumlat al-mawjudat*), and the place of human beings in the midst of them: where they began, how they were formed, and how they end. And what has been given to him of the two happinesses in both abodes through acquiring one's humanity, and I show you the road to it.

I begin by reminding of man's obligation to know himself, for to know that you should know something is a type of knowledge. Amongst the knowledges is knowing that

you do not know, and man knowing his own ignorance is one of the two knowledges.

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه said: ‘Whoever does not find some sense of the deficiency of his ignorance in his intellect, and does not feel the humiliation of his disobedience in his heart, and does not see the place of need (*al-khullah*) in his tongue when it grows tired while debating with someone—this type of person will never be able to free himself from low things. And he will not rise above his incapacitated state, nor will he be concerned about discerning between proofs and obfuscations.’

To the degree with which someone knows the benefit of a thing, he will be determined in seeking it, and he will be patient with bearing the hardships in its acquisition. God ﷻ says when describing the one who is ignorant of the benefit of what he seeks:

وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ— خُبْرًا

And how can you bear with that whereof you have never been informed?

(*Al-Kahf*, 18:68)

So know, O virtuous one, the virtue of being human, and what has been prepared of success for the one who has purified himself. God ﷻ says:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

Successful indeed will be the one who purifies it.

(*Al-Shams*, 91:9)

As the poem says:

These virtues are not like two vessels of milk
mixed with water then become urine

Do not be worried about the journey [in attaining what you seek]. And do not be deluded by the actions of the one whose garments and houses impress you. As the poem says:

For once you get past the clothes
you will see there is nothing there

Indeed you will see that he is a servant of stones, or mud, or animals, or a vehicle. As the Prophet ﷺ said censoring this: **‘Wretched is the slave of the dirham, wretched is the slave of the dinar, perish and fall back and get sick again. And if he is pricked by a thorn, may the tweezers fail.’**¹ For indeed you are in the vigours of your youth and with your limbs still nimble.

Know that it is not appropriate for anybody who has real aspiration (*himmah*) to be content to be an animal when God has given him the ability to become a human. Particularly when God has done so much for him in his creation and character and has given him those who raised him and did well in raising him. And who, through God’s providential care, removed from him, once he reached adulthood, any weakness and playthings. Nor should he be content to be human when God has given him the ability to become an angel; or to be an angel when God has given him the ability to be a king, *in a seat of truth, in the presence of a Sovereign who determines all things ... (Al-Qamar, 54:55)*; with the angels at his service. God ﷻ says:

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ * سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ

*and the angels shall enter to them from every gate. /
Peace be upon you for your patience'. How excellent is
the sequel of the [heavenly] Abode!*

(Al-Ra'd, 13:23-24)

May God ﷻ give us success to be like that and may He not make us among the lazy ones; the ones He describes in His Words:

لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَسَفَرًا قَاصِدًا لَاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَكِنْ بَعُدَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الشُّقَّةُ

*Had it been a near gain, and an easy journey,
they would have followed you; but the distance
was too great for them*

(Al-Tawbah, 9:42)

May God make us and you from the believers who God ﷻ describes in His Words:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ

*He it is Who sent down the spirit of Peace into the hearts
of the believers, that they might add faith to their faith*

(Al-Fath, 48:4)

And God's ﷻ Words:

أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُمْ بِرُوحٍ مِنْهُ

*[For] those He has inscribed faith upon their hearts and
reinforced them with a spirit from Him.*

(Al-Mujadilah, 58:22)

And may we not be like the people who are fooled by a mirage in a plain which the thirsty man supposes to be water until he comes to it and finds it to be nothing (Al-Nur, 24:39).

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DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK

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MAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF HIS SOUL



The people of wisdom (*hukama'*) once said: 'The first thing that is necessary for the human being is to know his soul.' And they also said: 'The first thing that is necessary for him is to know God ﷻ.' There is no contradiction in these two statements. They meant with 'the first thing', when they said knowledge of the soul (*al-nafs*), the first from the perspective of logical order. And they meant by 'the first thing', when they said the knowledge of God ﷻ, the first in terms of the higher virtue and honour of that knowledge. For indeed knowledge of God ﷻ is the best and most honourable of knowledges.

And in knowledge of the soul there is an awareness of several things:

First: by knowing oneself one can achieve knowledge of other than the self; but if you are ignorant of your own soul then you are ignorant of everything else.

Second: the human soul is the junction of all existent things (*mawjudat*), as we will clarify later—thus, he who knows the human soul knows all existent things. Thus God ﷻ says:

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا
بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَائِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكٰفِرُونَ

Have they not contemplated themselves? God did not create the heavens and the earth, and what is between them, except with the truth and an appointed term. But indeed many people disbelieve in the encounter with their Lord.

(Al-Rum, 30:8)

This verse calls to our attention the fact that had they reflected deeply (*tadabbaru*) on their souls and knew them, they would know through that knowledge the reality of all existent things: the permanent and the impermanent. And they would know the truth of the heavens and the earth. And they would not deny the Resurrection (*al-ba'ath*), which is the meeting with their Lord, only because they failed to think deeply about their souls. God ﷻ says:

سَرِيهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ

We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth.

(Fussilat, 41:53)

And God ﷻ says:

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ ءَايَاتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ * وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ

And in the earth there are signs for those who know with certainty and in your souls. Will you not then perceive?

(Al-Dhariyat, 51: 20-21)

Third: whoever knows his soul knows the world. And the one who knows the world is in the category of the one who is witnessing to God ﷻ as He is creating the heavens and the earth. He would not be like the ignorant ingrates whom God has deprived of this station. God ﷻ says about them:

مَا أَشْهَدْتُهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
وَمَا كُنْتُ مَتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا

I did not make them a witness to the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor to their own creation. Nor do I take misleaders as [My] support. (Al-Kahf, 18:51)

Fourth: whoever knows his spirit (*ruhuhu*), will know the spiritual world and its permanence. Just as he who knows his body knows the material world and its evanescence. Thus, he will know the insignificance of impermanent things; and he will know the nobility and honour of the enduring things (*al-baqiyat al-salihah*).

Fifth: He who knows his soul, will know the hidden enemies in his soul. The Prophet ﷺ referred to this: ‘Your greatest enemy that you have is your own soul between your two sides.’² So he seeks refuge in God ﷻ from it, and from its evil. The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘*Allahumma*, inspire me with my prudence (*rushdi*) and give me refuge from the evil of my own soul.’³ And he ﷺ said: ‘Do not leave me to myself even for the blink of an eye or I will perish.’⁴

Whoever knows his latent enemies and their machinations, and the nature of what incites them, that person will be capable of guarding against them. And he will be able to struggle against them in order to be worthy of what God ﷻ has promised those who struggle in the way of God. If he does not know his latent enemies, then it is easy for his enemy to appear to him, which is his own desire (*al-hawa*) in the form of reason (*al-aql*); and it will make falsehood appear to be truth. The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Desire is a *shaytan*.’⁵ The Prophet ﷺ also said: ‘It [desire] is worshipped as a god instead of God.’⁶

It was narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘No god has been worshipped on the earth more odious to God than desire.’⁷ God ﷻ says:

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ

*Have you then seen him who has taken as his god
his [own] desire (Al-Jathiyah, 45:23)*

Sixth: whoever knows his soul will become good at governing it. And whoever is good at governing his soul will be good at governing the world, and will become among God’s ﷻ vicegerents who He mentions in the following verse:

وَيَسْتَخْلَفَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

*and make you successors in the land.
(Al-A’raf, 7:129)*

And he will become among the kings that God ﷻ mentions in the following verse:

وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا

*and established you as kings
(Al-Ma’idah, 5:20)*

Seventh: whoever knows his soul will not find a fault in others without seeing that fault in himself, either manifest or latent like fire in flint. He is not a fault-finder (*hammazan*) or a gossip (*lammazan*) or a criticizer (*‘ayyaban*). Any fault that he finds in others he will find in himself. And he who sees his own faults will be among those who the Prophet ﷺ prayed for when he ﷻ said: ‘God has mercy on him whose own fault preoccupied him from the faults of others.’⁸

It is difficult to know one's own faults, because people love themselves. One's love of one's self will blind him to its faults. The Prophet ﷺ said: **'Your love of a thing will make you blind and deaf.'** And someone who is blind and deaf to something's faults might make him enamoured (*yu'jab*) of it.

There is no harm worse for a human being than to be enamoured of himself. As some of the people of wisdom said: 'The liar is at a great distance from the truth, and the one who admires himself (*al-muraa'i*) is in a worse condition than the liar, because the liar lies only with his words, but the one who admires himself lies with his words and his deeds.

And they said: 'And worse than both of them is the one who is enamoured of himself (*al-mu'jab bi nafsihi*). Because the liar and the one who admires himself might be of benefit to people, but there is no benefit at all from the one who is enamoured of himself. And because you can exhort the first two, and that exhortation might have a beneficial effect on them because of their knowledge of their own souls. But the one who is enamoured of himself due to his ignorance of his own soul thinks your exhortation is idle talk.'

Eighth: whoever knows his soul knows God ﷻ. It has been related that there is no book that God has revealed except that there is something in it akin to: 'Know yourself, O human being, and you will know your Lord.' And this is the meaning of the verse:

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ

We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth

(*Fussilat*, 41:53)

There are three interpretations of these words:

The first is that the knowledge of your soul will enable you to reach the knowledge of God ﷻ. In the same way that we say: ‘know Arabic and you will be able to know jurisprudence.’ That is, knowing Arabic is a means to enable you to know jurisprudence even though there are intermediaries between them.

The second meaning is: if knowledge of the self is achieved, then knowledge of God ﷻ is achieved with no impediment (*fasil*). It is the same meaning as: ‘when the sun rises, there is light.’ In other words, the light is coupled with the rising of the sun; it is not delayed in time.

The third meaning is: that knowledge of God ﷻ is not firm unless the soul is known, because if you know your soul in reality, you will know the world. And if you know the world, you will know that it is created (*muhdath*), and you will know that there has to be a Creator (*Muhdith*) that does not resemble the created thing in any way, shape or form. That is the extent (*ghayat*) of your knowledge of God ﷻ.

They said: and the meaning of this is indicated by the words of the Commander of the Faithful ﷺ: ‘the intellect (*aql*) is for establishing our servanthood to God, not to realize (*idrak*) the reality of our Lord.’ He ﷺ said in verse:

The how-ness of your soul is not known to anyone
How could you know Al-Jabbar in His eternity?
He is the One who began everything
So how can He be understood by one who is a
created soul?

And he also said:

The inability to know God is knowledge
The attempt to penetrate the mystery of His Essence
is shirk
And in the hidden aspirations of creation are many
mysteries
that jinn and angels are incapable of comprehending
From Him to Him is guidance
And the *wali* of Allah is the one who will arrive

And Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq رضي الله عنه, said: ‘O He Whose extent
of knowing Him is to fall short of knowing Him.’

And God ﷻ says:

نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَاَنْسَاهُمْ اَنْفُسَهُمْ

*those who forget God, so that He makes them forget
their own souls. (Al-Hashr, 59:19)*

Reminding us that if they knew their souls, they would
know God ﷻ. But they were ignorant of God and this
ignorance indicated their ignorance of their souls; and God
knows best.

CHAPTER II

MENTIONING THE DIFFERENT GENUSES OF EXISTENT THINGS AND MAN'S POSITION IN RELATION TO THEM



Know that the Creator is necessarily existing because He ﷻ is not contingent on anything else and He is the cause of every existent thing. And every existing thing is from Him and through Him ﷻ.

There are two types of existent things (*al-mawjudat*): the celestial intelligibles (*al-ma'qulat al-'ulwiyyah*) and the terrestrial sensibles (*al-mahsusat al-sufliyyah*). He ﷻ made the celestial intelligibles existent before the terrestrial sensibles. It has been related that: "The first thing that God ﷻ created was the Pen, and then the Tablet, and He ﷻ said: "Write what is going to be existent (*ka'in*) until the End of Time."¹⁰

It is also related that the Prophet ﷺ said: "The first thing God ﷻ created was the intellect (*al-aql*). And He said to it: "Come," and it came; then He said to it: "Go," so it went. Then God said: "By My power (*'izzati*) and My majesty (*jalali*), I did not create a creation more honourable (*akram*) to me than you. With you I take, with you I give, and upon you is My reward and My punishment."¹¹

What is meant by the intellect (*al-aql*) here is not the human intellect; rather, it refers to a noble essence (*jawhar*

sharif) from which human intellects emanate. Some of the philosophers call it the First Intellect (*al-aql al-awwal*). And some of the philosophers said that the intellect here refers to the aforementioned Pen in the previous tradition; and God knows best.

After that God ﷻ made existent all the heavens (*al-sama'*) and the immaterial substances (*al-ruhaniyyat*) which are neither too proud to worship God nor do they weary of it. His ﷻ making all of these things existent is by way of unparalleled creativity (*ibdaa'*). **Creativity is:** to bring a thing into existence without any preexistent thing.

Then He ﷻ created the four elements (*al-arkaan al-arba'a*): heat; cold; moisture; dryness; the non-living things (*al-jamadat*); the living things (*al-namiyat*), and the animals (*al-hayawanat*). Then He ﷻ completed creation with the human form. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'God ﷻ created Sunday like this and Monday like this' until he ﷻ said: '**And He created human beings on Friday at the end of the day.**'¹²

So when we speak about creation, most of the time it is said about making a thing existent from a thing that came before it, such as God ﷻ creating human beings from earth, which necessitates a composite (*tarkeeb*). Thus God ﷻ says:

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

And of all things We created pairs that perhaps you might remember (Al-Dhariyat, 51:49)

And as for composite things, this is referred to in God's ﷻ Words:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَمْ أَنْبَأْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيمٍ

Consider they the earth, how much We caused to develop in and on it of every generous pair? (Al-Shu'ara, 26:7)

And know that every thing from unprecedented creations (*al-mubda'at*) are complete with absolutely no deficiency in them. If there were any deficiency, it would indicate a defect in the One Who originated them (*Mubdi'ih*) and made them. As for the created one (*makbluq*) who is a composite (*murakkab*), he may have deficiency, but the deficiency comes not from the One Who created him and made him composite, but is of (*'aridan*) what he was composited from.

This is why the creations from higher things (*al-mubda'at al-'ulwiyyah*) are free from corrupted things in them. Rather, they stay in their [pure] state, until God ﷻ ends the world.

The human being is two human beings:

One of them is Adam who is the father of humanity, so he is to human beings the seed from which others were created. God ﷻ took it upon Himself to bring him into existence, and to raise him and to teach him. God ﷻ says:

مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِإِيْدِي

What prevents you from prostrating before that which I have created with My own hands. (Sad, 38:75)

And God ﷻ says:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا

*And He taught Adam the names, all of them.
(Al-Baqarah, 2:31)*

And the second are his children, He, Al-Bari ﷻ, brought them into existence also, but He made their creation and nurturing and education by means both material [bodily] and immaterial [spiritual].

The material [bodily] is the parents.

And the immaterial [spiritual] is the angels who direct affairs for good or ill (*al-mudbirat wa al-muqassimat*). They undertake raising him and bringing him up. As is related in a tradition: ‘The child will be for 40 days a drop of semen (*nutfah*), then a clot (*‘alaqah*), then it becomes a [little] lump of flesh (*mudgha*). Then God sends an angel to blow the spirit (*al-ruh*) into him.’¹³ And other traditions such as this.

And because parents are the means by which a child comes into existence, God ﷻ has magnified their rights. And He has necessitated that after one gives gratitude to God, to give gratitude to one’s parents. God ﷻ says:

أَنْ أَشْكُرَ لِي وَلَوْلَا دَيْكَ إِلَى الْمَصِيرِ

Give thanks to Me and to your parents.

To Me is the journey’s end.

(*Luqman*, 31:14)

The child is called a son (*ibn*), which is derived from ‘I built the building’ (*banaytu al-binyah*). The son is to the father what the building is to the builder.

CHAPTER III

THE ELEMENTS BY WHICH MAN HAS COME INTO EXISTENCE



God ﷻ mentions the elements from which He created Adam ﷺ, and He mentions that He made him a human being in seven steps (*darajat*). He ﷻ indicates this in different verses depending on what wisdom requires:

1. In a verse God ﷻ says that He created him of dust (*turab*) (*Aal 'Imran*, 3:59); **indicating the First Principle (*al-mabda' al-awwal*)**.
2. And in another He ﷻ says He created him of clay (*ṭeen*) (*Al-Mu'minun*, 23:12), **indicating the mix of dust and water**.
3. And in another that He ﷻ created him out of a dry clay [drawn] from a malleable mud (*hama'in masnoon*) (*Al-Hijr*, 15:28), **indicating a mud changed by air the slightest change**.
4. In another He ﷻ says He created him from a viscous clay (*ṭeenin lazeb*) (*Al-Saffat*, 37:11) **indicating mud that is settled in the right state to fashion its form**.
5. And in another place He ﷻ says He created him from a dry [clinking] clay of malleable mud (*min salsaal min hama'in masnoon*) (*Al-Hijr*, 15:28) **indicating it is dry so that you can hear a ringing (*salsalah*) from it**.
6. And in another place He ﷻ says He created him from

dry clay resembling the potter's (*salsaal ka al-fakkhar*) (*Al-Rahman*, 55:14). When it has been bettered by the touch of fire, so it becomes like a ceramic (*kha-zaf*). And because of this fiery potentiality (*quwwah nariyyah*), human beings have a demonic susceptibility. God ﷻ indicates this meaning in His Words:

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ
وَحَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّن نَّارٍ

*He created man of dry clay resembling the potter's, /
and He created the jann of a smokeless flame of fire.*
(*Al-Rahman*, 55:14-15)

God ﷻ warns that man has demonic potentiality (*quwwah shaytaniyyah*) to the degree to which there are the effects of fire in dry clay (*fakkhar*). And that the devil (*al-shaytan*) himself is made from this unstable flame (*marij*) that has no grounding (*istiqrar*).

7. And then God ﷻ reminds us of the completion of the human being by the blowing of the spirit into him. God ﷻ says:

إِنِّي خَلِقُ بَشَرًا مِّن طِينٍ
فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ، وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ، سَاجِدِينَ

*Indeed I am about to create a human being out of clay.
So when I have proportioned him, and breathed in him My
spirit, then fall down in prostration before him!*
(*Sad*, 38:71-72)

These are the seven steps that God has indicated as you see.

Then God ﷻ indicates the completion (*takmeel*) of the human being's soul with knowledges and refinements (*al-'ulum wa al-adaab*). For God ﷻ says:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا

And He taught Adam the names, all of them.

(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:31)

Then after that He mentions the creation of the children of Adam and the elements from which they are created state after state. Indicating that He ﷻ made them in seven steps, as was Adam ﷺ. God ﷻ says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ * ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ * ثُمَّ نُفْرَخْنَا النَّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا * ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

1. *And We certainly created man from an extraction of clay.*
2. *Then We made him a drop in a secure lodging*
3. *Then We transformed the drop [of semen] into a clot.*
4. *Then We transformed the clot into a [little] lump of flesh.*
5. *Then We transformed the lump of flesh into bones.*
6. *Then We clothed the bones with flesh.*
7. *Then We produced him as [yet] another creature.*

So blessed be God, the best of creators

(*Al-Mu'minun*, 23:12-14)

And God's ﷻ Words:

ثُمَّ أَدْنَيْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ

Then We produced him as [yet] another creature.

(Al-Mu'minun, 23:13)

... indicate that He ﷻ has given him strength of intellect (*aql*) and thinking (*fikr*) and articulation (*nutq*). If it is asked: 'Why did God ﷻ say: "We clothed the bones with flesh?" and not: "We created from it flesh," like He ﷻ says about the other things?' The answer is: it is an indication from God ﷻ to a very subtle thing that He created, which is that the drop of semen (*nutfah*) eventually becomes the bones, then God creates the flesh and this is a new creation; not from the *nutfah*. God made the flesh like a cloth (*kiswah*), just as a human being wears a garment and then he renews it. In the same way, if you cut meat from an animal, it will grow back; it is not like bones that are not restored if they are cut.

If it is said: 'How is it said that all of humanity was created from an extraction of clay (*sulalah min teen*) when it is Adam ﷻ who is created from it and not his children?'

Then it can be answered that: this can be understood from two different perspectives:

One: when God ﷻ created Adam ﷻ from an extraction of clay, his children by extension are also from it.

And second: human beings are made from a drop of semen (*nutfah*) and are nurtured by the blood of the womb (*dam al-tamath*). Both are made up of nourishment and nourishment comes from animals, and animals get their growth from vegetables, and vegetables come out of an extraction of clay. So, in reality, human beings are from an extraction of clay. Thus, God ﷻ says:

أَنَا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا * ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا * فَأَبْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا * وَعَبْنَا وَقَضَبًّا

That We pour down water plenteously / then We split the earth into fissures, / and cause the grains to grow therein, / and vines and herbs ('Abasa, 80:25-28)

And God ﷻ also says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ

And We certainly created man from an extraction (sulalah) of clay.

Then We made him a drop in a secure lodging

(Al-Mu'minun, 23:12-13)

And He ﷻ says:

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا

And God created you from dust, then from a drop of [seminal] fluid, then He made you pairs.

(Ghafir, 35: 11)

Hence, God ﷻ made him from dust (*turab*) in this way. And He ﷻ says:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنْشُرُونَ

And of His signs is that He created you of dust, then lo!

You are human beings, spreading.

(Al-Rum, 30:20)

And in another verse:

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ، وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ

*Who perfected everything that He created. And He began
the creation of man from clay.*

(Al-Sajdah, 32:7)

What is meant here by ‘man’ is Adam ﷺ. Thus God ﷻ says:

ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ

*then He made his progeny from an extract (sulalah)
of a base fluid*

(Al-Sajdah, 32:8)

Here it is limited to a drop of semen (*nutfah*) without the First Principle (*al-mabda’ al-awwal*) which is dust. Rather He ﷻ mentions these principles [or origins] (*mabadi’*) separately because wisdom necessitates specifying them in the places where they are mentioned. Expounding on the details of why each is mentioned in its specific place is not appropriate for this book, and God knows best.

CHAPTER IV

THE POTENTIALITIES THAT ARE GATHERED IN MAN



All the potentialities of the world are gathered in man. And man was brought into existence after the existence of the things that were gathered in him. God ﷻ says:

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ، وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ

*Who perfected everything that He created. And He began
the creation of man from clay.*

(Al-Sajdah, 32:7)

And this is in addition to what we referenced earlier that the Prophet ﷺ said.

God ﷻ gathered in human beings the world's potentialities: simple; compound; spiritual; material, creations (*mubdi'at*), and components (*mukawwinat*). So man—in the sense that he came about by means of the world, from the very elements (*arkaan*) of the world, and from its potentialities (*quwaah*)—is the world.

God ﷻ has shrunk (*sagghar*) man's form and gathered in it all the potentialities, like a microcosm of the world (*al-mukhtasar min al-'aalam*). Similar to an abridged book: its words are less, yet the meaning is complete. Such is man if he is considered the world.

And from the point of view that he was made from the

pure essence (*safwah*) of the world, its core (*lubabih*), and its summation, and its fruit, he is in essence like the cream that rises from milk, or like oil from sesame. There is nothing in the world except that you will find some similarity between that thing and human beings. For humans are:

Like the elements (*arkaan*) of the world, in the sense of heat and cold and moisture and dryness.

Like minerals, in the sense of having bodies.

Like the vegetal world, in the sense of feeding and growing.

Like the animals, in the sense of sentience, imagination, having illusions, and feeling pleasure and pain.

Like beasts of prey, in the sense of anger and combat.

Like the devil, in the sense of plotting, strategizing, tempting, and leading astray.

Like the angel, in the sense of knowing and worshipping God ﷻ and being in awe of Him.

Like the Preserved Tablet, in the sense that God ﷻ has made man the locus of all wisdom (*majma' al-hikam*) which He inscribed in him as an abridgement.

For one of the sages said that in the body of a human being there are four thousand wisdoms, and in his soul is something similar to that.

And like the pen, in the sense of preserving words as a conceptualization (*suwar*) of things in the hearts of people as the Pen preserves the judgement (*al-hukm*) in the Preserved Tablet.

Because human beings are created from different potentialities, God ﷻ says:

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ

Verily We created man from a drop of mixed fluid,
so that We may test him.
(Al-Insan, 76:2)

This means: mixed from different potentialities.

And from this point of view human beings and the world resemble one another. Thus it is said that the human being is a small world [microcosm] (*'alam saghir*), and the universe is a large man (*insan kabir*). Thus God ﷻ says:

مَا خَلَقَكُمْ وَلَا نَعْتُكُمْ إِلَّا كَنَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ

Your creation and your resurrection are only as [that of]
a single soul. (Luqman, 31:28)

Indicating that this one soul is the essence of the world (*thatt al-'alam*).

Each compounded thing made up of different things becomes a new meaning when its parts are joined that does not exist when they are separate, such as compounds in medicine and food. The same is true of the soul of a human being: in it is a meaning that does not exist in any of the world's existent things. And it is this meaning that is specific to him in terms of the particularities that God has given him that distinguish him from others, and his different aspects (*hay'at*): such as the fact that he is upright and he has broad fingernails. And emotions (*infi'alat*) specific to him: like smiling and bashfulness. And actions (*af'al*) that he is capable of: like conceptualizing the intelligibles (*tasawwur al-ma'qulat*), learning crafts and skills (*sina'at*) and acquiring good character. And God knows best.

CHAPTER V

HOW MAN IS CREATED ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER UNTIL HE BECOMES A COMPLETE HUMAN BEING



Man begins from an inanimate substance (*jamadan mayyitan*). God ﷻ says:

وَكُنْتُمْ أََمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ

you were dead, and He gave you life!

(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:28)

This is when he is dust, then mud, then clay, and the like.

Then man becomes vegetal and has growth (*nabatan namiyan*). God ﷻ says:

وَاللَّهُ أَنْبَتَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا

And God has caused you to grow from the earth.

(*Nuh*, 71:17)

This is when he is a drop of semen (*nutfah*), and a clot (*alaqa*), and a [little] lump of flesh (*mudgha*), and the like.

Then he becomes an animal (*hayawanan*) in that by his nature he follows what benefits him and avoids what harms him.

Then he becomes human and is distinguished by human characteristics. God ﷻ indicates this in many verses:

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن تَرَابٍ
 ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ

O mankind, if you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then lo! [consider that] We have created you from dust then, from a drop, then from a clot, then from a [little] lump of flesh, partly formed, and partly unformed

(Al-Hajj, 22:5)

And He ﷻ says:

أَكْفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تَرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ رَجُلًا

Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you of dust, then of a drop of fluid, then fashioned you a man?

(Al-Kahf, 18:37)

So the first thing that manifests in man is the power of growth that is in the vegetal world. Then the power of belligerence (*niza'*) that is in the animal world. Then the power of getting what is pleasing (*tanawol al-muwafeq*) and avoiding what he does not want (*daf' al-mukhalif*). And then sentience (*al-hiss*), then imagination (*al-takhayyul*), then conceptualization (*al-tasawwur*), then thought (*al-tafakkur*), then reason (*al-aql*). Indeed, he only becomes human through thought and reason with which he distinguishes between good and evil, and the beautiful and the ugly. Regarding reason (*al-aql*), God ﷻ says:

وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ

And He formed you and perfected your forms

(Ghafir, 40:64)

The human being, through his intellect (*aql*), became the source (*ma'dan*) of knowledge and the centre of wisdom. The existence of the intellect (*al-aql*) in the beginning of the affair is potentiality, like the existence of fire in flint, which must be struck for fire to be lit. Or like the whole palm tree exists in the palm-seed that needs planting and watering to grow. Or like the existence of water underneath the earth; in order to be drawn out, a well needs to be dug.

The human soul, then, exists between these two potentialities: **the concupiscent potentiality (*quwwat al-shahwah*); and the potentiality of the intellect (*quwwat al-aql*).**

And so the concupiscent potentiality attempts to obtain bodily and animalistic pleasures, like food and sex and to conquer, and all other immediate pleasures.

And the potentiality of the intellect (*quwwat al-aql*) desires to acquire knowledges and refinements (*al-'ulum wa al-adaab*), good deeds, and praiseworthy matters that have praiseworthy consequences. And about these two potentialities God ﷻ says:

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

Verily We have guided him to the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful. (Al-Insan, 76:3)

And God ﷻ says:

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ

and guided him to the two paths.

(Al-Balad, 90:10)

Human nature seeks pleasure (*al-laththah*), and pleasures come in two types:

One is sensual pleasure (*mahsoos*), like the pleasure of tastes, of touch, of sounds, of sights, and the pleasure of smells. And these follow the animal appetites (*al-shahwah al-hayawaniyyah*).

And the second type of pleasure is intellectual pleasure (*ma'qool*), like the pleasure of knowledge, of doing good, and of acting virtuously.

The sensual pleasures (*al-laththat al-mahsoosah*) are more dominant in us because they were the pleasures that existed first in us. They exist in man before he is born, and they are immediate. God ﷻ says:

كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ * وَتَذُرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ

*Never, Instead, you love that which is immediate,
/ and forsake the Hereafter.*

(*Al-Qiyamah*, 75:20-21)

For this reason most people hate what the intellect (*al-aql*) commands them to do and they incline to what their desires (*al-hawa*) command them to do. So much so that it has even been said: ‘The intellect (*al-aql*) is a friend that has been cut off (*maqtoo'*), and desire is an enemy that is followed (*matboo'*).’

And the poet said:

If one day your soul invites you to a lust

But the path to it is ugly

Then leave it and go against what you desire

for it is a loving foe, and opposition is a friend

Hence, the Prophet ﷻ said: ‘Paradise is surrounded by distasteful things (*makareh*), and the Fire is surrounded by things desired (*shahawat*).’¹⁴

For this reason human beings need to be led in the beginning of their affairs to their benefit with something of force. The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘O, wonderful [is seeing] people being led to Paradise in chains!’¹⁵ It is appropriate for a human being to struggle against (*yujahed*) his desire until he reaches the pinnacle; until he is free from the harm of the self.

The soul has two sights (*nazaraan*):

A sight looking upwards towards the intelligibles (*al-aql*), and from that it is able to draw from the sciences and knowledges (*al-ma‘aref*) and so it distinguishes between what is beautiful and what is ugly. And it knows how to seek what is beautiful and to avoid what is ugly.

And a sight looking downwards towards desire (*al-hawa*), and through it the soul forgets the [higher] realities (*haqa’iq*) and becomes accustomed to contemptible low things, even foul things.

When the soul is noble, it continues to look above it—as mentioned—and does not look at what is beneath it except when necessary. And it does not engage in bodily pleasures except to the degree which reason has decreed to be appropriate according to sacred law (*min al-shar‘*).

If the soul is a low soul (*daniyyah*), it inclines more towards bodily pleasures and becomes submissive to its bodily appetites and is led by them to the point that its desires enslave it. God ﷻ says:

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ

Have you then seen him who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and whom God has led astray knowingly

(Al-Jathiyah, 45:23)

After such a person has taken desire as his god and made himself a slave to his worldly aspirations, God ﷻ leads him astray. The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Wretched is the slave of the dirham, wretched is the slave of the dinar.’¹⁶ Indeed, Ibrahim ﷺ sought refuge from this slavehood when he said:

وَأَجْنِبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ

turn me and my sons away from serving idols

(Ibrahim, 14:35)

CHAPTER VI

MAN'S MANIFESTATION AMIDST EMBLEMATIC EXISTENT THINGS AND HIS PARTICULARIZATION WITH SOME OF THEIR POWER LITTLE BY LITTLE



A human being's essence (*thatt*), in terms of what is gathered in it from all the potentialities (*quwa*) of existent things (*al-mawjudat*), has become the vessel for the meanings of the world. He is the material (*teen*) of its images; the mettle of all its effects, and the locus of its realities. It is as if he is the composite of the inanimate; vegetal; animal; predator; demon, and angel. For this reason man may manifest each one of those emblematic things.

Sometimes he is like **inanimate things** in his laziness and lack of movement and incentive. God ﷻ says:

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً

Then your hearts became hardened thereafter,

or even yet harder

(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:74)

Sometimes he manifests in a way emblematic of the vegetal world, either praiseworthy or blameworthy. He may be like an [orange] fruit that has a nice smell, blossom, stalk

and leaf. Or like the date palm, or like the grape vine, in that they give so much benefit. Or he can manifest in a way emblematic of dodder with no good in it; or like colocynth with its foul taste. God ﷻ says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا
ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ * تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا
وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ * وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ
خَيْثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَيْثَةٍ أُجْتَثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ

*Have you not seen how God has struck a similitude?:
a goodly saying is as a goodly tree, its root set firm and its
shoots are in heaven; / it gives its produce every season
by the leave of its Lord. And God strikes similitudes for
mankind, so that they might remember. / And the similitude
of a bad saying is as a bad tree, uprooted from upon
the earth, having no stability.*

(Ibrahim, 14:24-26)

Sometimes man manifests in a way emblematic of the animal world, both praiseworthy and unpraiseworthy. He may be like the bees with their abundant benefits, minimal harm and excellent ways. God ﷻ says:

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ *
ثُمَّ كُلِي مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلَالًا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ
مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ، فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

And your Lord revealed to the bee, [saying]: ‘Choose among the hills habitations and among the trees, and among the trellises which they raise.’ / And your Lord revealed to the bee, [saying]: ‘Choose among the hills habitations and among the trees, and among the trellises which they raise.
 (Al-Nahl, 16:68-69)

Or he may be like the bird called Abu al-Wafa (Father of Loyalty), or like the pig with its gluttony, or like the wolf in its causing trouble, or like the dog in its covetousness, or like the ant in its hoarding, or like the mouse in its stealing, or like the fox in its craftiness, or like the monkey in its imitativeness, or like the donkey in its obtuseness, or like the bull in its rashness. And God ﷻ shows this likeness in His Words:

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ
 مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ

There is no animal on the earth and no bird that flies with its wings, but they are communities like to you. We have neglected nothing in the Book; then to their Lord they shall be gathered.
 (Al-An‘am, 6:38)

Sometimes man manifests in a way emblematic of the demons; leading astray and misguiding and beguiling that falsehood is truth. He seeks misguidance and follows desire. God ﷻ says:

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَٰيَاطِينَ الْإِنسِ وَالْجِنِّ
 يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا

*And so We have appointed to every Prophet an enemy,
devils of mankind and jinn who inspire fine speech
to each other in delusion
(Al-An'am, 6:112)*

And sometimes he manifests in a way emblematic of **the angels**. He follows the way of religion (*deen*), and disobeys his desires.

A man is **human** insofar as he places all of these emblematic aspects in their proper place according to a piercing intellect illuminated by the light of sacred law. And God knows best.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF HUMAN BEINGS?



The essence (*mahiyyat*) of everything is acquired through its form (*surah*) that distinguishes it from all other things, like the form of a knife, or a sword, or a sickle, and so on. A human being is two parts: a **physical [material] body** (*badan mahsoos*), and an **intelligible [immaterial] spirit** (*ruh ma'qool*). God ﷻ says:

إِنِّي خَلَقْتُ بَشَرًا مِّنْ طِينٍ * فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ، وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ، سَاجِدِينَ

*Indeed I am about to create a human being out of clay. /
So when I have proportioned him, and breathed in him
My spirit, then fall down in prostration before him!*

(*Sad*, 38:71-72)

Thus, man has a form for each of his two parts.

His physical material form: is in his being upright in stature, having broad fingernails, furless skin, and laughing.

And his **intelligible spiritual form:** is in his intellect (*aql*), thinking (*fikr*), deliberation (*ruwiyyah*), and speech (*nutq*).

They [the logicians] said: 'A human being is the [rational] speaking animal (*al-hayawan al-natiq*)'. They did not mean by speech (*nutq*) just the utterance that articulates; they meant by it the meanings that are particular to man. They summarized all of that with 'speech'. The general can be

articulated through a particular in it, or by what makes it noble, or its beginning, such as saying: *Surat Al-Rahman* or *Surat Yusuf*, or *Surat Li'ilaf* and others such as this.

It is said that the human being is one of two types: general and particular [elect].

The general: is used to describe all who are upright, have the potentiality for thought and the potentiality for benefitting from knowledge.

The particular: is used to describe the ones who have attained the Truth and believed it, and who know virtue and practice it as far as they are able. People vary in this and distinguish themselves greatly from each other. As far as a human being achieves this, he deserves his humanity, which is engaging in actions that are particular to human beings. Such that we say: so and so has more humanity than so and so.

And just as it is said that the human being is one of two types, he is also called the speaking animal in two ways:

In a general way: And these are the ones who have the potentiality of benefitting from the true and the good. For instance we say: Man is a writer, unlike the horse or the donkey. In other words, he has the potentiality to be a writer.

In a particular way: And these are the ones who attained the Truth and believed it, and who know virtue and practice it. In the same way that it is said that Zaid is a writer whereas Amr is not. In other words, it is he in particular who has the knowledge of writing.

In this way he is called a servant of God (*abd Allah*) in two ways:

In a general sense: Meaning the animal that is exposed to the commands of God ﷻ, whether he obeys them or not.

God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ كُلَّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِيَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا

There is none in the heavens and the earth but he comes to the Compassionate One as a servant.

(Maryam, 19:93)

In a particular sense: Meaning the one who adheres to God's ﷻ commands [in actuality]. God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ

Truly over My servants you shall have no warrant

(Al-Hijr, 15:42)

Thus we describe him as: Living, hearing, seeing, speaking, and rational; and all of that is in two ways.

First he is described as general: Referring to those with animal life which is characterized by sentience, imagination, inclinations and appetites. They can also hear sounds, perceive colours, and can help others understand what they want. They have all of the potentialities that necessitate [religious] obligations (*takleef*).

Second: he is described as particular [the elect]: Referring to those who are living the life that is the knowledge that is intended (*al-'ilm al-maqsood*) in God's ﷻ Words:

يُنذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا

that he may warn whoever is alive

(YaSin, 36:70)

They have **hearing** through which they hear the realities of the intelligibles (*haqa'iq al-ma'qoolat*), and they have **inner sight** (*basirah*) through which they can understand

considerations (*i'tibarat*). And they have **tongues** that can articulate the realized realities (*al-tahqeeqat*). These are the things that God ﷻ has negated for ignorant disbelievers in His ﷻ words:

صُمُّكُمْ عَمَىٰ فَهْمًا لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

deaf, dumb, blind—they do not comprehend.

(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:171)

CHAPTER VIII

WHY HUMAN BEINGS ARE UNIQUELY CREATED FOR BOTH ABODES



Amongst all existent things, the human being is a creature that was created for both abodes. This is because God ﷻ created three types of living beings:

The first type is created for the lower abode (*the dunya*): the animals.

The second type is created for the abode of the Next Life: the Highest Assembly (*Al-Mala' Al-A'la*).

The third type is created for both abodes: the human being.

Man is a means between these two essential types: a low type—the animals; and an exalted type—the angels. God ﷻ gathered in man potentialities from both worlds. He made him like **the animals**: with bodily appetites, the need for food and drink, and procreation. They vie and fight, and other animal characteristics. Man is also like **the angels** in terms of intellect (*aql*); knowledge (*'ilm*); worshipping God; sincerity, loyalty and other noble qualities.

The wisdom behind this is: God ﷻ put man forward as the candidate to worship Him, be His vicegerent and cultivate His earth, and He prepared him for being in His presence in Paradise. So divine wisdom dictated that these two potentialities be gathered in him together.

Had man been created like a beast, stripped of rational thought, then he would not have been fit for *khilafah* (vicegerency), nor to worship God ﷻ. Just as the animals themselves are not fit for that, nor are they fit to be in His ﷻ divine presence or to enter His Paradise.

Had God ﷻ created man like the angels, stripped of any bodily needs, then he would not have been fit to cultivate God's ﷻ earth. Just as the angels are not fit for that, as they questioned God ﷻ and He answered them:

إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

'Assuredly, I know what you know not.'

(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:30)

So divine wisdom dictated that the two potentialities be gathered in him together.

In consideration of this divine wisdom, there is a calling to attention to the fact that man is both worldly and other-worldly and was not created in vain. God ﷻ says:

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ

Did you suppose that We created you aimlessly and that you would not be returned to Us?'

(*Al-Mu'minun*, 23:115)

CHAPTER IX

ANALOGIES OF THE ESSENCE OF MAN AND HIS CONCEPTUALIZATION



The people of wisdom (*hukama'*) have made analogies and conceptualized man's essence (*thatt*) and its potentialities [faculties] (*quwaha*). Everything that cannot be conceived except through the intelligence has to be conceptualized with sensible things in order to approximate some understanding. They said: Because the essence of the human being is a microcosm, as previously mentioned, it can be looked at like a well-built city. Its buildings are well-erected, its walls are fortified, its streets planned out, its neighbourhoods organized, its homes inhabited with residents, its pathways laid out, its rivers flowing, its market-places open, and its craftspeople occupied. In it is a king who takes care of the affairs of the city; and the king has a minister, and another in charge of mail, and he has those who gather news for him. He also has a treasurer, a translator, and a writer. And in the city are good people and bad people.

The craftspeople are the seven faculties (*quwa*) that are called: the assimilative (*al-jathibah*); the retentive (*al-masikah*); the digestive (*al-haadimah*); the excretory (*al-daafi'ah*), the growth faculty (*al-naamiyah*); the nutritive (*al-ghaziyah*), and the conceptual (*al-musawwirah*).

The king is the intelligence (*al-aql*) and its source is the heart.

The minister is the cognitive faculty (*al-quwa al-mufak-kirah*) and it resides in the mid-brain (*wast al-dimagh*).

The one in charge of mail is the imaginative faculty (*al-quwa al-mutakhayilah*) and it resides in the front of the brain (*muqaddam al-dimagh*).

The ones who gather the news are the five senses and they reside in the five sense organs.

The treasurer is the faculty of memory (*al-quwa al-hafizah*), and it resides behind the brain (*khalf al-dimagh*).

The translator is the linguistic faculty (*al-quwa al-natiqah*) and its tool is the tongue.

The writer is the faculty of writing (*al-quwa al-katibah*) and its tool is the hand.

The residents of the city, both good and bad are the faculties from which come beautiful character and ugly character.

If the governor (*waali*), once he takes command, governs the people with God's ﷻ government (*siyasah*), he will become the shade of God on earth. It is narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: 'Governmental authority (*al-sultan*) is the shade of God on earth.'¹⁷ It is incumbent on everyone to obey it. God ﷻ says:

أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

*obey God, and obey the Messenger and those
in authority among you (Al-Nisa', 4:59)*

Likewise, when reason (*al-aql*) becomes the governor (*sa'isan*), it is an obligation on the rest of the faculties to obey it.

God ﷻ made people different from each other. This is indicated in God's ﷻ Words:

وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا
*and raised some of them above others by degrees, so that
some of them may take others in service*
(Al-Zukhruf, 43:32)

And God ﷻ made the soul's faculties different from one another, and He has made it the duty of every one of the faculties to be subservient to the faculty that is above it, and to be in command of the faculty beneath it. Thus, it is the duty of the appetitive faculty (*al-quwwah al-shahawiyyah*) to be subservient to the irascible faculty (*al-quwwah al-ghadabiyyah*). And it is the duty of the irascible faculty to be in obedience to the rational faculty (*al-quwwah al-'aqilah*). And it is the duty of the rational faculty to be illuminated by the light of sacred law, and in obedience to its dictates, so that they work in common cause and not in opposition to each other. God ﷻ says:

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنْ غِلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِلِينَ
*And We remove whatever rancour may be in their breasts.
As brethren, [they shall recline] upon couches,
facing one another.*
(Al-Hijr, 15:47)

The evildoers of the world never stop sowing corruption and being in enmity to the virtuous. God ﷻ says:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَرًا مُّجْرِمِيهَا لِيَمَّكُرُوا فِيهَا
*And thus, We have made in every city its sinners great ones,
that they may plot therein* (Al-An'am, 6:123)

And God ﷻ says:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيْطَانِ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ

And so We have appointed to every Prophet an enemy, devils of mankind and jinn (Al-An'am, 6:112)

Similarly, in the human soul there are low faculties, like desire (*hawa*), concupiscence, and envy that seek corruption and oppose reason (*al-aql*) and thought (*al-fikr*). God ﷻ warns that the governor (*waali*) must follow what is right (*al-haqq*) and must not listen to evildoers, nor rely on them. God ﷻ says:

يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بَطَانَةً مِّنْ دُونِكُمْ

O you who believe, do not take as intimates anyone apart from yourselves (Aal 'Imran, 3:118)

And God ﷻ says:

يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَرَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ

بَعْضٍ ؕ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنَّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

O you who believe, do not take Jews and Christians as patrons; they are patrons of each other. Whoever amongst you affiliates with them, he is one of them. God does not guide the folk who do wrong. (Al-Ma'idah, 5:51)

And He ﷻ says:

وَأَن أَحْكَمَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَأَحْذَرَهُمْ أَن يَفْتِنُوكَ

عَنْ بَعْضٍ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّا نُرِيدُ أَن يَصِيبَهُمْ بَعْضٌ

ذُنُوبِهِمْ وَإِن كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ

And judge between them according to what God has revealed, and do not follow their whims, and beware of them lest they seduce you from part of what God has revealed to you. But if they turn away, then know that God desires to smite them for some of their sins; surely, many of mankind are wicked.

(Al-Mai'dah, 5:49)

Likewise, the intelligence and thought should not rely on the lower faculties.

Moreover, the governor must strive against (*yujahid*) the enemies of the Muslims. God ﷻ says:

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ

تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ

Make ready for them whatever force you can and of horses tethered that thereby you may dismay the enemy of God and your enemy

(Al-Anfal, 8:60)

Similarly, the intelligence (*aql*) must strive against desire, because desire is one of the enemies of God. Proof of this is the Prophet's ﷺ words: **'Nothing is worshipped on earth more odious to God than desire.'**¹⁸ And he followed this with God's ﷻ Words:

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ، هَوْنَهُ

Have you seen him who has taken as his god his own desire?

(Al-Jathiyah, 45:23)

Just as when Satan prevails upon a human being, he makes him forget the remembrance of God.

God ﷻ says:

أَسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ

Satan has prevailed upon them, and so he has caused them to forget the remembrance of God.

(Al-Mujadilah, 58:19).

It is the same when desire takes control of the intelligence. Moreover, the governor must make peace with his enemies if he is not able to overcome them. God ﷻ says:

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا

And if they incline to peace, then incline to it

(Al-Anfal, 8:61)

And he should not incline towards them, even if he is at peace with them. God ﷻ says:

وَلَا تَرْكَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَمَا تَمْسِكُمُ النَّارُ

And do not incline toward the evildoers,

lest the Fire touch you (Hud, 11:113)

Likewise, the intelligence has to make peace with the evils of the faculties of the soul if it is not able to fight them and it should not incline towards them.

If the governor feels he has strength, he should nullify the [peace] treaty and display enmity. God ﷻ says:

فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ

وَخَذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصُرُوهُمْ وَأَقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ

Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them, and

*confine them, and lie in wait for them at every
place of ambush
(Al-Tawbah, 9:5)*

Similarly, if the intellect (*al-aql*) gains strength over the [appetitive] faculties of the soul, it is its duty that it not acquiesce to them.

The guiles (*kayd*) of the devils of mankind and jinn weaken with those who are fortified with faith and who seek refuge in God; and who are strengthened in the face of those who choose Satan as their patron. God ﷻ says:

إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ

*His [Satan's] power is only over those who
choose him as [their] patron
(Al-Nahl, 16:100)*

Similarly, the guiles of desire on the intelligence also weaken if it is strengthened through God ﷻ and if it seeks refuge in God. It is the duty of the intelligence to seek refuge in God from desires, gluttony, covetousness and vain hopes, and it should purify itself from them and from all evil impulses [*quwa*], the same way that Ibrahim ؑ sought refuge when he said:

رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ

*My Lord, make this land secure and turn me
and my sons away from serving idols.
(Ibrahim, 14:35)*

For low impulses and contemptible volitions in the essence of man are like idols. It is rare for a man's soul to be free from worshipping them. God ﷻ says:

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ

And most of them do not believe in God without ascribing partners [to Him]

(Yusuf, 12:106)

They also mentioned another analogy and said: Every human being with his body is like the governor of a city. It is said to him: ‘Clean your city of its pollutants (*najasaat*), and discipline all the citizens who are capable of being disciplined. And train the animals and predatory beasts that are susceptible to training. As for the one who sows corruption in it and does not accept any discipline or training, then jail him or kill him, but rightfully (*bil-haqq*).’ God ﷻ says:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ

And kill not a soul that God forbade, but rightfully

(Al-Isra’, 17:33)

If you are incapable of purifying the threshold of your house, [i.e. the lower aspects of yourself], from its pollutants, and disciplining its transgressors (*tughat*), and training its animals and predatory beasts, then at least do not fail to guard yourself from becoming soiled with its pollutants. And from being preyed upon by its predatory beasts, and from becoming a captive of its transgressors. So that if you are not overwhelming them, then at least you are not overwhelmed by them.

In this there are three types of people:

The first type does not do what he is commanded to do and does not fulfil the authority of government (*haqq al-iyalah*). He is lackadaisical about what is incumbent upon

him. So then he becomes wounded and captive, and so becomes with his Lord—alongside being injured, and captive—blameworthy and in a state of loss.

The second type does what he is commanded to do and fulfils the authority of government. With his Lord he is rewarded and given thanks.

The third type is diligent sometimes and falls short sometimes. Sometimes he strikes [the lower self], and sometimes he is stricken. Sometimes he overwhelms and sometimes he is overwhelmed. He is as God ﷻ describes:

وَأَخْرُونَ اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا

عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

And [there are] others, who have confessed their sins, they have mixed a righteous deed with another that was bad. It may be that God will relent to them.

Truly God is Forgiving, Merciful.

(Al-Tawbah, 9:102)

Some of the people of wisdom (*hukama'*) have said: if man is considered in terms of his potentiality of imagination (*quwwat al-takhayyul*) and also the irascible and appetitive potentialities, then he is like somebody who is subjected to a trial while travelling. He is compelled to travel in the company of three whom he cannot separate from nor complete his travels without them. As the poet said:

Of the miseries of this lower world is that the free man
has to consider his enemy in friendship
O, miseries of this world! When will you depart
from the free man so that he can approach
the opposite?

One of them goes ahead of him and guards and protects him, but he is obsequious (*maleq*), tells lies, fabricates, is mendacious, conjures up falsehoods and mixes lies with the truth, and error with what is correct.

The second one is on his right side, and is a malicious thug (*batish za'er*). He protects him from his enemies, but he often leads him astray and destroys what he has cultivated. He can stir him up, and is not controlled by sound advice, and will not bow down to gentleness. He is like a fire in dry wood, or a flashflood coming down from an elevation, or an inveterate meat-eater. Or like a predatory animal that has lost its offspring. Thus, he always has to be calming him down, and he has to seek protection through him and from him. With him he is like the saying: 'The rider of the lion is feared by people and he is himself fearful.'

The third one is on his left side. This is the one who brings him food and drink on the journey, but he himself is stupid (*ar'an*). He is obsequious, dirty, and concupiscent. He is like a pig who was made hungry and put into a pigsty. Sometimes good food is in the pigsty, and sometimes foul food is in the pigsty, and he is compelled to eat whatever is there.

The man has to placate them until he finishes his journey and reaches the holy land where there is light and where the sheep and the wolf drink from the same bowl together. Then he will be finally free of their evils.

The strategy the man hopes to employ to avoid their harm is by: pitting the malicious thug against the stupid dirty one so that he can completely keep him in check. And the man will be able to put out the extremism and deceptions of the malicious one who is astray with the charm of the stupid lying obsequious one. He must not incline

toward the lying mendacious one until he verifies things like a strong covenant from God. Then he can believe him in what he is saying to do or to avoid.

The obsequious lying one is a metaphor for illusion (*wahm*).

The malicious thug is [a metaphor for] irascibility (*al-ghadab*).

The stupid dirty obsequious one is [a metaphor for] appetite (*al-shahwah*).

And the holy land is the Abode of Peace (*Dar al-Salam*).

And so the strategy to avoid their harm is: to pit one against the other; avoiding harm with other harm. And God knows best.

CHAPTER X

HUMAN BEINGS ARE THE PURPOSE OF THE ENTIRE WORLD WHICH WAS CREATED FOR THEM



The purpose of this world and its creation little by little is in order to bring human beings into existence. Thus, the whole purpose of the elements (*arqaan*) is to produce vegetation, and the purpose of vegetation is to serve animals. And the purpose of animals is to serve human bodies, and the purpose of the human body is to be a vehicle for the rational soul (*al-arwaah al-natiqah*). And the purpose of the rational soul is to become the vicegerent of God ﷻ on earth. By fulfilling that duty, such a person warrants eternal bliss. This is what God ﷻ indicates when He says:

إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

I am appointing on earth a vicegerent

(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:30)

God has made human beings the offspring of the world and the cream of creation, and he has been distinguished by being honoured. God ﷻ says:

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْوَبْرِ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ
وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا

And verily We have honoured the Children of Adam, and carried them over land and sea, and provided them with good things and We have preferred them above many of those whom We created with a marked preferment.

(Al-Isra', 17:70)

And He made everything in support of human beings. God ﷻ says:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا

He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth

(Al-Baqarah, 2:29)

Man's virtue does not lie in his **bodily strength**; for the elephant and the camel are much stronger. Nor is his virtue due to his **long life** in the dunya; the eagle and the elephant live much longer. Nor is it due to his **ferociousness**; the lion and the leopard are much more ferocious. In terms of **beauty and adornment**, the peacock and the quail are much more beautifully adorned. And in terms of **sensual power**; the donkey and the sparrow outdo the human being. And in terms of **massive amounts of gold and silver**, the mines and the mountains outdo man. Who said it better than the poet when he said:

Had it not been for intellects, the least of the lions
would have more nobility than a human being
And souls would not differ like the different
positions of warriors' hands on their spears

Neither does man's virtue stem from the element from which he was created; for as Iblees said:

أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ خَلَقَنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ

*'I am better than him. You created me from fire,
while him You created from clay.'*

(Al-A'raf, 7:12)

Man's virtue stems from the meaning that God ﷻ placed in him and from the matter which God made him His candidate for. God ﷻ refers to this in the Qur'an:

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتَهُ، وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ، سَاجِدِينَ

So, when I have proportioned him and breathed of My Spirit in him, fall down in prostration before him!

(Al-Hijr, 15:29)

And God ﷻ says:

قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِإِيْدِي

He said, 'O Iblis! What prevents you from prostrating before that which I have created with My own hands?

(Sad, 38:75)

When God ﷻ alerted the angels to the virtue of Adam ﷻ, the angels became aware of it and submitted and prostrated to him as they were commanded to do. But Iblees chose to look merely at Adam's ﷻ outward form and at his principal element and his body and pretended not to see what God ﷻ said. He did not contemplate the meaning that God ﷻ had placed inside Adam, and the purpose for which God ﷻ created him. Iblees refused and disdained.

And the disbelievers (*kuffar*) followed Iblees in their rejection of the call of the Prophets. The Qur'an reports that they said:

مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْفَضِّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ

*This is just a human being like you who desires to gain
superiority over you
(Al-Mu'minun, 23:24)*

And God ﷻ says that they said:

مَا لِهَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ

*What is it with this Messenger that he eats food and walks
about in the marketplaces?
(Al-Furqan, 25:7)*

God ﷻ reminds us that consideration of the virtue of men should not be through the outward form of their bodies, but through meanings that are embedded in their souls which disbelievers are blind to. God ﷻ says:

وَتَرْنَهُمْ يُنْظَرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ

*and you see them staring at you, but they do not perceive
(Al-A'raf, 7:198)*

Meaning: they did not know how God ﷻ preferred them. Those who have been granted success to receive the virtue of what has been given, and what they have been chosen for, and what is prepared for them and then sought to attain it, have been given much good.

وَمَا يَذْكُرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

*yet none remembers, but the people of pith.
(Al-Baqarah, 2:269)*

CHAPTER XI

THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH HUMAN BEINGS WERE CREATED



The purpose for which human beings were created is: to worship God ﷻ, to be His vicegerents, to be helpers of God, and to cultivate His earth. God ﷻ tells us this in various places in the Qur'an:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

And I did not create the jinn and mankind except that they may worship Me
(Al-Dhariyat, 51:56)

And God ﷻ says:

إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

I am appointing on earth a vicegerent
(Al-Baqarah, 2:30)

And God ﷻ says:

لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

He will surely make them successors in the earth
(Al-Nur, 24:55)

And God ﷻ says:

وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ

*so that God may know those who help Him and His
messengers through the Unseen
(Al-Hadid, 57:25)*

And God ﷻ says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا أَنصَارَ اللَّهِ

*O you who believe, be helpers of God...
(Al-Saff, 61:14)*

And God ﷻ says:

هُوَ أَنشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَ فِيهَا

*He it is Who produced you from the earth,
and has given you to live therein
(Hud, 11:61)*

All this is to show that God ﷻ has given man the ability in these affairs and he is the only suitable one for it. As God ﷻ informs us in His speech to the angels:

إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

*Assuredly, I know what you know not
(Al-Baqarah, 2:30)*

God ﷻ says this because God only creates what He creates and only does what He does in four different aspects:

First: actions that only God ﷻ in His Essence can do, and this is origination (*ibda'at*). And the meaning of origination is to create something out of nothing, as is indicated in God's ﷻ Words:

بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Originator [Badee'] of the heavens and the earth
(Al-Baqarah, 2:117)

Second: actions that He has made His angels the servants of, and some scholars have called them the shaping responsibilities of the angels (*al-takweenat*). Meaning: **moving a thing from its deficiency to its wholeness in an imperceptible way.** Thus God ﷻ describes them:

فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا

by the ones who manage a command (Al-Nazi'at, 79:5)

And in another verse:

فَالْمَقْسِمَاتِ أَمْرًا

and those that apportion by command
(Al-Dhariyat, 51:4)

There are three types [of angels]:

One type works in the celestial realm (*al-ajraam al-samawiyyah*), and they are Israfil, Mika'il, Jibril, Rudwan and those who are encircling the Throne in multitudes, who are described in God's ﷻ Words:

وَتَرَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ حَافِينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ

وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

And you will see the angels encircling all round the Throne, glorifying with praise of their Lord, and judgement will be made between them with truth, and it will be said, 'Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds!' (Al-Zumar, 39:75)

And God ﷻ says:

الَّذِينَ يَجُلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ
وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا
فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ

Those who bear the Throne and those around it glorify with praise of their Lord, and they believe in Him, and they ask forgiveness for those who believe: 'Our Lord, You embrace all things in [Your] mercy and knowledge. So forgive those who repent and follow Your way and shield them from the chastisement of Hell-fire.

(*Ghafir*, 40:7)

The second type [of angel] works on the atmospheric world (*al-arkaan al-hawa'iyyah*), such as the angels that govern the air and bring forth the clouds. God ﷻ describes them:

وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ عُرْفًا

By those sent in succession
(*Al-Mursalat*, 77:1)

And God ﷻ says:

وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غُرُقًا

By those that wrest violently
(*Al-Nazi'at*, 79:1)

The third type [of angel] are those whose role is to maintain the earth (*tadbeer al-ard*). Such as those that God ﷻ describes in His Words:

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِّنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ، مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ

*For him are attendants, to his front and to his rear,
guarding him through God's command*

(Al-Ra'd, 13:11)

And such as the one described by the Prophet ﷺ when he said that God ﷻ sends an angel to blow the spirit¹⁹ into the fetus. And also there are Al-Hafeez, Al-Raqeeb and Al-'Ateed. And there are angels that God ﷻ describes in His Words:

إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُمَدِّدَ رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آلَافٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُنزَلِينَ * بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّن فَوْرِهِمْ هَذَا يُمَدِّدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ

When you were saying to the believers, 'Is it not sufficient for you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down? / Yea, if you are patient and fear, and they come against you instantly, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels accoutred'.

(Aal 'Imran, 3:124-125)

And the third aspect are the actions that God ﷻ has subjugated the elements (*arkaan*) for and created things of the world for, such as giving burning and diminishing for fire, and giving moisturization and quenching of thirst to water. God ﷻ has subjugated to man something of the inanimate (*jamadat*) and the animate (*namiyat*) and other things. God ﷻ says:

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَائِبَيْنِ ۖ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ

and He subjugated for you the sun and the moon, moving constantly, and subjugated for you the day and the night,
(Ibrahim, 14:33)

And other similar verses.

The fourth aspect are the material trades and crafts (*al-sina'at wa al-mihan al-mahsoosah*) that God ﷻ has made man serve in and fulfill his vicegerency through. There are six things that are necessary to partake in craftsmanship: the material element (*al-'unsor*); space and time; movement; limbs, and a tool.

This is something that is specific to human beings that the angels were not made suitable for, just as He ﷻ made angels suitable for matters that human beings are not suitable for. God ﷻ gave every angel amongst the angels a known station (*maqamon ma'loomon*). God ﷻ says about them:

وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ

And there is not one of us, but has a known station
(Al-Saffat, 37:164)

And God ﷻ also gave people known stations. God says:

كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

each party rejoicing in what is with them
(Al-Rum, 30:32)

And God ﷻ says:

أُنظِرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ

*See how We have given preference to some
of them over others
(Al-Isra', 17:21)*

And the Prophet ﷺ said: 'Every person will be facilitated to that for which he was created.'²⁰

But generally, angels do not disobey God ﷻ in what they are commanded to do. God ﷻ describes them:

مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاطٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

*angels, stern, mighty, who do not disobey God in what He
commands them, but do what they are commanded.
(Al-Tahrim, 66:6)*

Whereas human beings are between those who obey and those who disobey. So there are in general three kinds of human beings:

One kind fails to keep God's commands and completely remove themselves from what they are created to do. They follow the footsteps of Satan and worship idols (*taghoot*) besides God ﷻ .

The second kind expend their utmost effort, such as those described in God's ﷻ Words:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ
قَالُوا سَلَامًا * وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا * وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ
رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا * إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ
مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا * وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ

ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا * وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ
الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ^٤ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا * يُضْعَفُ
لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَخْلُدُ فِيهِ مُهَانًا * إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ
عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ^٥ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا
رَحِيمًا * وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّهُ يَنْبُؤُا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَتَابًا * وَالَّذِينَ
لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا * وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا
بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا * وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ
لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ^٦ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا *
أُولَئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْعُرْفَةَ^٧ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيهَا سَلَامًا
* خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا حَسَنَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا

And the [true] servants of the Compassionate One are those who walk upon the earth modestly, and who, when the ignorant address them, say [words of] peace; / and who spend the night before their Lord, prostrating and standing [in worship], / and who say, 'Our Lord, avert from us from the chastisement of Hell. Truly its chastisement is abiding. / It is truly a wretched abode and residence!' / And who, when they expend, are neither prodigal nor parsimonious; but between such lies moderation; / and [those] who do not call on another god along with God, nor slay the soul which God has forbidden, except with due cause, and who do not commit

fornication— for whoever does that shall meet with retribution; / doubled will be the chastisement for him on the Day of Resurrection and he will abide therein abased; / except for him who repents, and believes, and acts righteously, for such, God will replace their evil deeds with good deeds, for God is ever Forgiving, Merciful. / And whoever repents and acts righteously, indeed turns to God with due repentance; / and those who do not give false testimony, and, when they come across senseless talk, they pass by with dignity; / and those who, when they are reminded of the revelations of their Lord, do not fall on them deaf and blind;
 (Al-Furqan, 25:63-76)

And the third kind oscillates between these two paths. God ﷻ says:

وَأَخْرُونَ اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا
 عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

And [there are] others, who have confessed their sins, they have mixed a righteous deed with another that was bad. It may be that God will relent to them.

Truly God is Forgiving, Merciful.

(Al-Tawbah, 9:102)

So God ﷻ will be beautiful (*ihsan*) towards the one whose good deeds outweigh his bad.

And about these three kinds of people God ﷻ says:

وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً * فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ *
 وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ *

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ * أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ * فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

*and you will be three kinds: / Those of the right [hand]
– what of those of the right [hand]? / And those of the left
[hand] – what of those of the left [hand]? / And the
foremost, the foremost: / they are the ones brought
near [to God] / in the Gardens of Bliss,
(Al-Waqi'ah, 56:7-12)*

And then they are mentioned again later in the Surah.
God ﷻ says:

فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ * فَرَوْحٌ وَرَيْحَانٌ وَجَنَّتُ نَعِيمٍ * وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ
أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ * فَسَلَامٌ لَكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ * وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكْفِرِينَ
الضَّالِّينَ * فَزُلْزُلٌ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ * وَتَصْلِيَةٌ جَهِيمٍ * إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ *
فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

*Thus if he be of those brought near, / then repose, and a
goodly provision, and a garden of Bliss. / And if he be of
those of the right [hand], / then 'Peace be to you', [a
greeting] from those of the right [hand]. / But if he be of the
deniers, the erring, / then a welcome of boiling water, / and a
roasting in Hell-fire. / This indeed is the certain truth. / So
glorify the Name of your Lord, the Tremendous.
(Al-Waqi'ah, 56:88-96)*

Many people disobey God ﷻ and do not follow His
dictates. But God ﷻ uses them in spite of themselves and
without them realizing; to do what they did not intend in
His ﷻ service. Like Pharoah taking Moses ﷺ and raising

him, and his gathering the magicians and being the cause of their coming to have faith in God ﷻ and in Moses ﷺ. Or like what Joseph's ﷻ brothers did to him, leading Joseph to come to power in Egypt and him being able to do what he did. In this they are as the poem says:

You intended to harm me, but you brought me joy
Sometimes people do good without being aware

And another poet said:

He did me a good turn but didn't intend it
So I accepted it and considered it from his sins
Sometimes an action comes from someone
You praise the action but blame the actor

Thus, an act can be praiseworthy while the person who performed it is blameworthy. As it is said:

Perhaps something will come to you whose actors
You do not praise but you praise the actions

God ﷻ has created everything in the world for human beings. God ﷻ says:

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ

*He Who assigned to you the earth for a couch and heaven
for an edifice; and sent down from the heaven water,
wherewith He brought forth fruits for your provision
(Al-Baqarah, 2:22)*

And God ﷻ says:

وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

And the cattle, He created them for you. In them there is warmth, as well as [other] uses, and of them you eat;

(Al-Nahl, 16:5)

And God ﷻ says:

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِنْهُ

And He has disposed for you whatever is in the heavens, and whatever is in the earth, all being from Him.

(Al-Jathiah, 45:13)

And God ﷻ says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْفُلُوكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ

Have you not seen that God has disposed for you all that is in the earth, and [that] the ships run upon the sea

(Al-Hajj, 22:65)

And God ﷻ says:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ

سُيُومٌ * يُنْبِتُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالنَّخِيلَ وَالْأَعْنَابَ

وَمِنْ كُلِّ الشَّجَرِ لَكُمْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةٌ لِقَوْمٍ يَنْفَكِرُونَ * وَسَخَّرَ

لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٌ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ

فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ * وَمَا ذَرَأَ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ * وَهُوَ الَّذِي

سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لِتَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً
تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَاجِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ * وَالْقَى فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوْسًا أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ
وَأَنْهَرًا وَسُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ * وَعَلَّمَتِ بِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

He it is Who sends down water from the heaven, whence you have drink, and whence are trees, whereat you let your animals graze. / With it He makes the crops grow for you, and olives and date-palms and vines and all kinds of fruit. Surely in that there is a sign for people who reflect. / And He disposed for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon and the stars are disposed by His command. Surely in that there are signs for people who understand. / And whatever He has created for you in the earth, diverse in hue. Surely in that there is a sign for people who remember. / And He it is Who disposed the sea, that you may eat from it fresh meat, and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear. And you see the ships ploughing therein; and that you may seek of His bounty, and that you might be thankful. / And He cast into the earth firm mountains, lest it should shake with you, and rivers and ways so that you might be guided / —and landmarks [as well], and by the star, they are guided.

(Al-Nahl, 16:10-16)

And He ﷻ permitted all of that for man. God ﷻ says:

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ

Say, 'Who has forbidden the adornment of God which He has brought forth for His servants, and the good things of [God's] sustenance?' (Al-A'raf, 7:32)

It is for man to benefit from everything that is in the world in a manner that is permitted by the Shari'ah, whether in his food, his medicine, his clothing, his perfumes, his vehicles, his ornaments, or in the pleasure of sounds and sights. He should reflect through them, and benefit from the knowledge of them. He should follow things that are beautiful, and avoid things that are ugly. God ﷻ informs us of the benefits of all existent things through the Prophets ﷺ, or through the inspiration of the *awliya'* (saints) ﷺ.

Thus, it is the duty of every human being to know the benefits of the animals, to know their natures and to benefit from them in food, clothing, drink and medicine. And it is the duty of every man to know their characters and actions and states and to benefit from them by bringing forth what is good and avoiding what is harmful. He did well the one who said: 'I learned from everything the best of what is in it. I even learned from the dog the excellence of it guarding its owner; and from the crow who rises early to fulfil its needs.' God ﷻ shows this when he describes the bee:

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ *
 ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ
 مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ

And your Lord revealed to the bee, [saying]: 'Choose among the hills habitations and among the trees, and among the trellises which they raise. / Then eat from every [kind of] fruit, and follow the ways of your Lord, [ways] made easily accessible'. There comes forth from their bellies a drink of diverse hues, wherein is a cure for mankind.

(Al-Nahl, 16:68-69)

The verses show us that it is man's duty to follow the example of the bee in its following the revelation (*wahy*) of its Lord, for it does not go beyond the revelation of God in seeking out its benefits. **Likewise, man should not go beyond the revelation of God in seeking out benefits by choice. And God is The Guide (*Al-Hadi*).**

CHAPTER XII

THE DISPARITIES BETWEEN HUMAN BEINGS AND THEIR DIFFERENT STATIONS



All things in their createdness **have an equality to them** (*mutasawiyah*) with no disparities (*gayr mutafawitah*) in that they were created with [divine] wisdom. God ﷻ brings this to our attention when He ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوُّتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ

You do not see in the Compassionate One's creation any irregularity. Then cast your eyes again:

Do you see any fissure?

(*Al-Mulk*, 67:3)

But things differ in that every created thing has a specific benefit. And of all the things God ﷻ has created, nothing differs more than the differences and disparities found between human beings. God ﷻ says:

وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا

when verily He created you in stages

(*Nuh*, 71:14)

And He ﷻ says:

وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سُلْحِرِيًّا وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

and raised some of them above others by degrees, so that some of them may take others in service, and the mercy of your Lord is better than what they amass.

(Al-Zukhruf, 43:32)

And He ﷻ says:

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ۗ وَالْآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا

See how We have given preference to some of them over others. And truly the Hereafter is greater in degrees and greater in preferment.

(Al-Isra', 17:21)

And He ﷻ says:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَٰكِن لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ

If God had willed, He would have made you one community, but that He may try you in what He has given to you

(Al-Ma'idah, 5:48)

And He ﷻ says:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ خِلَافَتٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ

And He it is Who has made you successors in the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees, so that He may try you in what He has given you (Al-An'am, 6:165)

And He ﷻ says:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً ۗ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ * إِلَّا مَن رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ ۗ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ

Had your Lord willed, He would have made mankind one community, but they continue to differ /except those on whom your Lord has mercy; and that is why He created them
(Hud, 11:118-119)

And regarding this God ﷻ informs us:

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطْعٌ مُّتَجَوِّزَاتٌ وَجَنَّتْ مِّنْ أَعْنَبٍ وَزَرْعٌ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنَوَانٌ ۖ وَغَيْرُ صِنَوَانٍ يُسْقَىٰ بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنُفِضَ لِبَعْضِهَا عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فِي الْأَكْلِ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

And on the earth are tracts neighbouring each other, and gardens, of vines and sown fields, and date-palms sharing one root, and date-palms otherwise, watered by the same [source of] water; and We make some of them to excel others in flavour. Surely in that are signs for a people who understand.
(Al-Ra'd, 13:4)

The wisdom behind this is that man cannot function on his own, and if he were alone, he would not last long. He needs clothes to cover him, and he needs food. He does not find clothing made, and he does not find his food cooked; whereas animals find what they need and do not need to prepare it. Man is forced to make his clothes and prepare his food; and that preparation demands that he have tools that he cannot do without.

Man alone is not able to prepare all the things he needs to live a good life. Human beings need to share and cooperate. Thus, God ﷻ made for every people different trades and skills that are different from each other, so that they can divide the trades between them. Each of them takes up a type of industry and does it with energy and ease. God ﷻ says:

فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

But they split into sects regarding their affair, each party rejoicing in what is with them.

(Al-Mu'minun, 23:53)

For that reason wisdom necessitates that they have different bodies, and different faculties and aspirations (*himam*). This is so that they can be as the Prophet ﷺ said: 'Act, for all of you will be facilitated for what you were created to do.'²¹ And God ﷻ says:

قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ

Say: 'Everyone acts according to his [own] character

(Al-Isra', 17:84)

So humans' livelihoods are divided (*qismah*) between them as God ﷻ indicates in the preceding verses and in the following verse:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ * إِلَّا مَن رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ^{٢٢} وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

Had your Lord willed, He would have made mankind one community, but they continue to differ / except those on whom your Lord has mercy
(Hud, 11:118-119)

The difference [between people] is clear.

When one considers people in their different objectives and aspirations in their trades, in reality they are subjugated (*musakhkharin*) [to do these things], even though outwardly they appear to be choosing them (*mukhtareen*).

The Prophet ﷺ indicated the benefit of the disparities and differences between people and their different classes when he said: **‘People will remain in a good state as long as they distinguish themselves amongst one another [*ma tabayanu*], but if they all become equal, they will perish.’**²² And God ﷻ is The Guide (*Al-Hadi*).

CHAPTER XIII

THE REASONS FOR DISPARITIES BETWEEN PEOPLE



There are seven reasons why there are disparities between people:

First are the differences in temperaments (*amzija*), and the disparities in their [elemental] nature (*al-teenah*), and the differences in physiognomy (*khilqah*). This is indicated in the hadith that says: ‘When God ﷻ desired to create Adam ﷺ, He ordered that a handful [of earth] be taken from all over the earth. So the children of Adam come based on that earth (*teenatiha*). Thus, there are red people, white people, black people, easy people (*al-sahl*), difficult people (*al-hazn*), and some that are good (*al-tayyeb*) and some that are bad (*al-khabeeth*).’²³ Regarding this God ﷻ says:

وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكِدًا

As for the good land, its vegetation comes forth by permission of its Lord. While as for the bad, it comes forth only miserably
(*Al-A'raf*, 7:58)

And God ﷻ says:

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ

He it is Who forms you in the wombs as He will
(Aal 'Imran, 3:6)

Second is the differences in the states (*ahwal*) of one's parents in terms of righteousness or corruption. One can inherit from his parents the effects of their beautiful character or ugly character, just as he inherits a resemblance of their physiognomies. Thus, God ﷻ says:

وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا

Their father had been a righteous man
(Al-Kahf, 18:82)

It is said: God says in the Torah: 'If I am pleased, I bless, (*barakt*) and my blessing reaches the seventh generation; and if I am angry (*sakhat*), I punish, and my punishment reaches the seventh generation.' This indicates that the effects of any good or evil that a person acquires and assumes are inherited up until the seventh generation.

Third are the differences in what the semen (*nutfab*) consists of from which the child develops, and the womb blood (*dam al-tamath*) in which the child grows. Both have an effect according to their goodness or badness. Hence, the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Choose where you plant your seed for genealogy is of great influence (*al-'irq dassas*).'²⁴

And he ﷺ said: 'The one who mates is a sower, so look to where one of you plants his seed.'²⁵

And he ﷺ said: 'Beware of *khadra*' *al-diman*,' and it was said: 'what is *khadra*' *al-diman*? And he said: 'It is a beautiful woman from bad origins.'²⁶

Fourth are the differences in what he receives from breastmilk and from the goodness of the food on which he was brought up. And regarding the effects of breastfeeding,

the Prophet ﷺ said: **‘breast milk changes temperament.’**²⁷ And as the Arabs say regarding one they are praising: *‘Lillah darruh.’*

Fifth are the differences in how they are disciplined and what they are taught and also what habits they are naturalized into, whether good or bad. The right of the child on the parents is that they give him the manners of the Shari’ah, and to bring to his mind the truth, and habituate him into doing good. The Prophet ﷺ said: **‘Command them to prayer at seven, and discipline them for not doing it at ten.’**²⁸

It is necessary to keep the child away from the company of the bad, for a child is like wax, he takes the form of whomever he is affected by. Also they should make praise and dignity beautiful in his eyes, and make blame and humiliation bad in his eyes. He should also be made to not be greedy about food or drink, and to be moderate in partaking in them and to be made accustomed to go against his appetite. He should also be made accustomed to avoid silly people, and to sleep very little during the day, for it is a cause of laziness. He should become used to deliberating before acting or speaking. And he should be prevented from boasting to his friends and from hitting, cursing, or indulging in futile things. He should also be prevented from indulging in silver and gold. And he should be habituated to retain ties of kinship and good performance of religious duties.

Some of the people of wisdom (*hukama’*) said: it is of the happiness of a human being that he find someone when he is young who habituates him to follow the Shari’ah until he reaches adulthood. Then when he does, and he knows what he is responsible for and finds that it is consistent with

what he has been habituated to, this will strengthen his inner sight (*baseeraturah*), and will enable him to fulfil his duties with determination.

Sixth are the differences in who he associates with, and whose path he then follows.

Do not ask about a man, ask about his friend

Seventh are the differences, once one becomes independent, in the effort exerted in purifying (*tazkiyah*) oneself with knowledge and action.

The virtuous one who is complete in virtue is the one who has all of these causes for happiness. He comes from a good [elemental] nature (*teenah*), has a balanced temperament, and descends from righteous parents and people of trustworthiness and uprightness. He was composed of a good seed and from good womb blood, and in accordance with the Shari'ah. He was nursed with good milk; and from the time he was young until maturity, he had good caretakers who taught him good manners and protected him from the company of foul people. And once he achieved maturity, he followed a true madhhab, and exerted himself to know the truth, hastening to virtuous acts. Thus, all the good of this world, from all of its directions, has been gathered in the one who has been granted success in all of these things. God ﷻ says:

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
لَأَكَلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ

And had they observed the Torah and the Gospel, and what was revealed to them from their Lord, they would surely

*have received nourishment from above them
and from beneath their feet. (Al-Ma'idah, 5:66)*

And he will be among those whom God ﷻ describes:

وَإِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الْأَخْيَارِ

*Lo! In Our sight they are verily of the elect, the excellent.
(Sad, 38:47)*

And the lowly (*al-rathel*) one who is complete in lowliness is the one who has the opposite of all the things mentioned.

And know that the one whose states are good benefits from everything he hears and sees whether good or bad. Whereas the one whose states are bad will be harmed by everything he hears and sees. God ﷻ says:

وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكِدًا

*As for the good land, its vegetation comes forth by
permission of its Lord. While as for the bad,
it comes forth only miserably...*

(Al-A'raf, 7:58)

Bad soil, even if the seed is good and the water is good, only produces bad vegetation. Whereas good soil, even if the seed is not very good and the water is brackish, will only bring forth good vegetation. Thus, God ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطْعٌ مُتَجَوِّرَةٌ وَجَنَّتْ مِّنْ أَعْنَبٍ وَزَرْعٍ وَنَخِيلٍ صِنَوَانٍ
وَعَيْرٍ صِنَوَانٍ يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَحِدٍ وَنَفِضِلٌ بَعْضُهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الْأَكْلِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

And on the earth are tracts neighbouring each other, and gardens, of vines and sown fields, and date-palms sharing one root, and date-palms otherwise, watered by the same [source of] water; and We make some of them to excel others in flavour. Surely in that are signs for a people who understand.

(Al-Ra'd, 13:4)

And God ﷻ says:

قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءً وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي
ءَاذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى

Say: 'For those who believe it is guidance and a healing; but as for those who do not believe, there is a deafness in their ears, and they are blind to it

(Fussilat, 41:44)

And God ﷻ says:

وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ
إِلَّا خَسَارًا

And We reveal of the Qur'an that which is a cure, and a mercy for believers; though it only increases the evildoers in loss

(Al-Isra', 17:82)

CHAPTER XIV

EXPLAINING PROPHETIC LINEAGE AND WHY IT IS PREFERRED OVER THE REST OF CREATION



Divine wisdom dictated that Prophetic lineage be a singular kind (*sinfan munfaridan*) and one type (*naw'an wahidan*) falling between man and angel and sharing in each of their characteristics in some way. They [the Prophets] are like angels in their knowing about (*ittila'ihim 'ala*) the kingdom of the heavens and the earth (*malakut al-samawat wa al-ard*). And they are like man in their need for food and drink. They fall between two kinds: they are like coral; they are rocks that look like trees with pruned branches, and like date palms; a tree that is like animals in its need for fertilization, and it ends if its head is cut off.

God ﷻ ordained Prophethood in the descendants of Abraham ﷺ and in the descendants of Noah ﷺ before him. God ﷻ says:

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ

*And verily We sent Noah and Abraham and We ordained
among their seed prophethood and the Scripture
(Al-Hadid, 57:26)*

And God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ *
ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Lo! God preferred Adam and Noah and the House of Abraham and the House of 'Imrān above the worlds, / the seed of one another; God is Hearer, Knower.

(Aal 'Imran, 3:33-34)

For the Prophets ﷺ are like humans in terms of bodies, but like angels in terms of spirits. They are supported with spiritual power (*quwwah ruhaniyyah*) and are singled out for it. As God ﷻ says about Jesus ﷺ:

وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ

and supported him with the Holy Spirit.

(Al-Baqarah, 2:87)

And God ﷻ says about our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ:

نَزَّلَ بِهِ الرُّوحَ الْأَمِينُ * عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ * بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ

brought down by the Trustworthy Spirit, / upon your heart, that you may be [one] of the warners, / in a clear Arabic tongue.

(Al-Shu'ara, 26:193-195)

The Prophets are singled out for this Spirit so that they are able to receive (*yaqbalu*) from the angels because of the similitude (*munasabah*) they share with these spirits. And they deliver (*yulqu*) to people because of their human similitude (*al-munasabah al-bashariyyah*). Thus God ﷻ says:

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكًا لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّا يَلْبَسُونَ

And had We appointed him an angel, We would assuredly have made him a man; and We would have assuredly confused for them what they are confusing.

(Al-An'am, 6:9)

Indicating that it is not in the power of the commonality of people who are not singled out with that Spirit to receive (*yaqbalu*) except from human beings.

The disbelievers (*kuffar*) are blinded from perceiving this station (*manzilah*) and from the virtues of the Prophets, thus they deny their Prophethood. God ﷻ says about them:

قَالُوا إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَصُدُّونَا عَمَّا كَانَتْ يَعْبُدُ

ءَابَاؤُنَا فَأْتُونَا بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ

They said, 'You are but mortals like us, desiring to bar us from that which our fathers used to worship.

So bring us a clear warrant'.

(Ibrahim, 14:10)

The Prophets ﷺ compared to the rest of humanity are like humanity in comparison to animals and like the heart in comparison to the rest of the faculties (*jawarih*). Moreover, the station (*manzilah*) of the Prophets ﷺ to their nations (*ummamihim*) is like the station of the sun to the moon. And the station of the Prophets' knowledge to the knowledge of their nations is like the station of the radiance of the sun to the light of the moon. For as God ﷻ says:

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا

He it is Who made the sun a radiance, and the moon a light

(Yunus, 10:5)

For as the moon draws its light (*muqtabas*) from the radiance of the sun and is restricted to it (*qasir 'anha*); so is the station of a Prophet's nation to their Prophet, and the station of that nation's knowledge to the knowledge of their Prophet. And just as there is no moonlight except through the sun; people's knowledge and the purification of their souls through sacred laws are only achieved through the Prophets. God ﷻ indicates this in His Words:

رَبَّنَا وَأَبْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

*Our Lord! And send among them a messenger, one of them,
who shall recite to them Your signs, and teach them the
Book and Wisdom, and purify them;
You are the Mighty, the Wise.
(Al-Baqarah, 2:129)*

God ﷻ purifies the Prophets through the angel, and purifies the rest of mankind with sacred law through the Prophets; like a seal with writing that imprints that impression in different candlewax.

HOW GOD GUIDES EVERYTHING TO ITS BENEFIT



God ﷻ guides everything He creates to its benefit, for as God says:

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ

He said, 'Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its [peculiar] nature and then guided [it]'.

(TaHa, 20:50)

However, His guidance to the **inanimate** (*jamadat*) is through subjugation (*taskheer*) only, such as earth-bound things (*al-ashya' al-ardiyyah*) which, if left alone, incline downwards, and like fire which inclines upwards.

And He guides **animals** to acts that they do through subjugation and inspiration (*ilham*), such as **bees** and how they manage their affairs and make hexagonal homes and honey. And like the termite builds its colony, and like the spider weaves its web.

And He guides **the angels** through subjugation and inspiration and through the intellect's instinct (*badeehat al-aql*) and through what he gave them of necessary knowledges.

As for **man**, God ﷻ guides him through all these means in addition to **thought** (*fikr*) and **careful consideration** (*rawiyyah*). Thus, there is **subjugation** of his soul and many

of his movements and other actions. And he is **inspired** as an infant to breastfeed and suckle the breast and ask for nourishment, and if he is in pain, he complains through crying. And through the **intellect's instinct** (*badeehat al-aql*) he comes to know the principles of the sciences. And through **thought** he infers the unknown from the known.

Man is born denuded of the knowledges that God ﷻ has made known to the animals through inspiration, and of the clothing and weapons that He gave animals through subjugation. Nevertheless, through the intellect and the power to learn and acquire clothing and weapons and various tools, God entrusted man (*wakkalahu*) with the ability to benefit himself and enabled him to do so.

This is an advantage not a shortcoming; an honour not a defect. By giving man reason, contemplation, discernment, and dexterity (*al-yadd al-'amilah*), God ﷻ has given man everything. Had man been given everything the way animals are given piecemeal, he would have been denied (*muni'a*) everything because using part of it (*ba'duhu*) would have prevented him from using other parts (*al-ba'd*).

Regarding man's ability to attain what he wants, God ﷻ says:

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ
السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

And God brought you forth from the bellies of your mothers while you did not know anything, and He gave you hearing and sight and hearts that perhaps you might give thanks.

(*Al-Nahl*, 16:78)

Some have thought that from among all the animals, man was created by God ﷻ lacking. For people were not

given weapons with which to defend themselves the way many animals have weapons, such as fangs and claws. They were not given ‘clothing’ like animals. Indeed, they are forced to clean their bodies, unlike animals.

Thus, they said that God ﷻ says:

وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا

for man was created weak.

(*Al-Nisa'*, 4:28)

And yet not absolutely.

The well-versed (*al-muhassilin*) have affirmed that man, even if he is weak compared to The Maker (*Al-Bari*) ﷻ and the Highest Assembly (*Al-Mala' Al-A'la*), is not deficient compared to all the animals in terms of perspective. For God ﷻ in His brilliant wisdom gave each one of the animals a weapon as He knew would benefit it. For some he gave the ability to escape by running; such as the rabbit or the deer. For others he gave a spear in the form of a horn; such as the ox or the goat. And for others he gave maces in the form of hoofs; like the horse or donkey. And others have arrows in the form of quills such as the hedgehog. Moreover, He gave each one garments depending on its needs and inspired each one to do specific work according to its temperament.

Instead of these things, God gave man **thought** (*fikr*) and **discernment** (*tamyeez*) which enable him to utilize every tool and every garment depending on his need for them. He can use them whenever he wills and leave or replace them whenever he wants. The animals are not able to put down their weapons when they do not need them, nor are they able to replace them. This is stunning proof that man is whole and animals are lacking.

Through thought (*fikr*) and careful consideration (*ra-wiyyah*) man compels animals which are stronger than him. This is because through his intellect (*fikr*) he is able to prepare tools with which to hunt or capture them.

Hence, the intellect (*aql*) that was given to man [by God] to attain all that he needs is higher and more noble. For it is a mirror that were he to polish it, he would be able to know the kingdom of the heavens and the earth (*malakut al-samawat wa al-ard*). And God knows best.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW GOD GUIDES EVERYTHING TO ITS BENEFIT



Some of the people of wisdom (*hukama'*) have said: God created perfection in everything He created that it is drawn to by its nature. And He guided it to be distinguished by it through subjugation. For God ﷻ says:

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ، ثُمَّ هَدَى

He said, 'Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its [peculiar] nature and then guided [it]'.

(*TaHa*, 20:50)

And man has happinesses that have been made available to him, and they are the blessings mentioned in God's ﷻ Words:

وَإِنْ تَعَدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا

If you count God's blessing, you will never number it

(*Al-Nahl*, 16:18)

All blessings and happinesses in general are of two kinds:
A permanent kind that does not perish or change: and these are the blessings of the world to come.

And a kind that perishes and changes: and these are the blessings of this world.

Unless the blessings of this world lead us to those happinesses, they are *like a mirage in a plain which the thirsty man supposes to be water until he comes to it and finds it to be nothing* (Al-Nur, 24:39).

[And they are] delusion (*ghurur*), temptation (*fitnah*), and chastisement (*'athab*), as God ﷻ says in His Book:

وَمَا الْحَيَوةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَعُ الْغُرُورِ

*And what is this present life but the delusion
of enjoyment?
(Aal 'Imran, 3:185)*

And:

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ
مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَرَ
أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَدِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَتَاهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا
حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالْأَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ نَفْصَلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُفَكِّرُونَ

*The likeness of the life of this world is only as water, which
We send down from the heaven, then the plants of the
earth mingle with it, whereof mankind eat, and cattle [eat]
until, when the earth has taken on its ornaments, and has
adorned itself, and its inhabitants think that they are
masters of it, Our command comes upon it by night or day,
and We make it as reaped corn, as though the previous day
it had not flourished. Thus do We detail the signs for a
people who reflect.*

(Yunus, 10:24)

And the poet spoke truly when he said:

The world is like a vision that brought joy
For an hour to he who saw it, and then it passed

SECTION

MAN VERY OFTEN MISTAKES THE PATH TO HAPPINESS

Everyone without exception inclines to his own happiness and strives to achieve it. But very often man is mistaken and thinks what is not happiness in himself is happiness and so he is deluded by it. He becomes like the one described in God's ﷻ Words:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيَعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْثَانُ مَاءً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ
لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ فَوَفَّاهُ حِسَابَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

And as for those who disbelieve, their works are like a mirage in a plain which the thirsty man supposes to be water until he comes to it and finds it to be nothing, and he finds God there, Who pays him his account in full; and God is swift at reckoning.

(Al-Nur, 24:39)

And his ﷻ words:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ ۖ أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادٍ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ
عَاصِفٍ ۖ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الصَّلَٰلُ الْبَعِيدُ

The likeness of those who disbelieve in their Lord: their works are as ashes over which the wind blows hard on a

tempestuous day; they have no power over anything that they have earned. That is extreme error.

(Ibrahim, 14:18)

And the poet spoke truly when he said:

Everyone tries a trick whereby he hopes
To push away harm and bring forth good
And man acts incorrectly with respect to his state
He might choose suffering over leaving things
alone

SECTION

PEOPLE WITH THEIR BLESSINGS ARE TWO GROUPS

Worldly blessings are blessings and happiness when they are enjoyed for what is correct and in a correct manner, and are scrutinized for the intent (*al-wajh*) for which they were created. For God ﷻ made the world bare (*'ariyah*) so that permanent blessings and true happiness can be attained to the extent possible. For each of them God has ordained a law (*hukm*) through which he clarified how it should be received and how it is to be dealt with.

However, in receiving them people have become two groups:

A group who receives them in the manner that God made them for man and so he benefited from them and they became sources of blessings and happiness. These are the ones described in God's ﷻ Words:

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْأُمُورِ

those who, if We empower them in the land, maintain the prayer, and pay the alms, and enjoin decency and forbid indecency. And with God rests the outcome of all matters.

(Al-Hajj, 22:41)

And his ﷺ words:

لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَلِدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ
خَيْرٌ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ

For those who were virtuous in this world, there will be a virtuous [reward]; and truly the abode of the Hereafter is better: And truly excellent is the abode of the God-fearing.

(Al-Nahl, 16:30)

And his ﷺ words:

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا لَنبُوْتَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ
وَلِأَجْرِ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

And those who emigrated for God's cause after they had been wronged, truly We shall lodge them in this world in a goodly lodging, and the reward of the Hereafter is surely greater, did they but know.

(Al-Nahl, 16:41)

Those people live a goodly life, as God ﷻ says:

فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً
We shall revive with a goodly life.
(Al-Nahl, 16:97)

And a group who do not receive them in the manner that God made them for man and he depended on them and they became a curse (*niqmah*) and misery (*shaqawah*) with which they are punished sooner and later. They are the ones God ﷻ describes in His Words:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَرْهَقَ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ

God only desires to punish them with these in the life of this world, and that their souls should depart while they are disbelievers.

(*Al-Tawbah*, 9:55)

SECTION

‘NO SOUL KNOWS WHAT HAS BEEN KEPT HIDDEN FOR THEM’

We cannot imagine the essence of the happinesses of the next world as long as we are in the abode of the lower world (*dar al-dunya*). Thus, God ﷻ says:

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ

For no soul knows what has been kept hidden for them in the way of joyous sights

(*Al-Sajdah*, 32:17)

And as the Prophet ﷺ said that his Lord ﷻ said: ‘I have prepared for My righteous slaves that which no eye has ever seen, and no ear has ever heard, and no human heart has ever conceived.’²⁹

There are two reasons why we are not capable of imagining it:

One is that man cannot know the truth of a thing and envisage (*tasawwur*) it until he perceives (*yudrikuh*) it himself. If he does not perceive it and it is not described for him, he is like a boy for whom the pleasure of sexual intercourse is described but whose reality he cannot envisage, until he reaches puberty and experiences it after puberty for himself, [or like describing a mirror to a blind person]. Our state with the pleasures of the next world is like that; for we do not apprehend (*tala'naaha*) them in reality until we experience them. When we apprehend them, we will be busy with joy and enjoyment and forget about all other pleasures. For God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغْلٍ فَكِهِونَ

Indeed today the inhabitants of Paradise are busy rejoicing;
(*YaSin*, 36:55)

Two is that each one of the faculties (*quwwah*) of the soul, and each part of the body has a pleasure specific to it that nothing else has a share in.

The pleasure of **sight** lies in looking upon what it finds beautiful.

The pleasure of **hearing** lies in listening to what it finds appealing.

The pleasure of **touch** rests in touching what it finds sensuous.

The pleasure of **fantasy** (*al-wahm*) lies in envisaging what is hoped for.

The pleasure of **imagination** (*al-takhayyul*) lies in imagining what one finds beautiful to envisage.

And the pleasure of **thought** (*al-fikr*) lies in something unknown becoming known.

Each one of these faculties and parts if faced with an affliction (*aaffah*) that prevents it from its desire (*shahwah*), and from apprehending its pleasure, becomes like a sick person who does not crave water even though he is thirsty. And even if he drinks, he does not feel pleasure. As the poet said:

He whose mouth is bitter with illness
Finds even sweet water bitter

Hence, the pleasures of the next world are pleasures that can only be perceived through pure intellect (*al-aql al-mahd*). And the intellects of most people in this abode are arrested and prevented from perceiving the realities of the pleasures of the next world; they do not feel them. A person like that is like someone who is numbed by an affliction that has befallen him, and so does not feel the cause of his pain. He is like a sick person who feels no hunger although his hunger harms him and the lack of food weakens him. He only feels hunger when the cause of his pain is gone.

Moreover, the intellects of most of us are lacking and are like the intellects of boys who have not yet reached manhood and come to know the truth of things. For boys, while they are still young, do not feel the pleasures and pains that men feel, and they make excuses through falsehoods and errors. Such are the ones whose minds are like those of boys and have not apprehended the realities. God ﷻ warned us not to be like them, for He says:

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَلَعِبٌ

And the life of this world is nothing but diversion and play.

(*Al-‘Ankabut*, 29:64)

And God ﷻ says:

فَلَا تَغُرَّتْكُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا يَغُرَّتْكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ

So do not let the life of this world deceive you, and do not let the Deceiver deceive you concerning God.

(Luqman, 31:33)

Because God ﷻ wanted to approximate those pleasure to the understanding of the commonality of people (*al-kaaffah*), he struck similitudes and examples to things that our senses perceive. Thus, God ﷻ says:

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وَعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَنْغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ. وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ

A similitude of the Garden promised to the God-fearing: therein are rivers of unstaling water, and rivers of milk unchanging in flavour, and rivers of wine delicious to the drinkers, and [also] rivers of purified honey; and there will be for them therein every fruit

(Muhammad. 47:15)

God ﷻ says this to clarify for the commonality of people (*al-kaaffah*) the deliciousness of those pleasures by comparing them to the deliciousness they have experienced in their food [in this world]. God ﷻ says: ‘*A similitude of the Garden promised to the God-fearing*’ and not ‘the Garden,’ to alert the elect (*al-khassah*) that this is a similitude and an example.

No matter how much man strives to apprehend those

happinesses, he has no path to them except through two ways:

One way is for one to depart this shell (*haykal*) and leave behind him this halting place (*manzil*) and then apprehend them. God ﷻ says:

يَوْمَ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيْمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ ءَامَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا حَيْرًا قُلْ أَنْظِرُوا إِنَّا مُنظِرُونَ

On the day that one of your Lord's signs comes it shall not benefit a soul to believe if it had not believed theretofore or earned in its belief some good.

Say: 'Wait, We too are waiting'.

(*Al-An'am*, 6:158)

The second way is for one to rid himself of sicknesses of the soul before he departs the shell. This is what God ﷻ refers to in His Words:

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا

In their hearts is a sickness; and God has increased their sickness

(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:10)

And to rid his soul of its sins, as described in God's ﷻ Words:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

Indeed God will but to rid you of sin, People of the House, and to purify you with a thorough purification.

(*Al-Ahzab*, 33:33)

Then he will be able to apprehend, from behind a thin veil, some of what has been prepared for him. As is related that Harithah said to the Prophet ﷺ: ‘My soul has turned away from the world, it is as though I am looking upon the Throne of my Lord prominent, and apprehending the people of Paradise visiting each other in it, and the people of the Fire howling in it.’ And the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘**Now you know, so stay firm.**’³⁰

And as *Amir al-Mu’mineen*, Ali ibn Abi Talib ؑ said: ‘Were the veil to be lifted [from me], my certainty would not increase.

CHAPTER XVII

MAN'S STATE IN THIS WORLD AND WHAT HE NEEDS TO TAKE AS PROVISION FROM IT



Man is a traveller in his world, and in his travels he has halting places (*manazil*), and the beginning of his travels are as God ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

وَقُلْنَا أَهْبَطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

*and We said, 'Go down some of you an enemy to the other;
and in the earth a dwelling shall be yours,
and enjoyment for a while'.*

(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:36)

And God ﷻ describes the children of man:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِن بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

*And when your Lord took from the Children of Adam,
from their loins their seed and made them testify against
themselves, 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yea, indeed
we testify', lest they should say on the Day of Resurrection,
'Truly, of this we were unaware'. (Al-A'raf, 7:172)*

And the end of man's travels is the Abode of Peace (*Dar Al-Salam*) and the Enduring Abode (*Dar Al-Qarar*).

In his travels man has four halting places (*manazil*):

His father's loins, his mother's womb, the surface of the earth, and the stopping place (*al-mawqif*).

And he has two states:

A state in which he is deposited (*mustawda'*), and this is his state while he is in these halting places.

And a state in which he is established, and this is his state in the Enduring Abode (*Dar Al-Qarar*).

And this is what God ﷻ refers to in His words:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ

لِقَوْمٍ يَفْقَهُونَ

And He it is Who produced you from a single soul, such that some are established and some are deposited. Verily We have distinguished the signs for a people who understand.

(*Al-An'am*, 6:98)

And the halting place (*manzil*) requires provision as long as man is on the surface of the earth, for he is labouring (*kadh*) and in travail (*kabad*) until he reaches the Enduring Abode. God ﷻ says:

يَأْتِيهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدًّا فَمَلِيقِهِ

O man! Verily you are labouring toward your Lord laboriously, and you will encounter it.

(*Al-Inshiqaq*, 84:6)

And God ﷻ says:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ

We certainly created man in travail.
(Al-Balad, 90:4)

Man is predisposed to search for ease (*al-rahah*), but people are of two kinds in their search for it:

A kind that is blinded to the hereafter and say:

وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُم بِذَلِكَ مِنْ

عِلْمٍ إِن هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ

'There is only our life in this world. We die and we live, and nothing but time destroys us'. Of that they have no knowledge; they are only making conjectures.

(Al-Jathiyah, 45:24)

Or they behave the way someone who says that behaves, even if they do not say it outright. They seek ease where there is no ease. They are like those described in God's ﷻ Words:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيَعَةٍ يُحْسِبُهُ الظَّمْثَانُ مَاءً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ

لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ فَوَفَّاهُ حِسَابَهُ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

And as for those who disbelieve, their works are like a mirage in a plain which the thirsty man supposes to be water until he comes to it and finds it to be nothing, and he finds God there, Who pays him his account in full; and God is swift at reckoning. (Al-Nur, 24:39)

And in God's ﷻ Words:

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ
 مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازِيدَتْ وَظُرَّتْ
 أَهْلَهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَدِירוْنَ عَلَيْهَا أَتَاهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا
 حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالْأَمْسِ

*The likeness of the life of this world is only as water, which
 We send down from the heaven, then the plants of the
 earth mingle with it, whereof mankind eat, and cattle [eat]
 until, when the earth has taken on its ornaments, and has
 adorned itself, and its inhabitants think that they are
 masters of it, Our command comes upon it by night or day,
 and We make it as reaped corn, as though the previous
 day it had not flourished.*

(Yunus, 10:24)

They ask of the world what it cannot give. The poet spoke truly when he said:

I want from my time to give me
 What time itself cannot attain

And another poet said:

There were a people before us who hoped to straighten
 Life without toil, and it would not straighten

And a kind that knew world (*dunya*) and the hereafter and knew that the world is as God ﷻ says:

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

*There will be for you on earth an abode
and enjoyment for a while’.*
(Al-A‘raf, 7:24)

And God ﷻ says:

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُوٌّ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ
لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

*And the life of this world is nothing but diversion and play.
But surely the Abode of the Hereafter is indeed the [true]
Life, if they only knew.*
(Al-‘Ankabut, 29:64)

They know that this world is an abode for them in which they can be at peace. For God ﷻ says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ * ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

‘O soul at peace! / Return to your Lord, pleased, pleasing.
(Al-Fajr, 89: 27-28)

And they know that they need to journey in it, as the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Journey and you will have booty (*safiru taghnamu*).’³¹ And so they withstand hardship knowing that every difficulty (*ta‘ab*) that leads them to ease (*raha*) is ease and so they are happy (*su‘idu*). God ﷻ says:

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سَعِدُوا ففِي الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ
إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ عَطَاءٌ غَيْرَ مَجْذُورٍ

*But as for those who [by virtue of their past deeds] will have
been blest with happiness, [they shall live] in paradise,*

*therein to abide as long as the heavens and the earth
endure – unless your Sustainer wills it otherwise –
as a gift unceasing.*
(Hud, 11:108)

God made two useful tillages (*harthayn*) for two provisions (*zadayn*):

One of them is spiritual, such as knowledges, wisdoms (*al-hikam*), acts of worship (*al-ibadat*), courtesies (*al-aa-daab*), and noble character traits.

Its fruit is: eternal life and eternal bliss. Seeking much of it is praiseworthy and is almost always pursued by those who have come to know it and know its benefits.

The other one of them is material, such as money and furnishings and in general are the things God ﷻ mentions in the verse:

زَيْنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ
مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ

*Beautiful for mankind is love of lusts – of women, children,
stored-up heaps of gold and silver, horses of mark, cattle,
and tillage. That is the comfort of the life of this world; but
God – with Him is the more excellent abode.*

(Aal-‘Imran, 3:14)

Its fruit is: enjoyment of the trappings of temporary worldly life all of which are taken back from one once he leaves this world. None of it is of benefit except to the extent that one has used it to reach the eternal pleasures. God ﷻ says:

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مَتَاعٌ

*yet the life of this world in the Hereafter,
is but [a brief] enjoyment.
(Al-Ra'd, 13:26)*

Only one who is ignorant of its realities and its benefits is enamoured with relying on it. Seeking much of it is not condemned (*mathmoum*) unless it deters one from his [ultimate] destination (*maqsadiah*) and as long as it is dealt with in the proper manner and is utilized in a manner that benefits one in his destination. However, dealing with it in this manner and seeking much of it only happens if the ruler (*al-sultan*) is just and things are in moderation. And as a result people's standing (*maqamahom*) is preserved in accordance with sacred law. Then that person is as God ﷻ says:

وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ
كَانَ بِهِمْ خِصَاصَةٌ

*and do not find in their breasts any need of that which those
[others] have been given, but prefer [others] to themselves,
though they be in poverty.
(Al-Hashr, 59:9)*

If the situation is not as we described in terms of uprightness, then the only way is to adopt economy and restrictions and aim to reach [the ultimate destination] with what is available until one's journeying comes to an end.

The one aided with felicity (*al-muwaffaq*) in this world is the one who if he sees his soul unable to assimilate the two, concerns himself with what remains and is unconcerned with what is transitory. He chooses the next life over the life of this world and pays attention to this world

insofar as it aids him to reach the next life while he observes the sacred law and maintains what God ﷻ says:

يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا
وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ

O mankind! Indeed God's promise is true. So do not let the life of this world deceive you, and do not let the Deceiver deceive you concerning God.

(*Fatir*, 35:5)

He also observes the Prophet's ﷺ words: 'By God, what is there between myself and the world? I am to it like a rider who travelled on a hot summer's day and saw a tree and stopped to rest beneath its shade for an hour and then went and left it.'³²

And through a metaphor God ﷻ alerts us to the state of one who wants to rid himself of the net of the world:

إِنَّكَ اللَّهُ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اعْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ

'God will try you with a river; whoever drinks of it, is not of me, and whoever tastes it not, he is of me, except for him who scoops up with his hand.

(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:249)

And 'love of the *dunya*' as the Prophet ﷺ said: 'is the root of every sin.'³³ And it has been narrated the Prophet ﷺ said: 'He in whose heart dwells love of the *dunya* will be tried with three things: never-ending busyness, poverty that will never allow independence, and never-ending vain hopes.'³⁴

And the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘He whose greatest concern is the dunya, God will disorganize his affairs, and will put his poverty right before his eyes, and the world does not come to him except what has been decreed for him. And he whose greatest concern is the Hereafter, God will organize his affairs, and will make his wealth in his heart and the world will be forced to come to him.’³⁵

And this is the meaning of God’s ﷻ Words:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزَدْنَاهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ
الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ

And whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter, We will enhance for him his harvest; and whoever desires the harvest of this world, We will give him of it; but in the Hereafter he will have no share.

(Al-Shura, 42:20)

Knowing this and reaching it can only be through the mind being illuminated with the light of sacred law and depending on He who is the Master of Creation and He Who Commands All Things, Blessed be God ﷻ Lord of the Worlds.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE AND SACRED LAW AND THEIR NEED FOR EACH OTHER



Know that the intelligence (*aql*) is not guided except through sacred law, and sacred law is not discerned except through the intelligence. For the intelligence is like a foundation (*uss*) and sacred law is like a building. No foundation is useful unless there is a structure and no structure will stand firm if there is no foundation.

Moreover, the intelligence is like eyesight, and sacred law is like a ray. Eyesight is not useful if there is not an external ray, and a ray is not useful without eyesight. Hence God ﷻ says:

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ * يَهْدِي
بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ
الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ

*There has verily come to you from God a light, and a Book,
lucid, / whereby God guides whoever follows His good
pleasure to the ways of peace, and brings them forth from
the shadows into the light by His leave*
(*Al-Ma'idah*, 5:15-16)

Moreover, the intelligence is like a lamp and sacred law is like its oil; if there is no oil, there is no [illuminating] lamp and if there is no lamp, the oil will not light. God ﷻ says:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ ۗ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ ۗ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَلَ لِلنَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star kindled from a Blessed Tree, an olive neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow forth [of itself], though no fire touched it. Light upon light. God guides to His Light whom He will. And God strikes similitudes for men; and God is

Knower of all things.

(Al-Nur, 24:35)

Moreover, sacred law is an external intelligence, and the intelligence is an internal sacred law, and they support each other, indeed they are united. And because sacred law is an external intelligence, God ﷻ withdrew the word [and quality of] intelligence (*aql*) from the disbelievers in several verses of the Qur'an; such as in the verse:

صُمُّوا بِكُمْ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

deaf, dumb, blind – they do not comprehend (ya'qilun).

(Al-Baqarah, 2:171)

And because the intelligence is an internal sacred law, God ﷻ says describing the intelligence:

فَطَرَتَ اللَّهُ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا يَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ

a nature given by God, upon which He originated mankind.

There is no changing God's creation.

That is the upright religion

(Al-Rum, 30:30)

Thus, the intelligence (*al-aql*) is called religion.

And because they are united, God ﷻ says: *Light upon light* (*Al-Nur, 24:35*), meaning: **the light of sacred law and the light of the intelligence**. Then God ﷻ says: *God guides to His Light whom He will* (*Al-Nur, 24:35*) and so He made them one light.

In the absence of the intelligence, sacred law becomes incapacitated (*'ajz*) from most things, just as the eye is incapacitated in the absence of light.

And know that the intelligence in and of itself gives little benefit and sufficiency. It barely leads to the knowledge of things except their totalities and not their details. For example, it is like knowing that in general it is excellent to believe in the truth; to speak truthfully; to behave beautifully; to be just and to adhere to virtue etc., without these things being known individually (*shay' shay'*).

Sacred law defines the totalities of things and their details and identifies what should be believed individually, and what is just individually. Thus, for example, the intelligence does not make us know that the flesh of swine, blood, and alcohol are forbidden. Nor does it make us know that we must avoid eating at certain times, and that one cannot marry *thawat al-maharem*, and that sexual in-

tercourse with a menstruating woman is prohibited; the only way to know these things and the like is through sacred law.

Hence, sacred law is the system of correct beliefs and upright actions which guide one to his benefit in this life and the next; and whoever veers off its course has surely strayed from the even way.

And because there is no way for the intelligence to know this, God ﷻ says:

وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا

And We never chastise until We have sent a messenger.

(Al-Isra', 17:15)

And God ﷻ says:

وَلَوْ أَنَّا أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَوْلَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا

رَسُولًا فَنَتَّبِعَ آيَاتِكَ مِن قَبْلِ أَنْ نُنزِلَ وَنَخْزَىٰ

Had We destroyed them with a chastisement before him, they would have said: 'Our Lord, if only You had sent us a messenger, so that we might have followed those signs of Yours before we were [thus] abased and disgraced?'

(TaHa, 20:134)

The intelligence and sacred law are referred to with favor and mercy, for God ﷻ says:

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

And if not for the favor of God upon you and His mercy, you would have followed Satan, except for a few.

(Al-Nisa', 4:83)

What is meant by a few in this verse are the elect, the excellent (*al-mustafeen al-akhyar*).

CHAPTER XIX

ON THE VIRTUE OF SACRED LAW



Know that the laws of sacred law are in one way a prepared medicine that is complete, and was brought into being by He Who Commands All Things. And it is a medicine to attain (*mufeed*) eternal life, and perpetual well-being. God ﷻ says:

أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَن
مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا

Why, is he who was dead, and We gave him life, and appointed for him a light by which to walk among people, as him whose likeness is in darkness whence he cannot emerge? (Al-An'am, 6:122)

And God ﷻ says:

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِن
جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

And thus, have We revealed to you a Spirit from Our command. You did not know what the Book was, nor faith; but We have made it a light by which We guide whomever We will of Our servants. And verily you guide to a straight path, (Al-Shura, 42:52)

So He made it a Spirit in order to attain eternal life. And God ﷻ says:

قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءٌ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى

Say: 'For those who believe it is guidance and a healing; but as for those who do not believe, there is a deafness in their ears, and they are blind to it...

(Fussilat, 41:44)

And God ﷻ says:

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَ تَكْمٌ مَّوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ
وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O people! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord, and a healing for what is in the breasts, and a guidance, and a mercy for those who believe.

(Yunus, 10:57)

And in another way, it is **purifying water** that removes impurities (*al-anjas*) and abominations (*al-arjas*) in the soul. For God ﷻ says describing the Qur'an:

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَّابِيًا
He sends down water from the sky, whereat the valleys flow according to their measure, and the flood carries a scum that swells

(Al-Ra'd, 13:17)

And God ﷻ says:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

God only intends to keep (all sorts of) filth away from you, O members of the family (of the prophet), and to make you pure through a perfect purification.

(Al-Ahzab, 33:33)

And in another way, it is a **light and a lamp** that dispel darkness, confusion and ignorance. For God ﷻ says:

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ * يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

O people of the Book, there has come to you Our Messenger disclosing to you much of what you have been concealing of the Book, while He overlooks much. There has come to you, from God, a Light and a clear Book; / with it God guides those who follow His pleasure to the pathways of peace, and brings them out, by His will, from the depths of darkness into the light, and guides them to a straight path.

(Al-Ma'idah, 5:15-16)

And God ﷻ says:

اللَّهُ نُورٌ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكُوفٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُّبْرَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَّا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَلَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star kindled from a Blessed Tree, an olive neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow forth [of itself], though no fire touched it. Light upon light. God guides to His Light whom He will. And God strikes similitudes for men; and God is Knower of all things.

(Al-Nur, 24:35)

And in another way, it is a means of nearness to God ﷻ, for God ﷻ says:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَابْتَغُوا۟ اِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيْلَةَ

O you who believe, fear God, and seek the means to Him
(Al-Ma'idah, 5:35)

And God ﷻ says about those He praises:

اُو۟لٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُو۟نَ يَبْتَغُو۟نَ اِلٰى رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيْلَةَ

اَيُّهُمْ اَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُو۟نَ رَحْمَتَهُ

Those whom they call, [they themselves] seek a means to their Lord, which of them is nearer; and they hope for His mercy
(Al-Isra', 17:57)

And God ﷻ says:

وَاعْتَصِمُو۟ا بِحَبْلِ اللّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُو۟ا

And hold fast to God's bond, together, and do not scatter
(Aal 'Imran, 3:103)

And God ﷻ says:

فَلْيَرْقُوا فِي الْأَسْبَابِ

Then let them ascend by the means.

(*Sad*, 38:10)

And in another way, it is the straight path. God ﷻ says:

وَهَذَا صِرَاطُ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا

And this is the path of your Lord, a straight one.

(*Al-An'am*, 6:126)

And He ﷻ says:

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ

عَنْ سَبِيلِي ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

And that this is My straight path, so follow it; and do not follow other ways, lest it separate you away from His way. This is what He has ordained for you, that perhaps you will be God-fearing'.

(*Al-An'am*, 6:153)

SECTION

THE MEANING OF THE HOLY LAND

The people of wisdom said that the Holy Land mentioned in the following verse is—in the *dunya*—the sacred law (*al-shari'ah*), and in the next world is Heaven (*al-Jannah*). This is because if one enters it and does not turn back in flight, he will without a doubt attain the ultimate happiness (*al-sa'adah al-kubra*). God ﷻ says:

يَقْوِمِ أَدْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ

وَلَا تَرْجِعُوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ

O my people, enter the Holy Land which God has ordained for you, and do not turn back in flight ...

(Al-Ma'idah, 5:21)

As for Jerusalem (*Bayt Al-Maqdis*), it is on earth and whoever enters it does not warrant a reward; reward is earned through other means; one's entering the place—which is *Bayt Al-Maqdis*—is one of those means after he enters in a specific manner and in a specific state.

It is said: and in this Sanctuary (*Haram*) which is mentioned in God's ﷻ Words:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا ءَامِنًا وَيُنْخَظَفُ النَّاسُ مِنْ حَوْلِهِمْ

أَفِإِذَا بَطِلَ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ يَكْفُرُونَ

Or is it that they have not seen that We have appointed a secure Sanctuary, while people are carried away [by fear and despair] all around them? Is it that they believe in falsehood, and are [wont to be] ungrateful for God's grace?

(Al-'Ankabut, 29:67)

And Ja'far bin Muhammad Al-Sadeq asked some jurists about this verse and said: 'What was meant is Mecca,' and it was said: 'How wonderful, what land causes people to be carried away all around them more than Mecca?

This is proved by God's ﷻ Words after that:

وَمَا أَوْتِيْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَّعِ الْحَيَوَةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزَيَّنَّا لَهَا

وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

And whatever things you have been given are [only] the [short-lived] enjoyment of the life of this world and an ornament thereof; and what is with God is better and more lasting. Will you not understand?
(Al-Qasas, 28:60)

And also God's ﷻ Words:

وَإِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَسْكُنُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ
وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا نَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَتِكُمْ

سَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And when it was said to them: 'Dwell in this city, and eat therein wherever you will, and say, "Exoneration", and enter the gate, prostrating. We shall forgive you your transgressions; We shall give more to those who are virtuous',
(Al-A'raf, 7:161)

And the journeying that is promised is booty, because the Prophet ﷺ said: 'Journey and you will have booty (*safiru taghnamu*).'³⁶

As is the fleeing that is enjoined, for example, for God ﷻ says:

فَفِرُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُم مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

So flee unto God. Truly I am a clear warner to you from Him.

(Al-Dhariyat, 51:50)

As is the Greater Hajj which He called people to perform in His ﷻ Words:

وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ

*A proclamation from God and His Messenger to mankind
on the day of the Greater Pilgrimage
(Al-Tawbah, 9:3)*

And His ﷻ Words:

وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا

*It is the duty of people towards God to make the pilgrimage
to the House, if he is able to make his way there.
(Aal-'Imran, 3:97)*

And as is the Greater Jihad, as we see in God's ﷻ Words:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ

*And struggle (jahidu) in the way of God,
a struggle worthy of Him.
(Al-Hajj, 22:78)*

And as is the Great Hijrah, as we see in God's ﷻ Words:

أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً فَهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا

*'But was not God's earth spacious that you might have
emigrated therein?'
(Al-Nisa', 4:97)*

CLARIFYING THAT THE ONE WHO
DOES NOT PRACTICE SACRED
LAW AND WORSHIP HIS LORD
IS NOT HUMAN



Since man only becomes human through the intelligence, were we to imagine the intelligence removed from him, he would no longer be human. The phantasm (*shabah*) remaining before us is nothing more than a neglected beast, or an embodied image (*surah mumathalah*).

The intelligence is not complete—indeed it is not considered intelligence—until it is guided by sacred law, as previously mentioned. Hence, in several verses of the Qur’an God ﷻ denies that the disbelievers [have the quality of] intelligence because they divested themselves of being guided by sacred law, and being guided by sacred law is to worship God ﷻ.

Thus, a human being in reality is the one who worships God ﷻ and this is the purpose for which he was created, for God ﷻ says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ *
مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونَ

And I did not create the jinn and mankind except that they may worship Me. / I do not desire from them any provision, nor do I desire that they should feed Me.

(Al-Dhariyat, 51:56-57)

And as God ﷻ says:

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ

*And they were only commanded to worship
God devoting religion purely to Him*

(Al-Bayyinah, 98:5)

Everything created was created to perform a certain act, if that act is absent, then it is as if that created thing is non-existent (*ma'doom*). Hence, often something's name will be withdrawn from it if its act is lacking; such as saying that a weak horse is not a horse, or saying that a lowly person is not a human. And we say: 'so and so has neither eye nor ear,' if his eyes and ears do not work properly, even if their phantasms remain. Thus, God ﷻ says about those who do not benefit from these organs:

صُمُّوا بِكُمْ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

deaf, dumb, blind – they do not comprehend.

(Al-Baqarah, 2:171)

Man is human to the extent that he worships; for which he was created. He who worships and gives worship its due, has fulfilled his humanity, and he who rejects it has separated himself from his humanity and has become an animal or even lower than an animal. For as God ﷻ says describing the disbelievers:

إِنَّ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

*They are but as the cattle - nay, but they are further
astray from the way.*

(Al-Furqan, 25:44)

And God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الضَّمُّ الْبِكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

*Surely the worst of beasts in God's sight are those who are
deaf and dumb, those who do not understand.*

(Al-Anfal, 8:22)

God was not content to call them cattle and beasts, and made them further astray than them and made them wicked (*ashrar*) and he considers their words outside of coherent speech (*al-bayan*) in general. God ﷻ says:

وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا مُكَاءً وَتَصْدِيَةً

*And their prayer at the [Sacred] House is nothing but
whistling and hand-clapping:*

(Al-Anfal, 8:35)

Indicating that they [the disbelievers] are like birds that whistle and flap their wings.

God alerts us in a subtle point that He ﷻ makes, that a human is not a human except through religion. And he is not one of coherent speech except through his ability to arrive at religious truths. God ﷻ says:

الرَّحْمَنُ * عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ * خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ * عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ

*The Compassionate One / has taught the Qur'ān. / He
created man, / teaching him the [coherent] speech.*

(Al-Rahman, 55:1-4)

Thus God ﷻ began with teaching the Qur'an, then creating man, then teaching coherent speech. And the conjunction *waw* (and) is not used between each of those. It is customary between people to say: He taught the Qur'an and created man, and taught him the [coherent] speech. In our view, creating man precedes the teaching of coherent speech, the teaching coherent speech precedes the teaching of the Qur'an. However, because a human is not a human except through the Qur'an, God ﷻ begins with the [teaching of the] Qur'an. Then God ﷻ says: He created man, alerting us that **man is made truly human through God teaching him the Qur'an.**

Then God ﷻ says: teaching him the [coherent] speech, alerting us that the true coherent speech meant for the human being occurs after knowing the Qur'an. And so God ﷻ alerts us to this with the order of the verses and He ﷻ left out the conjunction [*'waw' / 'and'*] and He ﷻ made every sentence a substitute (*badal*) and not a conjunctive (*'atf*). **However, if a person is not knowledgeable about the definitions of acts of worship and does not perform them well, he is not human. And if his speech is not in accordance with sacred law, it is not coherent speech.**

If it is said: according to what you have said, it is not correct that a disbeliever be called human, and yet God has named him such throughout the Qur'an.

Our reply is: we did not say: we do not call the disbeliever human as understood by the generality of people. What we said is: the issue of the intellect and sacred law necessitate that the disbeliever only be called human figuratively (*majazan*), if he does not use his intellect for the purpose for which it was created. And if he is called human as commonly understood by the generality, that is not

indecent (*munkar*), for many a noun is used in a certain way and sacred law clarifies that it should not be used in that way, such as saying: richness (*al-ghina*), which is used to denote the abundance of wealth. However, sacred law has clarified that richness is not in the abundance of wealth, for the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘**Richness does not lie in the abundance of wealth, richness lies in the richness of the soul.**’³⁷ And God ﷻ says:

وَمَنْ كَانَ غَنِيًّا فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ

If any man is rich, let him be abstinent

(*Al-Nisa*, 4:6)

Meaning he has much property and wealth, and so God uses the word as it is commonly understood.

All in all, if a wise man uses a word intending to praise, he includes what is finer (*ashraf*) than it. For example, God ﷻ says:

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ

And indeed, it is a remembrance for you and your people,

(*Al-Zukhruf*, 43:44)

And God ﷻ says:

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ

And We exalted for you your remembrance?

(*Al-Sharh*, 94:4)

Even though ‘remembrance’ can be said of what is praised and what is condemned (*mathmoum*). Thus everything is praised by stating its type (*naw’uh*). So we say: ‘so and so is a human,’ and ‘this sword is a sword.’ And this is why it is said: ‘the ultimate human is a prophet of his time.’ And

the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘people are two kinds: a scholar and a seeker of knowledge; everyone else is foolish riffraff (*hamaj*).’³⁸

And some scholars have said that: ‘those who have said that “man is he who is living, speaking, and dying (*maa’it*),” are correct. And that the meaning of that is not what many people are deluded about; that man is he who has animal life, animal death, and speaking which is in humans by force.’ What is meant by ‘**living**,’ is he who has the life mentioned in God’s ﷻ Words:

لِيُنذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا

that he may warn whoever is alive,

(*YaSin*, 36:70)

And what is meant by ‘**speaking**’ is the coherent speech in God’s ﷻ Words:

عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ

teaching him the [coherent] speech.

(*Al-Rahman*, 55:1-4)

And what is meant by ‘**dying**’ is he who has conquered his appetitive and irascible potentialities according to sacred law. He is then somebody who has died by his will and is alive naturally, as it has been said: ‘die willingly and you will live naturally.’ And it has been said: ‘he who allows himself to die in the *dunya*, gives himself life in the hereafter.’

WHAT IS RELATED TO SACRED LAW
FROM THE ACTIONS OF HUMAN
BEINGS



Man has two kinds of states that he cannot be rid of: A kind that leads to neither praise nor condemnation, and there is no obligation (*takleef*) in its types (*jinsih*), and it is of two kinds:

One: necessary states that he cannot be separate from, such as the pulse in veins, breathing, and other similar necessary states.

The other: what man does out of absentmindedness or by mistake, even if its type is destined (*maqdooran lahu*). And it is the one that is mentioned the Prophet's ﷺ Hadith: 'God has pardoned for my ummah: their mistakes, their forgetfulness, and that which they have been forced to do under duress.'³⁹

And a kind that leads to praise or condemnation, and there is obligation (*takleef*) in its types, and it is of three kinds:

One of them is: the actions that are related to the limbs; such as standing up, sitting down, riding, walking, looking, and everything that requires the use of an organ.

The second is: preserving the manifestations ('*awarid*) of the faculties of the soul; such as appetite (*shahwah*), fear, pleasure, joy, anger, yearning, mercy, jealousy and the like.

And third is: that which concerns discernment and knowledge.

Man is either praised or condemned for each one of these three.

He is praised if his actions are beautiful and if the manifestations of the faculties of his soul are upright, and his heart is intelligent. And this until he believes what is true and is strong enough to recognize it if it occurs to him.

He is condemned if his actions are opposite of what was just mentioned.

And acts of worship are concerned with all three of these things.

In every act that man does, there is some worship of God, whether that act is an obligation, recommended (*nadb*), or permitted. And that act of worship is made clear either through instinctive intelligence, or through the Qur'an, or through the words of the Prophet ﷺ, or through consensus of the Ummah, or through considerations and standards based on these foundations (*usul*). Indeed there is no ruling (*hukm*) that the Book of God does not include, regardless of who knows it or who is ignorant of it. God ﷻ says:

مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

We have neglected nothing in the Book
(Al-An'am, 6:38)

And there is nothing permissible that man practices according to God's ﷻ rulings that man is not worshipping God ﷻ in that practice, and deserving of its reward. For as the Prophet ﷺ said to Sa'd: 'indeed you are rewarded in everything, even the morsel that you put in your wife's mouth.'⁴⁰ The Prophet ﷺ said this to Sa'd because he knew

that Sa'd observed God's ﷺ rulings in all his actions. And in the same vein, the Prophet ﷺ said: 'if any Muslim plants any plant, and anyone or anything eats of it, he will be rewarded as if he had given that much in charity.'⁴¹

Observing God's ﷺ rulings in all things big and small is recommended ('*mustahab*') for all and is a duty for the Prophet ﷺ and all who approach his status, for God ﷻ says:

فَأَسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ

*So remain upright as you have been commanded, and he
who repents with you;*

(*Hud*, 11:112)

HOW TO ACHIEVE WORSHIP



Worship (*al-‘ibadah*) is: an act one chooses to fulfill (*fi’l ikhtiyari*) that is counter to physical appetites and is made with an intention to draw closer to God ﷻ in adherence to sacred law. Our saying: ‘one chooses to fulfill (*fi’l ikhtiyari*)’ excludes acts of subjugation and compulsion (*yakhruju minhu al-fi’l al-taskheeri wa al-qahri*). It includes omission (*al-tark*) which is a choice. **And omission** (*al-tark*) is two kinds:

A kind that is a choice, and it is an act.

And a kind that is absolute nothingness (*al-‘adam al-mutlaq*) in which there is not a choice, indeed it is not choosing and it is not an act.

Our saying: ‘counter to physical appetites’ excludes what is not an obedience (*ta‘ah*). And as for permissible acts, such as eating, drinking, sexual congress with a woman; these are not an obedience (*ta‘ah*) if they are appetites, but they can be acts of worship if one seeks the rulings of sacred law in those acts.

Indeed we said: ‘is made with an intention to draw closer to God ﷻ’. This is because if the intention is absent, or if the act issues from an intention that does not intend to draw closer to God ﷻ, and instead is intended for ostentation (*mura’abah*), it is also not worship.

Indeed we said: **‘in adherence to sacred law’** because if one performs an act of his own accord that is not permissible according to sacred law, it is not worship, even if the intention behind it is to draw closer to God ﷻ.

Thus, worship is an act that includes all these characteristics. And God knows best.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE TYPES OF WORSHIP FROM KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION



Worship is two types: knowledge and acts (*'ilm wa 'amal*), and they should be inseparable. This is because knowledge is like a foundation (*uss*) and acts are like a structure. No foundation is useful unless there is a structure and no structure will stand firm if there is no foundation. Likewise, no knowledge is useful without action and no act is useful without knowledge. Thus, God ﷻ says:

إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ.

*To Him ascends good words;
and as for righteous action, He exalts it
(Fatir, 35:10)*

Knowledge is the more honourable of the two, but it is not useful without action. About its honour, a man asked the Prophet ﷺ: 'Which act is the best, O Messenger of God?' The Prophet ﷺ said: 'knowledge.'
He asked him again.
The Prophet ﷺ said: 'knowledge.'
The third time, the man said: 'I am asking you about acts, not knowledge.'
The Prophet ﷺ said: 'few acts [done] with knowledge are better than many acts [done] with ignorance.'⁴²

And he ﷺ said: ‘seeking knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim.’⁴³

Knowledge is two types: theoretical and practical.

As for theoretical knowledge: it is knowledge that is sufficient to just know and no action is needed after that knowledge. Examples of this are knowing the Unity (*Wah-daniyyah*) of God ﷻ, and knowing of God’s ﷻ Angels, Books, Prophets, and the Last Day. In addition to knowing the Heavens (*Al-Samawat*) and the like.

As for practical knowledge: it is knowledge that is not useful to know without it being exercised, such as knowing the prayers, the tithe, jihad, fasting, Hajj, and treating one’s parents honourably.

Acts are three kinds:

Some: relate to the heart.

Some: relate to the body.

And some: both the body and the heart have a share in.

If knowledge is considered while it is being acquired, then that acquisition is an act. If it is considered after it has been acquired and has been understood (*tasawwarahu*) by the heart; it then leaves the condition of being an act.

From another facet, [acts] are two kinds: obligatory and recommended (*wajib wa nadb*).

The obligatory acts are termed: justice (*al-‘adl*).

The recommended acts are termed: virtue (*ihsan*).

And they are mentioned in God’s ﷻ Words:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ

Indeed God enjoins justice and virtue

(*Al-Nahl*, 16:90)

Duty and justice are: that man seeks that which if he does it, he is rewarded; and if he abandons it, is punished.

And what is recommended and virtuous is: that man seeks that which if he does it, he is rewarded, and if he abandons it, he is not punished.

Being fair (*al-insaf*) is a part of justice, and graciousness (*al-tafaddul*) is a part of honourable behaviour and virtue (*al-birr wa al-ihsan*).

Being fair (*al-insaf*): is returning good with good and bad with bad in equal measure.

And graciousness (*al-tafaddul*) and honourable behaviour (*al-birr*): is returning good with more good and returning bad with less than it.

And virtue and graciousness are circumspection in justice and fairness, so that one is safe from faults (*khalal*) in them. Thus, if you increase in giving what you should, and you take less of what is yours, you have been circumspect and sober. Such as paying more than what is due in tithe to a poor person, and refraining from taking what is lawful for you from the money of an orphan.

Beautiful as justice is, graciousness is even more beautiful. Thus, God ﷻ says about the one who has received his rights and sought justice:

وَلَمَنۢ أَنۡصَرَ بَعۡدَ ظُلۡمِهِۦ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَا عَلَيۡهِم مِّنۡ سَبِيلٍ

And whoever defends himself after he has been wronged, for such, there will be no course [of action] against them.

(*Al-Shura*, 42:41)

And after that God ﷻ says:

وَلَمَنۢ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ لَمِنۡ عِزِّ الْأُمُورِ

*But verily he who is patient and forgives – surely that is
[true] constancy in [such] affairs.*

(Al-Shura, 42:43)

And God ﷻ says:

وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

And that they pardon is nearer to God-consciousness.

*Forget not grace among you. Truly, God is Seeing
of what you do.*

(Al-Baqarah, 2:237)

Indicating that virtue (*ihsan*) is beautiful and gracious-
ness is even more beautiful.

And God ﷻ says:

لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ

For those who do good (ahsanu) is the fairest reward

(al-husna) and more

(Yunus, 10:26)

And one is only virtuous and gracious after he has been
just and fair. As for he who leaves what he needs and then
seeks out what he does not need; he is not described as
gracious (*mutafaddil*).

Graciousness cannot be attributed except to one who
has received his dues and has paid his dues (*mustawfiyan
wa mufiyan*). As for the ruler and the one who has received
his dues and has paid his dues, there is nothing for them
but to seek to achieve justice and fairness.

SECTION

KNOWLEDGE IS CONCEPTUALIZING (TASAWWUR) AND ATTESTATION (TASDEEQ)

Sciences (*al-‘ulum*) in terms of their modes (*kayfiyyah*) are two kinds: conceptualizing (*tasawwur*) and attestation (*tasdeeq*).

Conceptualizing is: for one to know the meaning of a thing, whether it has been confirmed with proof or not. Such as one who knows the prayer and its conditions, even if its correctness (*sihatihā*) is not proven to him with proof.

And attestation is: for one to conceptualize something and for it to be proven to him with a proof that necessitates its correctness.

And attestation is three kinds:

Either through something being most likely (*ghalabat al-zhan*): and that means that there is proof for that thing and it might be interrupted by a doubt (*shubha*) that weakens it or invalidates it. For God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ
تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ

Truly the God-fearing, when a visitation from Satan touches them, they remember, and then see clearly.

(Al-A‘raf, 7:201)

Or through certain knowledge (*‘ilm al-yaqin*): and that is when one knows and knows that he knows, and it is not interrupted by a doubt (*shubha*) that weakens it. For example, it is like knowing that three and three is six, and that it cannot be more or less than that. For as God ﷻ says:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ؕ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّٰدِقُونَ

The [true] believers are only those who believe in God and His Messenger, and then have not doubted, and who strive with their wealth and their souls for the cause of God. It is they who are sincere. (Al-Hujurat, 49:15)

Or through the eye of certainty (*'ayn al-yaqin*): and that is when something occurs (*yatara'a*) to one's mind and he sees it with his insight (*basirah*) in a state of waking and not sleeping. God ﷻ alerted us to these modes in His Words:

كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ * ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ * كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ * لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ * ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ

No indeed! You will come to know! / Again, no indeed! You will come to know. / No indeed! Were you to know with certain knowledge / you would surely see hell-fire. / Again, you will surely see it with the eye of certainty. (Al-Takathur, 102:3-7)

As for abstract conceptualization (*al-tasawwur al-mujarrad*); it is for the commonality of people to whom God ﷻ says:

وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰ أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ

If they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them; those among them who are able to think it out, would have known it from them.

(Al-Nisa', 4:83)

And as for being most likely (*ghalabat al-zhan*); it is for the commonality of people whom God ﷻ praises in His Words:

الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

*who reckon that they shall meet their Lord,
and that to Him they are returning.*

(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:46)

As for certain knowledge (*‘ilm al-yaqin*); it is for the elite (*al-khassah*).

And as for the eye of certainty (*‘ayn al-yaqin*): in the dunya it is for the Prophets and some Siddiqin. In that vein the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘my eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep.’⁴⁴ And the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘I see behind me just as I see in front of me.’⁴⁵ And the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Talib ؑ said: ‘by God, were the cover to be removed, I would not increase in certainty.’

Some of the people of wisdom (*hukama’*) have said: ‘certain knowledge comes to the intelligence through thought and remembrance (*fikr wa zikr*). For the intelligence with its thought—i.e. through its searching—comes to realize knowledges (*al-ma‘arif*). And the intelligence through its remembrance summons them if one forgets them or is absentminded or occupied with something else. And through his mind (*zihnih*) he is always looking at them, as we look at something material (*mahsoos*) that in front of our eyes, without the need to search or ask or contemplate or remember. Thus, it is said: man comprehends (*ya‘qil*); he looks to the truth through thought (*fikr*). And the angels always look at him through the mind (*bil zihni*) without the need for contemplation and exigency (*tatallub*).

SECTION

PEOPLE'S STATE WITH KNOWLEDGE

People have three states when it comes to benefitting from knowledge and benefitting others with knowledge:

A state of one only benefitting.

A state of one benefitting from who are above him and benefitting others that are below him.

A state of one only benefitting others.

Very few deserve to be of benefit to others while they do not benefit. God ﷻ says:

وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ

*and above every man of knowledge is one
who knows better.*

(Yusuf, 12:76)

Until this condition reaches the One Whom alone has the full knowledge of all that is unseen ('Allam Al-Ghuyub) ﷻ.

God ﷻ alerted us to the necessity of benefitting from what Moses ﷺ said to his companion:

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَىٰ هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَٰ رُشْدًا

*'May I follow you for the purpose that you teach me of
what you have been taught [in the way] of right judgement?'*

(Al-Kahf, 18:66)

And in the story of Solomon ﷺ with the hoopoe, God ﷻ alerts us that someone great may be poorer in some knowledges than someone less great. God ﷻ says:

أَحْطْتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ

*'I have discovered something of which you have no
knowledge ... (Al-Naml, 27:22)*

As long as one is alive, he must not cease to be someone who benefits or gives benefit. For as the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘people are two kinds: a scholar and a seeker of knowledge; everyone else is foolish riffraff (*hamaj*).’⁴⁶

THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP BEING
THE PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL
AND BRINGING ABOUT ITS HEALTH



God does not charge (*yukallef*) people to worship Him so that He ﷻ may benefit from it the way a master benefits from enslaving his slaves or using his servants, for **God is Independent of all worlds**. Nor does He [charge people to worship Him] so that He may harm them. God ﷻ says:

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

God desires ease for you, and desires not hardship for you

(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:185)

Rather, God charges them so that He may remove their impurities and the sicknesses of their souls. Through that they will be able to attain eternal life and permanent and everlasting wellbeing (*salamah*).

Anyone born is dead when it comes to those in the Abode of the Hereafter (*Al-Dar Al-Aakhirah*). He is lacking the eye through which he can know them, and the hearing through which he can hear their conversation, and the tongue through which they can speak to each other, and the comprehension (*al-'aql*) through which he can comprehend them (*ya'qiluhum*). That life, that eye and that hearing are not what are available to man in the life of this world

(*al-hayat al-dunya*). And how could they be when God has negated those things when it comes to the disbelievers and when He has made them deaf, mute, and blind!

Man has the potentiality to attain these things in the beginning of his affair, but if he neglects his soul, he misses that potentiality and there will be no acceptance of him after that. It is similar to coal when it turns to ash; after that it cannot be fire. Thus, he who continues in his disbelief or wickedness (*fusq*) and is excessive in them; becomes either like a dead person, or a sick person, or a deaf person who cannot be healed. Thus God ﷻ says about those who have lost this potentiality:

إِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمَعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا تَسْمَعُ الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ * وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادِي
الْعُمَىٰ عَنِ ضَلَالَتِهِمْ ۗ إِنْ تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

Indeed you cannot make the dead hear, nor can you make the deaf hear the call when they have turned their backs [upon you]; nor can you lead the blind out of their error. You can only make those hear who believe in Our signs and have therefore submitted.

(*Al-Naml*, 27:80-81)

And God ﷻ says:

صُمُّ بَكْمٌ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

deaf, dumb, blind – they do not comprehend
(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:171)

And God ﷻ says:

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا

*In their hearts is a sickness; and God has increased
their sickness
(Al-Baqarah, 2:10)*

And God ﷻ says:

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَإِذَا أُنزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ مُّحْكَمَةٌ وَذِكْرٌ
فِيهَا الْفِتَالُ رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يُنظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ نَظَرَ الْمَغْشَى
عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ

*And those who believe say: 'Why has a s ra not been
revealed?' But when a definitive s ra is revealed, and
fighting is mentioned in it, you see those in whose hearts
is a sickness, looking at you with the look of someone
fainting at [the point of] death.*

(Muhammad, 47:20)

And God ﷻ says:

إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ

*The polytheists are an embodiment of impurity
(Al-Tawbah, 9:28)*

And God ﷻ says about the believers:

لِيُنذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا

that he may warn whoever is alive (YaSin, 36:70)

And God ﷻ describes them as:

أُولَى الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ

men of fortitude and insight.

(Sad, 38:45)

He who **benefits** from life and health and purity before the potentiality of these things being accepted comes to end, **becomes** alive, hearing, seeing, and pure. And he **attains** his provision as God ﷻ has commanded in His Words:

وَتَكَزَّوْذُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ

And take provision. But the best provision is piety
(Al-Baqarah, 2:197)

And he is guided by the proof described in God's ﷻ Words:

وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ * صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ

And verily you guide to a straight path, / the path of God, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Surely with God all matters end [their journey].
(Al-Shura, 42:52-53)

And he has submitted to God's ﷻ command:

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ

And vie with one another hastening to forgiveness
from your Lord
(Aal 'Imran, 3:133)

And he has followed the example of those described in God's ﷻ Words:

أُولَٰئِكَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ

those [are the ones who] hasten to [perform] good works,
and they [are the ones who] shall come out ahead in them.
(Al-Mu'minin, 23:61)

Then he is worthy of achieving success (*yaflah*) and so attaining this happiness, as God ﷻ says:

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ

so that you might achieve success

(*Al-Nur*, 24:31)

CLARIFYING THE SICKNESSES AND
IMPURITIES THAT CAN ONLY BE
REMOVED BY SACRED LAW



There are things (*'awarid*) in man's body that are present at birth and things that appear at certain times because wisdom necessitates it. They are considered impurities (*najasat*) that must all be removed; or their pollutants must be removed. Examples of this are the placenta, the umbilicus, the foreskin, a newborn's hair (*'aqiqah*), and also things such as dirt, lice, nails, pubic hair, and axillary hair.

There are also manifestations (*'awarid*) in man's soul that are impurities and sicknesses of the soul that must be removed. Examples of this are ignorance, avarice (*al-sharrah*), hastiness, stinginess (*al-shuh*), and injustice.

God indicates that man is born with these things in him, and He ﷻ commands man to remove them and remove their pollutants. God ﷻ says:

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ

Man was created of haste.

(*Al-Anbiya'*, 21:37)

So God ﷻ mentions that man is created of haste, as you see. Then God ﷻ commands him to distance himself from his soul, and not to be hasty. Thus, God ﷻ says:

سَأُورِيكُمْ آيَاتِي فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونِ

*Assuredly I shall show you My signs,
so do not demand that I hasten.*

(Al-Anbiya', 21:37)

And God ﷻ says:

إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا

Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant.

(Al-Ahzab, 33:72)

And in several verses of the Qur'an God ﷻ commands man to pursue knowledge and justice.

Moreover, God ﷻ says:

وَأَحْضَرَتِ الْأَنْفُسُ الشُّحَّ

And present in [human] souls is stinginess.

(Al-Nisa', 4:128)

Then God ﷻ says:

وَمَنْ يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

*And whoever is protected from the stinginess
of his soul – it is those who will be the successful.*

(Al-Hashr, 59:9)

Thus, God commands man to avoid stinginess even though it is in his nature. God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا * إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا * وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا

*Indeed man was created restless: / when evil befalls him, [he
is] anxious, / and when good befalls him, [he is] grudging,*

(Al-Ma'arij, 70:19-21)

And God ﷻ describes man as ungrateful and ever niggardly; in His Words:

وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ كَفُورًا
for man was ever ungrateful.
(*Al-Isra'*, 17:67)

And:

قُلْ لَوْ أَنْتُمْ تَمْلِكُونَ خَزَائِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي إِذًا لَأَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الْإِنْفَاقِ
وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ قَتُورًا
Say: 'If you possessed the treasuries of my Lord's mercy, you would surely withhold [them] for fear of spending; and man was ever niggardly.'
(*Al-Isra'*, 17:100)

God uses the word 'was' to alert us that these things are instincts in man that are present in him before and not something that occurs later (*tare'*). And God ﷻ says:

وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا
But man is most disputatious.
(*Al-Kahf*, 18:54)

And He ﷻ forbade being overly disputatious.

Indeed, in this life, man must use these potentialities as they should be used and when they should be used and to the extent that they should be used. And he should remove their pollutants before he leaves the *dunya*, and in accordance to sacred law. For if he does not purify himself of impurity (*najasah*) and does not rid himself of the sicknesses of his soul, he will not find a path to the bliss of the hereafter, nor the goodness of life in this world.

Thus, the one who is purified has the seal removed from his heart and knows that what is right is right and what is wrong is wrong. He is not concerned with what does not concern him, and deals only with what concerns him, and so he lives a goodly life, as God ﷻ says:

فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً

him verily We shall revive with a goodly life.

(Al-Nahl, 16:97)

And his possessions do not become a barrage against him or chastisement, as God ﷻ says about the disbelievers:

فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ اَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا اَوْلَادُهُمْ اِنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ

لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ اَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ

So do not let their wealth or their children please you:

God only desires thereby to chastise them in the life

of this world, and that their souls should depart

while they are disbelievers.

(Al-Tawbah, 9:55)

And his heart, if it is purified, becomes a dwelling place for the spirit of Peace (*al-Sakinah*) and goodly spirits (*al-arwah al-tayyibah*), as God ﷻ describes the believers:

هُوَ الَّذِي اَنْزَلَ السَّكِيْنَهٖ فِي قُلُوْبِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ لِيَزِدُّوْا اِيْمٰنًا مَّعَ اِيْمٰنِهِمْ وَلِلّٰهِ

جُنُوْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلِيْمًا حٰكِيْمًا

He it is Who sent down the spirit of Peace into the hearts of the believers, that they might add faith to their faith.

And to God belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth.

And God is ever Knower, Wise; (Al-Fath, 48:4)

And he will know path that leads to the Garden of Retreat (*Jannat Al-Ma'wa*) and the companionship of the Highest Assembly (*Al-Mala' Al-A'la*) in an abode of truth, before a King [Who is] Omnipotent. (*Al-Qamar*: 54:55). And so he hastens to perform good works and hastens to receive forgiveness from his Lord, as God ﷻ says:

أُولَٰئِكَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ

those [are the ones who] hasten to [perform] good works, and they [are the ones who] shall come out ahead in them.

(*Al-Mu'minun*, 23:61)

And God ﷻ says:

سَابِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
أُعِدَّتْ لِلذَّيْبِ ؕ ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ؕ ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ

وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

Race to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden the breadth of which is as the breadth of the heaven and the earth, prepared for those who believe in God and His messengers. That is the bounty of God, which He gives to whomever He will, and God is [dispenser] of tremendous bounty.

(*Al-Hadid*, 57:21)

And when his impurity (*najasatuh*) remains or increases, his heart becomes a dwelling place of doubts (*shubah*) and sins, as God ﷻ says:

هَلْ أَتَيْتُمْ عَلَىٰ مَن تَنَزَّلُ الشَّيَاطِينُ * تَنَزَّلُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ

*Shall I inform you upon whom the devils descend? /
They descend upon every sinful liar.
(Al-Shu'ara', 26:221-222)*

And he does not find the path to the happiness of the Abode of the Hereafter (*Dar Al-Aakhirah*), as God ﷻ says:

أَيَطْمَعُ كُلُّ أُمَّرِيٍّ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيمٍ
كَلَّا إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ

*Does each one of them hope to be admitted into a Garden of Bliss? / Nay! Indeed We created them from what they know.
(Al-Ma'arij, 70:38-39)*

Thus, God ﷻ alerts us that man is not fit for heaven if he does not purify himself of the things that he was born with. God shows this in His ﷻ Words:

مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ

It is not God's purpose to leave the believers in the state in which you are till He shall distinguish the evil one from the good. (Aal 'Imran, 3:179)

It is man's duty to consider these potentialities and rectify them and use them in the correct manner so that he may be like the ones God describes in His ﷻ Words:

الَّذِينَ نُوَفِّقُهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ طَيِّبِينَ يَقُولُونَ ۗ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ اُدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

those whom the angels take away [in death] while they are goodly, saying: 'Peace be on you!; Enter Paradise because of what you used to do'. (Al-Nahl, 16:32)

Man may fall prey to doubts about these impurities and say: ‘can these be from other than God, and if they are, who brought them into being? Where is their source? And if they are from Him, what is the reason he created them in man and then ordered him to remove them?’

To which the answer is: there is nothing that God has created or enabled to be existent without there being wisdom and benefit behind it, even if humans do not know it. However, the benefit of some things are for a specific time, or within a specific measure. Then afterwards it is possible to do without them, or if they exceed the measure of what is needed, they must be removed.

If one contemplates, it becomes clear. It is known that the placenta and umbilicus are needed to preserve the child at a certain time, then they are no longer needed; after which keeping them is impure. Similarly, nails and hair are needed within a measure, and if they exceed it, they should be removed.

THE POTENTIALITIES WHOSE
SICKNESSES AND IMPURITIES MUST
BE REMOVED AND THE MEANINGS
ACHIEVED THROUGH THAT



Removing impurity and bringing about the purity mentioned in God's Words: *Indeed God will but to rid you of sin, People of the House, and to purify you with a thorough purification (Al-Ahzab, 33:33)*, and gaining health and removing the sickness mentioned in God's Words: *In their hearts is a sickness; and God has increased their sickness (Al-Baqarah, 2:10)*, is achieved through rehabilitating the three potentialities. The three potentialities are what motivate man's behaviour and they are: **the appetitive potentiality, the irascible potentiality, and the intellectual potentiality.**

By rehabilitating the **appetitive potentiality** one achieves virtuous restraint (*al-'iffah*) through which he guards against avarice (*al-sharah*), and the harms of appetite. He then seeks what is beneficial in food, drink, clothing, sex, and rest and other sensory pleasures.

By rehabilitating the **irascible potentiality** one achieves courage and guards against cowardice, impetuosity, and envy. And he seeks moderation in fear, anger, pride and other such things.

By rehabilitating the **intellectual potentiality** one attains

wisdom and guards against stupidity and deception and seeks moderation in managing worldly affairs. By ‘wisdom’ we do not mean theoretical knowledges; rather we mean **practical wisdom** through which worldly benefits are sought.

By rehabilitating these potentialities, man attains the **potentiality of justice**, and he follows God ﷻ in managing his soul and managing others. For man’s soul is in enmity towards him, as God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي

verily the soul is ever inciting to evil, except that whereon my Lord has mercy (Yusuf, 12:53)

And the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘**your worst enemy is your soul which is between your two sides.**’⁴⁷

Thus, he who disciplines it or dominates it, is protected from its injustice. This is the injustice God ﷻ refers to in His Words:

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يَخَافُ ظُلْمًا وَلَا هَضْمًا

But whoever does righteous deeds, being a believer, shall fear neither injustice nor unfairness.

(TaHa, 20:112)

Meaning he shall not fear injustice from his appetitive soul, for righteous deeds are a fortress of defence against it, because God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

truly prayer prohibits lewd acts and indecency.

(Al-‘Ankabut, 29:45)

CHAPTER XXVII

MAN IS NATURALLY DISPOSED TO RECTIFY HIS SOUL



Man is naturally disposed through divine creation to rectify his acts and morals and to distinguish himself, and he is also able to corrupt them. It has been made easy for him take the path to good or to evil, even though some people are in general more inclined to one over the other.

God ﷻ indicates that man is able to choose either way; in His Words:

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

Verily We have guided him to the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful.

(Al-Insan, 76:3)

And God ﷻ says:

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ

and guided him to the two paths?

(Al-Balad, 90:10)

That is: We made him know the two paths.

Moreover, man is naturally disposed to adopt either of the two from early on. He is naturally disposed to be familiar with either good or evil depending on which he has

adopted. If he becomes familiar with one, it becomes habitual, and if it becomes habitual, it becomes his nature, and if it becomes his nature, it becomes a habit and a quality (*malakah*). It becomes entrenched in him so that if he wants to be rid of it, he is unable to. As the poet said:

Traits resist change

He is like a tree that has grown crooked and it is easy early on to straighten it with twine that pulls it up, or with a stake planted by its side that pulls it up. Then when it thickens and grows strong and straight, it is safe from becoming crooked; indeed it cannot be made crooked. And if it is left to become crooked and hardens while it is crooked, it is no longer possible to straighten it. As the poet said:

The soft branch is straightened with a stake
 And the hard branch is unable to be straightened

And God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ
Indeed good deeds annul misdeeds.
 (Hud, 11:114)

And God ﷻ says:

وَيَذْرُؤُنَّ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ
and repel evil with good
 (Al-Ra'd, 13:22)

Some are deluded that disciplining and correcting have no effect; that people are born with natures that cannot be

changed. That some are naturally good, and some are naturally bad. They find proof for this in God's ﷻ Words:

قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَىٰ شَاكِلَتِهِ

Say: 'Everyone acts according to his [own] character
(Al-Isra', 17:84)

And God's ﷻ words:

فَطَرَتِ اللَّهُ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا يَبْدِيلُ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ

a nature given by God, upon which He originated
mankind. There is no changing God's creation.

(Al-Rum, 30:30)

Through the Prophet's ﷺ words, God alerts us that every person is [born] in a state that cannot be changed: 'Every person will be facilitated to that for which he was created.'⁴⁸ And the Prophet's ﷺ words: 'Your Lord has preordained one's creation, temperament, provision, and lifespan.'⁴⁹

And God ﷻ says:

وَلَقَدْ أَصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

Indeed We chose him in this world, and in the Hereafter
he shall be among the righteous.

(Al-Baqarah, 2:130)

And God ﷻ says:

إِنَّا أَخْلَصْنَاهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ * وَإِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الْأَخْيَارِ

Assuredly We purified them with an exclusive [thought], the
remembrance of the Abode. / And indeed in Our sight they
are of the elect, the excellent. (Sad, 38:46-47)

And God ﷻ says:

وَلَقَدْ اخْتَرْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ

*And We chose them, with knowledge,
above all the worlds.*

(Al-Dukhan, 44:32)

So, even if people vary in the origin of their natures (*asl al-khilqah*), there is no one who does not have the power to acquire a measure of virtue. Were that not true, there would be no benefit from preaching, warning, and disciplining. And God knows best.

WHY VICE IS PREVALENT IN
MAN AND WHY HE DELAYS
PRACTICING VIRTUE



There are several reasons why man delays practicing virtue: **Either there is an insufficiency in the origin of his nature** (*asl khilqatihi*), and compounded disability (*'ajzan*) in his nature through which he is unable to achieve strength and gather the means through which he can reach happiness. For example, one who has a weak nature, or does not cease seeking the necessary means of livelihood with his time, or does not find a guide to lead him to what is right. Such people are excused, for God ﷻ says:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

God charges no soul save to its capacity

(*Al-Baqarah*, 2:286)

Or he is not incapable of it but has not been aided to achieve it because of his lifespan. For one such as this his wage is then incumbent upon God, as God ﷻ says:

وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَاعِمًا كَثِيرًا وَسِعَةً
وَمَنْ يُخْرَجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ
فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

Whoever emigrates in the way of God will find in the earth many refuges and abundance; whoever goes forth from his house as an emigrant to God and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him, his wage is then incumbent upon God; surely God is ever Forgiving, Merciful.

(Al-Nisa', 4:100)

Or he has a nurturer or teacher that leads astray, and leads him astray from the path. Someone such as this is excused if he is unable to be guided by someone who rectifies him and guides him. And the sins he commits are rightly on the one who led him astray and not on him. For as God ﷻ says about the ones who lead astray (*mudilleen*):

لِيَحْمِلُوا أَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمِنْ أَوْزَارِ الَّذِينَ يُضِلُّونَهُمْ
بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا سَاءَ مَا يَزُرُونَ

That they may bear their burdens complete on the Day of Resurrection and also of the burdens of those whom they lead astray without any knowledge.

How evil is the burden they bear.

(Al-Nahl, 16:25)

If after that he is able to find someone to guide him but is not guided by him, then he and the one who led him astray have a joint share in the sin. For God ﷻ says:

أَحْشُرُوا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ
'Gather those who did wrong together with their mates
(Al-Saffat, 37:22)

Or his misguidance is from his soul and not from any of the other sources just mentioned, and this person is prom-

ised punishment. He whom God has removed his deficiency (*illah*) with understanding, sufficiency, and an advising teacher and does not want to be guided and leaves behind the path of rectitude is like those described in God's ﷻ Words:

وَأْتَلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا
فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ

*And recite to them the tidings of him to whom We gave
Our signs, but he cast them off, and Satan pursued him,
and he became of the perverse.*

(Al-A'raf, 7:175)

And God's ﷻ Words:

وَلَقَدْ آرَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا كُلَّهَا فَكَذَّبَ وَأَبَىٰ

*And verily We showed him all Our signs,
but he denied and refused.*

(TaHa, 20:56)

And the one who receives even more punishment is the one who has had the benefit of knowledge, and has known the truth and walked several stages in the path of good, and then turned back from it. He is like those described in God's ﷻ Words:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْتَدُوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ مِن بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ
الشَّيْطَانُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ وَأَمْلَىٰ لَهُمْ

*Truly those who have turned their backs after the guidance
has become clear to them, Satan has seduced them
and has given them [false] hopes.*

(Muhammad, 47:25)

And God's ﷻ Words:

وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ ۖ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ

فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

*and whoever of you turns from his religion, and dies
disbelieving – their works have failed in this world
and the Hereafter.*

(Al-Baqarah, 2:217)

PEOPLE'S STATES AND STATIONS IN
ACQUIRING PRAISEWORTHY AND
BLAMEWORTHY ACTIONS AND
THEIR MEANS



In performing the acts of worship ('*ibadat*), and drawing in good, people are four kinds:

The first kind is: one who has knowledge of what must be done, and has the power of determination to do it. They are the ones God ﷻ describes in more than one place:

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ طُوبَىٰ لَهُمْ وَحَسَنُ مَا أَجْرُهُمْ

*those who believe and perform righteous deeds:
theirs shall be blessedness and a fair resort.*

(*Al-Ra'd*, 13:29)

The second kind is: one who lacks all of that, and they are the ones described in God's ﷻ Words:

إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

Surely the worst of beasts in God's sight are those who are deaf and dumb, those who do not understand.

(*Al-Anfal*, 8:22)

And God's ﷻ Words:

إِنَّهُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

*They are but as the cattle—nay, but they are
further astray from the way.*

(Al-Furqan, 25:44)

The third kind is: one who has knowledge and does not have the power of determination to act. This one is in the rank of the ignorant, indeed he is worse than that. As it has been related that a wise man was once asked: ‘when is knowledge worse than ignorance?’ He replied: ‘when it is not acted upon.’ And it has been related that Amir al-Mu’mineen, Ali ibn Abi Talib عليه السلام said: ‘he who is astray after he has believed the truth, is far from forgiveness.’

The fourth kind is: one who does not have knowledge, but has the power of determination. This kind of person, once he is led to the people of knowledge and he implements what they say, is successful in his actions. He becomes one of those whom God describes in His قرآني Words:

فَأَوْلِيَّتِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ

وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أَوْلِيَّتِكَ رَفِيقًا

*they are with those whom God has blessed of the prophets
and the truthful, and the martyrs, and the righteous.*

What fine companions they are!

(Al-Nisa’, 4:69)

Man grows stronger in beautiful or ugly actions through repeating them many times and for a long time, time after time, and close together. If one does that regarding a certain matter, it becomes a habit, and if it becomes a habit, it becomes part of his character. Someone clever at a skill

such as writing, for example, becomes so through acting like one who is clever at writing. Acts that stem from acquired characteristics (*akhlaq*) are the same acts that the one who possesses them behaves with until they become part of his character.

It is man's duty to practice good acts, for an act that has become a habit becomes a quality (*malakah*). Such as a boy who may play at a skill and that play leads him to learn it.

SECTION

WHEN IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP PRAISEWORTHY?

Acts of worship are praiseworthy when they are undertaken voluntarily and by choice, not out of coincidence (*ittifaqan*) or out of coercion. And they should be done at all times and not at some times and not others. And they should be done because they are in themselves good, and not for another reason. So, he who undertakes them in this manner is described in God's ﷻ Words:

وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ^ط

وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِي اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

and make their religion purely God's; those are with the believers; and God will certainly give the believers a great wage.

(*Al-Nisa'*, 4:146)

And the Prophet ﷺ said: 'be sincere in your religion and a little righteous deed will be sufficient for you.'⁵⁰ And 'God does not accept anything less than sincerity.'⁵¹ For God ﷻ says:

أَلِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ

Surely to God belongs pure religion. (Al-Zumar, 39:3)

One may do good, such as: praying, but he does it because he just so happens to be with people about to pray and so joins them, or because he is coerced to pray, or he prays during Ramadan only, or in order to gain distinction or money. None of these deserve praise.

Likewise, when one abandons an ugly act, either out of coincidence or coercion or fear, or during one time and not another, or in order to gain some worldly thing, it is not praiseworthy. Thus, God ﷻ says:

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا
أَذَى لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Those who expend their wealth in the way of God then do not follow up their expenditure with reminder of their generosity and injury, their wage is with their Lord, and no fear shall befall them, neither shall they grieve.

(Al-Baqarah, 2:262)

Alerting us that he who does not expend his wealth in this way and is afraid of poverty and grieves expending his wealth, does not attain virtue. Then God ﷻ says:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يُبْطَلُوا صَدَقَتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ
رِثَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ ءِالْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ
فَأَصَابَهُ، وَأَبْلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ، صَلْدًا ۗ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

O you who believe, annul not your voluntary almsgivings with reproach and injury, as one who expends of his substance to show off to men and believes not in God and the Last Day. The likeness of him is as the likeness of a smooth rock on which is soil, and a torrent smites it, and leaves it barren. They have no power over anything that they have earned. God guides not the disbelieving folk.
(Al-Baqarah, 2:264)

CHAPTER XXX

HOW HUMAN BEINGS TURN BACK FROM THE PATH OF BOTH GOOD AND EVIL



In seeking out good or evil, man has one of two states:

A state in which he is able to turn back from what he does whether good or evil, and before he becomes entrenched in his path and ends his journey.

And a state in which he is unable to turn back from what he does, and indeed has no way back. And this is if he has become entrenched in his path and reached the end of his journey.

For everyone who does good and becomes too lazy to practice it, and everyone who does evil and does not leave it, is left by his laziness with a constriction in his breast from doing good. For God ﷻ says:

وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ، يُجْعَلْ صَدْرُهُ ضَيْقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ

and whomever He desires to send astray, He makes his breast narrow and constricted, as if he were engaged in ascent to the heaven.

(Al-An'am, 6:125)

And his breast is expanded by doing evil, for as God ﷻ says:

أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَنًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

Is he, the evil of whose deeds is made [to seem] fair to him, so that he deems it good [...]? Indeed God leads astray whomever He will and guides whomever He will.

(Fatir, 35:8)

If he continues in this manner and does not desist, he will acquire **rust upon his heart**, as God ﷻ says:

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust.

(Al-Mutafifin, 83:14)

And if he goes to excess and increases, it will leave him with a **veil**, as God ﷻ says:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا فَأَغْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ

And We have set a barrier before them and a barrier behind them, and We have cast a veil over their eyes so they do not see anything.

(YaSin, 36:9)

And if he goes to excess and increases, it will leave him with a **print upon [his heart] (tab'an)** and a **seal (khatman)**, as God ﷻ says:

حَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشْوَةً وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

God has set a seal on their hearts, and on their hearing; and on their eyes is a covering; and for them there will be a mighty chastisement.

(Al-Baqarah, 2:7)

And God ﷻ says:

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ أَخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوْنَهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عَٰلَمٍ وَخَمَّ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ ۖ وَقَلْبِهِ
وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ غِشْوَةً ۖ فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ ۗ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and God has sent him astray due to knowledge and has set a seal upon his hearing and his heart and put over his vision a veil? So who will guide him after God?

Then will you not be reminded?

(Al-Jathiyah, 45:23)

And if it increases, it becomes a lock, for as God ﷻ says:

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Do they not contemplate the Qur'ān? Or is it that there are locks on, [their] hearts?

(Muhammad, 47:24)

And if he goes to excess, his heart has died a death after which there is little hope for life. And signs and warnings will not be of benefit to him, for as God ﷻ says:

إِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمَعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا تَسْمَعُ الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ

Indeed you cannot make the dead hear, nor can you make the deaf hear the call when they have turned their backs [upon you]. (Al-Naml, 27:80)

Since God ﷻ knows the states of those who reach this stage; that they are neither repentant nor penitent, He says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ ثُمَّ أَزْدَادُوا كُفْرًا
لَنْ نُقْبَلَ تَوْبَتَهُمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الضَّالُّونَ

Surely those who disbelieve after they have believed, and then increase in unbelief, their repentance shall not be accepted; those are the ones who go astray.

(Aal 'Imran, 3:90)

God does not say that if they repent, their repentance will not be accepted; he alerts us that they do not repent so that their repentance may be accepted. Thus the end of the act is shown by its beginning, and this is what they say. And as the poet said:

You do not see the lizard hide in its burrow

Meaning: there is no lizard in it to hide in the burrow. Negation, even if it discusses the lizard hiding in its burrow, is in reality a negation of the lizard being in it. Thus, God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ ءَزَادُوا كُفْرًا
لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ سَبِيلًا

Verily, those who believed, and then disbelieved, and then believed, and then disbelieved, and then increased in disbelief – it was not for God to forgive them, nor to guide them to a way. (Al-Nisa', 4:137)

Meaning: they did not repent so that God may forgive them. Thus, God ﷻ says:

إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ
The repentance that God accepts is only of those who do evil in ignorance; then repent shortly thereafter
(Al-Nisa', 4:17)

Alerting us that those are the ones for whom forgiveness may be hoped for.

And the Prophet ﷺ alerted us in this vein with his words: ‘if a man commits a sin, a black spot appears on his heart, and if he commits a sin again, another spot appears. He remains like this until his heart is like a camel the colour of ash.’⁵² And in another Hadith the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Sin builds on sin until the heart is blackened, then no remorse is hoped for him.’⁵³

Such is the state of man in terms of doing good. He who is patient in acquiring a good deed, his patience will yield goodness. God describes the patient in several verses in the Qur’an. God ﷻ says:

وَمَنْ يَقْتِرْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهُ فِيهَا حَسَنًا

*And whoever acquires a good deed, We shall enhance
for him its goodness.*

(Al-Shura, 42:23)

If he continues in this for a measure, he will be shaken and invigorated, and his heart will expand through it. For as God ﷻ says:

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ

*Whomever God desires to guide, He expands
his breast to Islam*

(Al-An‘am, 6:125)

If they maintain this, God will test their hearts for God-fearingness, for as God ﷻ says:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَمْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلنَّقْوَى

*they are the ones whose hearts God has tested
for God-fearing.
(Al-Hujurat, 49:3)*

And they become as the ones whom God ﷻ describes in these verses:

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ
وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ * فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

*But God has endeared faith to you, adorning your hearts
with it, and He has made odious to you disbelief and
immorality and disobedience. Those they are the right-
minded; / [that is] a favour from God and a grace,
and God is Knower, Wise.
(Al-Hujurat, 49:7-8)*

If they increase in this behaviour, they will be sent an impulse (*ba'ith*) and a cause from God ﷻ that will shake them. God ﷻ says:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَّعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ

*He it is Who sent down the spirit of Peace into the hearts of
the believers, that they might add faith to their faith
(Al-Fath, 48:4)*

It is man's duty not to be easy with himself in terms of effort, nor should he backslide in any good he has become accustomed to. And he should not give his soul license for any evil it has committed, because minor sins lead to major sins, and backsliding in a little good, leads to backsliding in a lot of good. As the poet said:

The blue of dawn appears before its white
And rain begins with drops and then pours

God ﷻ alerts us to this in His Words:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْتَدُوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ مِن بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ ۗ الشَّيْطَانُ
سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ وَأَمْلَىٰ لَهُمْ * ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَرِهُوا مَا نَزَّلَ
اللَّهُ سَنُطِيعُكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ الْأَمْرِ

Truly those who have turned their backs after the guidance has become clear to them, Satan has seduced them and has given them [false] hopes. / That is because they said to those who were averse to what God revealed:

‘We will obey you in some matters’

(Muhammad, 47:25-26)

God ﷻ shows us that their saying: ‘We will obey you in some matters’ led to them turning their backs.

And God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَىٰ الْجَمْعَانِ
إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا

Truly, those of you who turned away the day the two hosts encountered each other – truly, Satan made them slip through some of what they had earned

(Aal ‘Imran, 3:155)

In this verse God ﷻ alerts us that some of what they had earned led to them being defeated.

The one who practices doing good, and who draws strength from it, is given by God ﷻ a protection (*waaqi*)

that prevents him from committing ugly acts and encourages him to perform beautiful acts. This is the meaning of infallibility ('*ismah*). God ﷻ alerts us to this in describing his *awliya*':

أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ

[For] those He has inscribed faith upon their hearts and reinforced them with a spirit from Him

(Al-Mujadilah, 58:22)

And God ﷻ says:

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

God being pleased with them, and they being pleased with Him. Those [they] are God's confederates. Assuredly it is God's confederates who are the successful.

(Al-Mujadilah, 58:22)

And the one who practices doing evil, and who draws strength from it, may develop from all the ugliness he has committed an impulse (*ba'ith*) that encourages him to perform ugly acts and an impulse that blocks him from the paths of beautiful acts. Thus, God ﷻ describes his enemies in the following way:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ أَغْلَالًا فَهِيَ إِلَى الْأَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ مُّقْمَحُونَ * وَجَعَلْنَا

مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا فَأَغْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ *

وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

Indeed We have put fetters around their necks, such that they are up to the chins so that their heads are upturned. / And We have set before them a barrier and behind them a

barrier; so We have covered them, so they do not see. / And it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe.

(YaSin, 36:8-10)

And God ﷻ says:

وَمَنْ يَعِشْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُفِضْ لَهُ، شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ، قَرِينٌ * وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّونَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

And whoever withdraws from the Remembrance of the Compassionate One, We assign for him a devil and he becomes his companion. / And indeed they bar them from the way, while they suppose that they are [rightly] guided, (Al-Zukhruf, 43: 36-37)

And God ﷻ says:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

We have made the devils friends of those who do not believe.

(Al-A'raf, 7:27)

God attributes the slave's guidance or misguidance alike to Himself ﷻ in the sense that He ﷻ created man's nature (*khilqah*) and his temperament (*tab'ahu*). So that if he undertakes an act; whether good or evil, and continues in it; it becomes a temperament and a quality in that person and he does not abandon it. However, God ﷻ does not attribute [a slave's] withholding from faith to Himself ﷻ, until after He mentions what the slave did that was wrong. For God ﷻ says:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

*We have made the devils friends of those
who do not believe. (Al-A'raf, 7:27)*

So God ﷻ specifies that it is those who do not believe whom the devils are their friends.

And God ﷻ says:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّרِيدٍ
كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ مَنْ تَوَلَّاهُ فَأَنَّهُ يُضِلُّهُ وَيَهْدِيهِ إِلَى عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ

*And among mankind are those who dispute about God
without any knowledge and [those who] follow every
rebellious devil / about whom it has been decreed that
whoever takes him for a friend, he will make him go a
stray and will lead him to the chastisement of the Blaze.*

(Al-Hajj, 22:3-4)

And God ﷻ says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

*Truly those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have
adorned their deeds for them, and so they are bewildered.*

(Al-Naml, 27:4)

And a poet once said:

Beautified in your eye is the ugly just as
Beautified in the eye of another is the beautiful

THE EXTENT POSSIBLE TO ACQUIRE HAPPINESS



Since man is reflective of the world, there is in him everything that is in the world. And as there are things in the world that are difficult to rehabilitate, and animals that cannot be disciplined; there is also in the essence of man potentialities that are difficult to rehabilitate and discipline. Thus, man has things that inhibit him from what he has been commanded to do and he has shortcomings in what he has been obliged to do. Hence, God ﷻ says:

قُلِ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ، * مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ، * مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ، فَقَدَرَهُ، * ثُمَّ
السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ، * ثُمَّ أَمَّانَهُ، فَأَقْبَرَهُ، * ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْشَرَهُ، * كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقِضْ مَا أَمَرَهُ،

Perish man! What has made him ungrateful? / From what thing has He created him? / From a drop of sperm did He create him then proportion him. / Then He made the way easy for him; / then He makes him die and buries him; / then, when He wills, He will raise him. / No indeed! He has not accomplished what He commanded him.

(‘Abasa, 80:17-23)

Hence, God ﷻ alerts us that man barely makes it out of this life having fulfilled his purpose and so he must exert every effort to do what he can. He should purify himself as

much as possible, and also seek expiation for what he was lax in doing. If man does his best, he is excused. For God ﷻ says:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

God charges no soul save to its capacity
(Al-Baqarah, 2:286)

If he does his best, he can hope that God will absolve him of his remaining misdeeds.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا

عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ

O you who believe! Repent to God with sincere repentance. It may be that your Lord will absolve you of your misdeeds
(Al-Tahrim, 66:8)

And God ﷻ says:

إِن تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نَكَفَّرَ عَنْكُمْ

سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلُكُمْ مَدْخَلًا كَرِيمًا

If you avoid the grave sins that are forbidden you, We will absolve you of your evil deeds and admit you by an honourable gate. (Al-Nisa', 4:31)

Hence, God commands us to persist in supplicating, for He ﷻ says:

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

Our Lord, do not cause our hearts to deviate after You have guided us; and give us mercy from You; You are the Bestower. (Aal-'Imran, 3:8)

And He ﷻ says:

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا

*Our Lord, take us not to task if we forget, or err
(Al-Baqarah, 2:286)*

And God ﷻ says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ
سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُم جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي
اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ، نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ
يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا نُورَنَا وَأَغْفِرْ لَنَا إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*O you who believe! Repent to God with sincere repentance.
It may be that your Lord will absolve you of your misdeeds
and admit you into gardens, underneath which rivers flow,
on the day when God will not let down the Prophet and
those who believe with him. Their light will be running
before them and on their right. They will say: 'Our Lord!
Perfect our light for us and forgive us. Assuredly You
have power over all things'.*

(Al-Tahrim, 66:8)

Hence, God commands us to seek Him ﷻ in completing what we fall short of acquiring. God ﷻ says:

وَالَّذِي جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ * لَهُمْ مَا
يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ * لِيُكَفِّرَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ
أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

And he who brings the truth and [those] who confirm it, those, they are the ones who guard themselves. / They shall have whatever they wish with their Lord. That is the reward of those who are virtuous, / so that God may absolve them of the worst of what they did, and pay them their reward by the best of what they used to do.

(Al-Zumar, 39:33-35)

In this vein some of the people of wisdom have said: ‘he who thinks he attains righteousness (*al-haqq*) through effort, is labouring; and he who thinks he attains it without effort is daydreaming.’

Because man falls short of purifying himself perfectly, the Prophet ﷺ said: “no one enters paradise solely because of his actions.’ And he was asked: “even you O Prophet of Allah?” He said: ‘Even me, without God enfolding me in His mercy.’⁵⁴

And God ﷻ says alerting us to this:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

O you who believe, do not follow in the steps of Satan. For whoever follows in the steps of Satan, assuredly he enjoins indecency and what is reprehensible. And were it not for God’s bounty to you and His mercy not one of you would ever have grown pure. But God purifies whom He will, and God is Hearer, Knower.

(Al-Nur, 24:21)

The proof that man falls short of purifying himself perfectly is that he is a speaking thinking animal. And an animal is a breathing, sensible essence, and what breathes is an earthy essence that feeds, and has no upright posture except through food. For as God ﷻ says:

وَمَا جَعَلْنَاهُمْ جَسَدًا لَا يَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُوا خَالِدِينَ

*And We did not make them bodies that did not eat food,
and they were not immortal.*

(*Al-Anbiya*, 21:8)

Hence, in this world man shares [qualities] with the animals and the predators, because he is an animal that needs what they need; and he shares [qualities] with trees and plants because he breathes and needs what they need.

If man does not rush the steep ascent or free the slave [i.e. exert his utmost effort] and rid himself of his lowly needs, he will not be secure from the devils of mankind and jinn. How could he be secure when God ﷻ says:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيَاطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ

*And so We have appointed to every Prophet an enemy,
devils of mankind and jinn who inspire fine speech to each
other in delusion; yet, had your Lord willed, they would
never have done it. So leave them with what they fabricate.*

(*Al-An'am*, 6:112)

Some exegetes have said that when Ibrahim ﷺ asked God ﷻ:

رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أُولِمُ تُوْمِنُ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ

رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أُولِمَ تُوْمِنَ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَظْمِنُ
 قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ أَجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ
 مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

‘My Lord show me how You give life to the dead’. He said, ‘Why, do you not believe?’ ‘Yes’, he said, ‘but so that my heart may be re-assured’. Said He, ‘Take four birds, and twist them to you, then set a part of them on every hill, then summon them, and they will come to you in haste.

And know that God is Mighty, Wise’.

(Al-Baqarah, 2:260)

He was asking God to show him life denuded of the contingencies (*‘awarid*) that animate life is exposed to. God ﷻ says: ‘Why, do you not believe?’ meaning: have you not ascertained? ‘Yes’, he said, meaning: I have ascertained, ‘but so that my heart may be re-assured’ meaning: so I can envisage reassurance, meaning: so that the soul may be rid of avarice (*sharah*), greed (*hirs*), vain hope (*al-amal*), and boastfulness (*iftikhar*). And so that I may observe the state mentioned in God’s ﷻ Words:

يَأْتِيَنَّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ * أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَةً *
 فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي * وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي

‘O soul at peace! / Return to your Lord, pleased, pleasing. / then enter among My servants! / And enter My Paradise!’

(Al-Fajr, 89:27-30)

So God commands him to take four birds: a **crow**: which is characterized by greed and avarice; an **eagle**: which is

characterized by vain hopes; a **peacock**: which is characterized by boastfulness, and a **rooster**: which is characterized by concupiscence, and to cut them up and then summon them to him. When he did that, they rushed back to him. So, God alerts us through this that even if man strives as much as he can in removing these attributes from himself, and purifying himself of them, he will not be purified as long as his humanity is worldly, and he will not attain the required reassurance and peace.

Some claim that there are people who have rid themselves of these attributes, to the extent that they do without food and drink, and become free of animal behaviour. If this occurs in some people, then they are angels who pretend to be ghosts, called human in name only. Their essence has been transformed the way the essence of fire transforms when it becomes ash, or like the transformation of a tadpole into a frog, or a caterpillar into a butterfly, and many other plants or animals whose essence transforms into something else. None of this is beyond Divine ability; and these people no longer need to be reformed to do the things for which man was created and made a vicegerent that cultivates the earth.

SECTION

ON THE GREATEST EMIGRATION (*HIJRAH*)

Know that he who immigrates in the cause of God and struggles for His sake, God will deem him worthy of guiding him to His path. God ﷻ promises:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

But as for those who struggle for Our sake, We shall assuredly guide them in Our ways,

and truly God is with the virtuous.
(Al-‘Ankabut, 29:69)

And God ﷻ says:

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَاوَأُوا وَنَصَرُوا
أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

And those who believed and emigrated and strove for the way of God, and those who provided refuge and assisted - those are the true believers, and for them is forgiveness and a generous provision. (Al-Anfal, 8:74)

The greatest emigration (*al-hijrah al-‘uzma*) is: abandoning the curiosities of appetites. And the greatest struggle (*al-mujahada al-kubra*) is: pushing back passion. For as the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘your jihad against your passion is better than your jihad against your enemy.’⁵⁵ So he who is guided to God’s path and who is intent in his journey on vying and hastening to doing good, is worthy of becoming one of the *abdal*.

The meaning of *abdal* is: Those who exchange (*yubad-dilun*) some of their blameworthy character traits and actions to praiseworthy character traits and actions. They change ignorance into knowledge; stinginess into generosity, concupiscence into virtuous restraint; injustice into justice, and rashness into deliberateness. Hence God ﷻ says:

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ^٤ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا * يُضَاعَفْ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَخْلُدْ فِيهِ مُهَانًا * إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا

فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَبْدِلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

and [those] who do not call on another god along with God, nor slay the soul which God has forbidden, except with due cause, and who do not commit fornication - for whoever does that shall meet with retribution; / doubled will be the chastisement for him on the Day of Resurrection and he will abide therein abased; / except for him who repents, and believes, and acts righteously, for such, God will replace their evil deeds with good deeds, for God is ever Forgiving, Merciful.

(Al-Furqan, 25:68-70)

So if someone becomes one of the *abdal*, he has been elevated to the station of the ones who are loved (*al-ahbab*) whom God refers to in His ﷻ Words:

فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ

*God will assuredly bring a people whom
He loves and who love Him:*

(Al-Ma'idah, 5:54)

Such a person is venerated among people and everyone elevates their standing; indeed he reaches a rank where even animals, predators, beasts and insects obey him, the way they obeyed Sulayman ibn Dawud ﷻ. And God will make iron malleable for him the way He did for Dawud ﷻ. And if he walks through fire, it will become coolness and safety for him the way it was for Ibrahim ﷻ. And the wind will be disposed for him so that he may ride it the way Sulayman ﷻ did. And water will be disposed for him so that he may walk on it, the way it was disposed for Al-Khidr ﷻ. And plants, metals, celestial bodies, and stars all speak to him, entrusting

him with their benefits and will tell him their secrets the way they spoke to Idris ؑ. Indeed, it has been narrated that: 'If God loves a slave, He will bestow upon him an image of His Images (*albasahu surah min suwarihi*), and will blow a spirit into him from His Spirit, until every stone (*hajar*) and piece of clay (*madar*) obeys him, and every bird and predator humbles itself before him.'⁵⁶

Indeed, God may single him out for miracles (*karamat*) that no one can know about other than the person who has been singled out for them. For as the Prophet ﷺ said about his Lord ﷻ: 'I have prepared for My righteous slaves that which no eye has ever seen, and no ear has ever heard, and no human heart has ever conceived.'⁵⁷ And in this vein God ﷻ says:

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ

*For no soul knows what has been kept hidden
for them in the way of joyous sights
(Al-Sajdah, 32:17)*

These states are not solely for the Prophets, they may also be for the friends of God (*al-awliya'*) who are singled out for miracles (*al-karamah*). This is not an innovation (*mustabda'*) or impossible (*mustankar*) before God's ﷻ ability. Nor is it contrary to His ﷻ wisdom, as some theologians (*mutakalimin*) have thought and said. They have said that if God ﷻ gives this to other than His Prophets, there is not guarantee that people will not be seduced by it. And they have also said that it leads to doubts being cast on miracles (*al-mu'jizah*). But God is the Wisest of the Wise and only grants this *karamah* to those who are worthy of it, for God ﷻ alerts us:

اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ

God knows best where to place His Message.

(Al-An'am, 6:124)

And whoever God has allowed to reach this station, He has undoubtedly granted him knowledge and wisdom enough to guide him and purify him. He then knows what restrains him and he walks the straight path as he has been ordered, and he knows his own worth, and does not cross his bounds.

ASSERTING THE CERTITUDE AND
VIRTUE OF DEATH AND WHAT
FOLLOWS OF HAPPINESS



No one denies the Resurrection or the second creation other than [materialistic] naturalists who neglect their own thoughts and are ignorant of their own worth. They are preoccupied from reflection on their beginning and their end by what has been made beautiful in their eyes of the lusts which God ﷻ describes:

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ
مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ
ذَٰلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَآبِ

Beautiful for mankind is love of lusts—of women, children, stored-up heaps of gold and silver, horses of mark, cattle, and tillage. That is the comfort of the life of this world; but God - with Him is the more excellent abode.

(Aal 'Imran, 3:14)

As for the upright one who does not walk cast down on his face, like those who God ﷻ describes:

إِنَّهُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

*They are but as the cattle—nay, but they are
further astray from the way.*

(Al-Furqan, 25:44)

He has reflected on the constituents of the world and has realized that the best are those who have animate souls; and the best of those with animate souls are those possessed of free will (*iradah*) and volition (*ikhtiyar*) in this world. And the best of those who have free will and volition are those who consider deeply the consequences of matters, and this is only true of human beings. Indeed, God ﷻ did not grant such a particular gift to human beings except for something that is relegated to the ultimate consequence (*al-'uqba*). If not, man's special gift would be meaningless.

Had the end of human life simply been this miserable life here below filled with its trials, griefs, stresses, and exhaustions, and with no condition of happiness afterwards, then the most contemptible animal would be better in his condition than the human being. It would also mean that all these divine wisdoms and lordly wonders that God has manifested in human beings would be simply without purpose. God ﷻ says:

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ

*Did you suppose that We created you aimlessly
and that you would not be returned to Us?*

(Al-Mu'minun, 23:115)

Surely how can the perfection of man's form with all its wondrous aspects, followed by its nullification and destruction, be without any meaning other than to share with the other animals, eating, drinking, and mating. Not to mention all the travails that accompany such a life—especially

given that God has relieved the animals of enduring many of these hardships. It would be as God ﷻ says:

كَأَلَّتِي نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ أَنْكَاثًا

like her who undoes her yarn after having made it strong,

[breaking it up] into fibres

(Al-Nahl, 16:92)

Transcendent is God and far above this!

How clear for anyone willing to throw off the veil of blindness is the veracity of *Amir al-Mu'mineen*, Ali ibn Abi Talib's ﷺ words: 'This world is a temporal abode (*dar mamarr*), not a permanent one (*dar maqarr*), so pass through it and do not attempt a permanent residence, for you have been created for eternity. But you must pass from abode to abode until you come to the final resting place (*qarar*).'

Unfortunately, many ignorant people have been duped by people to whom they attribute great intelligence about worldly affairs while these people deny matters of the Afterlife. They declare: 'If the Afterlife were true, such brilliant men and others like them of such extreme intelligence and impeccable understanding would not have denied it.' What they fail to recognize is that the intellect, despite being a noble substance, will only investigate those matters which one directs it to. It has no independence as such unless willfully directed to something. Hence, if it is directed to matters of the Afterlife, it will master such matters. But if it is directed only to worldly affairs, then it becomes formidable in such matters and fully embraces them to the neglect of everything else. Then such a person's inner sight is blinded to matters of eschatology (*al-umoor al-akhrawiyah*) as God has alerted us in several verses of the Qur'an as mentioned earlier.

SECTION

DEATH AS A DOOR TO PARADISE

Know that death as we know it, which is the separation of the soul from the body, is a means by which a person achieves eternal bliss (*al-na'eem al-abadi*). It is a transfer from one abode to another. As was stated: 'You have been created for eternity (*al-abad*). But you must pass from abode to abode until you come to the final resting place.' Hence, although outwardly death means annihilation and evanescence, in reality it means a second birth. How excellently the poet conveyed this:

The birth pangs of death came to him one day,
And every pregnancy must complete its term

The poet likened death to the pregnancy of a woman and the pangs of death to the pangs of childbirth, and being born into another world like the first birth. This is a way of reminding us that this is one of the very purposes of existence itself.

One of the sages said: As long as man is in this world dwelling in his body, he is analogous to a chick within its egg. And just as the completeness (*kamal*) of the chick is to break through the egg to be born, so a man, in order to find completeness, must leave his body. Indeed, were it not for death, human beings could never achieve completeness. Hence, death is essential for the completion of one's humanity. In fact, given that death acts as the means by which one moves from this lower state to a nobler more exalted one, God calls it fulfillment (*tawuffiyan*), or to be retained [back to the Divine] (*imsakan 'indahu*). God ﷻ says:

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فِيمَسِكُ
 الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ
 لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

God takes (yatawaffa) the souls at the time of their death, and, those that have not died in their sleep. Then He retains (yumsek) those for whom He has ordained death and releases the others until an appointed term. Truly in that there are signs for a people who reflect.
 (Al-Zumar, 39:42)

For that reason we find such expressions as: ‘God retained (ista’thar) so and so’ and ‘He went back to God,’ and other such idioms.

Given that death means a movement from a low abode to a higher one, the one who trusts what God holds for him, loves death. Indeed, only two types of people detest death:

The first type: are those who do not believe in an After-life, and to them the only life and bliss to be found is here in this world. God ﷻ describes them:

وَلَنَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَىٰ حَيٰوةٍ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ
 لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُزَحِّزِهِ ۚ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ۚ إِنَّ يُعَمَّرُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ
 بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ

And you shall find them the people most covetous of life, and the idolaters; any one of them would love that he might be given life for a thousand years; yet, his being given life shall not budge him from the chastisement. God sees what they do. (Al-Baqarah, 2:96)

A poet from those who are like this said:

Do you leave the pleasure of wine here
For some promise about milk and wine there
Life, death resurrection
these are just mythology, O' Um Amr

And another said:

Take from this world a good portion
Before you leave it
Because you will find no abode after this
Better than this

The second type: are those who believe in the Afterlife but worry about their sinfulness.

Anyone without those two concerns will love death and wish for it, just as the righteous love death and wish for it. Hence, the Prophet ﷺ said: 'He who loves to meet God, God loves to meet him, and he who dislikes to meet God, God abhors to meet him.'⁵⁸ And God ﷻ says:

فَتَمَنُّوا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

then long for death, if you are truthful'.

(Al-Jumu'ah, 62:6)

Alerting us that whoever is certain of his good state with God will not hate death.

For death is a door from the doors of Paradise, and through it one arrives to Paradise. Without death, Paradise would be inaccessible. For that reason God granted us death. God ﷻ says:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

[He] Who created death and life, that He may try you [to see] which of you is best in conduct

(Al-Mulk, 67:2)

In the verse, death is mentioned before life as a reminder that it leads to real life. Indeed God ﷻ counts it as a blessing to us from Him. God ﷻ says:

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

How do you disbelieve in God, when you were dead, and He gave you life; then He shall make you dead, then He shall give you life, then to Him you shall be returned!

(Al-Baqarah, 2:28)

Thus, God made death a blessing (*in'aman*) just as He made life a blessing. This is because, since the Afterlife is a blessing (*ni'mah*) that can only be achieved through death, then death becomes a blessing. Because the means to a blessing is also a blessing.

Since death is the means to the greatest happiness, the Prophets ﷺ and the sages have never feared it. In fact, *Amir al-Mu'mineen*, Ali ibn Abi Talib ؑ said: 'I swear by God, I could not care less whether I fall upon death or death falls upon me.'

They expected death and considered themselves in prison, waiting for the good news of their release. And for this reason the Prophet ﷺ said: 'The world (*dunya*) is the believer's prison and the disbeliever's (*kafir*) paradise.'⁵⁹

And it is said that when Dawud al-Ta'iy died, someone heard a voice that said: 'Dawud has been released from prison.'

God ﷻ says:

وَلَيْنَ مُتَمِّمٌ أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لِإِلَى اللَّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

*And if you die or are slain, it is to God
you shall be mustered
(Aal 'Imran, 3:158)*

Alerting us that death provides a path to salvation with God. God ﷻ says:

وَلَيْنَ قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مِتُّمْ لِمَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةٍ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

*And if you are slain in God's way, or die, forgiveness from
God and mercy are better than what they amass
(Aal 'Imran, 3:157)*

And God ﷻ says:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أحيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ

* فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ

مِّنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

*Count not those who were slain in God's way, as dead,
but rather, living with their Lord, provided for [by Him]. /
Rejoicing in what God has given them of His bounty,
and rejoicing, for the sake of those who have not joined
them but are left behind, that no fear shall befall them,
neither shall they grieve.
(Aal 'Imran, 3:169-170)*

And God ﷻ says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ * ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ
* ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ
عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَبَارِكِ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ
الْمَخْلُقِينَ * ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمَيِّتُونَ * ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ

*And We certainly created man from an extraction of clay. /
Then We made him a drop in a secure lodging. / Then We
transformed the drop [of semen] into a clot. Then We
transformed the clot into a [little] lump of flesh. Then We
transformed the lump of flesh into bones. Then We clothed
the bones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet]
another creature. So blessed be God, the best of creators! /
Then indeed after that you die. / Then on the Day of
Resurrection you shall surely be raised.*

(Al-Mu'minun, 23:12-16)

God ﷻ alerts us in these verses that each stage of transformation is towards a better creation. Thus, God ﷻ destroys this [temporal] body in order to restore it to a higher more noble form. Like the date seed that is planted that can only become a great date-bearing fruit palm by the destruction of its form. And like the wheat grain; we can only use it to support our bodies by crushing it, then kneading it, then baking it, and finally eating it. Thus, outwardly each stage appears to be the thing's destruction. Likewise, the seed thrown upon the earth; one who does not know what it is to become would deem such an act wasteful.

The soul does not like to remain in this abode unless it

is a dirty soul, content with the inconsequential things of this world, like a dung-beetle, content in its hole. Or if the soul is ignorant concerning its state in the Afterlife.

THE VIRTUE OF HUMAN BEINGS
WHEN THEY ARE HONOURED
ABOVE THE ANGELS



As aforementioned, people are of two types:

A type who have gained nothing from humanity except the outward form of upright stature, wide fingernails, the ability to laugh, and vacuous speech, analogous to whistling and clapping. These are lower than beasts.

And a type who can be called human beings. These are the ones who fulfill the reason for which they were created.

Of those, there are only two states man finds himself in:

The first is our worldly state. In this state man has not rushed the steep ascent or freed the slave [i.e. exerted his utmost effort]. Rather, he is a victim of hunger, a prisoner of satiety, his sweat engenders a stench, bedbugs irritate him, and he can die choking on a morsel of food. *No indeed! He has not accomplished what He commanded him.* ('Abasa, 80:23)

Such a person, as long as he resides in the world, cannot be considered better than the angels—ever.

The second state is that of the ones who rush the steep ascent, free the slave; and fulfill what God ﷻ has commanded of them, thus becoming among those that *no fear shall befall them, neither shall they grieve.* (Yunus, 10:62)

Indeed, they have achieved being *in an abode of truth, before a King [Who is] Omnipotent*. (Al-Qamar: 54:55); that of: life without annihilation; richness without want; dignity without humiliation; and knowledge without ignorance. The angels come to their service, just as God ﷻ promises:

جَنَّتٍ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ
يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ * سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ

Gardens of Eden, which they shall enter along with those who were righteous from among their fathers and their spouses and their descendants; and the angels shall enter to them from every gate. / 'Peace be upon you for your patience'. How excellent is the sequel of the [heavenly] Abode!
(Al-Ra'd, 13:23-24)

Then the one who has achieved this station (*manzilah*) is better than many of the angels. And God knows best.

May God ﷻ help us to achieve this station and make us from those who are worthy of it with His mercy, and He ﷻ is capable of all things.



This is the end of what I intended by *A Detailing of the Two Creations and the Attainment of the Two Happinesses*. May God ﷻ benefit me with it and from His looking at it with His mercy. Indeed He does as He wills. All praise be to God ﷻ, and may blessings be upon the best of creation Muhammad, and his good and pure family.



ENDNOTES

- ¹ Sahih Bukhari no. 2887.
- ² Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Zuhd*, no. 157.
- ³ Al-Bazzar on the authority of Omar.
- ⁴ Al-Tirmidhi no. 3789 and Ahmad no. 19992 and Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir* (18/369), and Al-Bazzar no. 3578, and Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Asma' wa Al-Sifat* p. 993 on the authority of Imran bin Al-Hasein, and it is a Hadith Sahih.
- ⁵ The editor could not find it.
- ⁶ The editor could not find it.
- ⁷ Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir* (8/103) and Abu Nu'aym in *Al-Hulyah* (6/119).
- ⁸ Al-Bazzar, no. 3225.
- ⁹ Abu Dawud, 5130 and Ahmad no. 21694.
- ¹⁰ Al-Daraqutni in *Al-Ghara'ib*, and Ibn 'Asakir on the authority of Abu Hurairah.
- ¹¹ Al-Shawkani wrote in *Al-Fawa'id Al-Majmu'ah*, p. 478: 'narrated by Ibn Uday on the authority of Abu Hurairah.'
- ¹² Sahih Muslim no. 2789.
- ¹³ Sahih Bukhari no. 3208 and Sahih Muslim no. 2643.
- ¹⁴ Sahih Muslim no. 2822 and Ahmad no. 13671 and Bukhari no. 6487.
- ¹⁵ Sahih Bukhari no. 3010.
- ¹⁶ Sahih Bukhari no. 2887.
- ¹⁷ Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir* and Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Shu'ab*, and Ibn Abi 'Asim in *Al-Sunnah*.
- ¹⁸ Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir* (8/103) and Abu Nu'aym in *Al-Hulyah* (6/119).
- ¹⁹ Sahih Bukhari no. 3208 and Sahih Muslim no. 2643.
- ²⁰ Sahih Bukhari no. 4946 and Sahih Muslim 6733.
- ²¹ Sahih Bukhari no. 4946 and Sahih Muslim 6733.
- ²² Al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab Al-Iman* on the authority of Hasan Al-Basri.
- ²³ Abu Dawud no. 4693 and Al-Tirmidhi no. 3188.

- ²⁴ Ibn Majah no. 1978 and Ibn Abi Hatem in *Al-'Ilal* (1/403 and 404), and *Al-Hakem* (2/1630), and Al-Daraqutni no. 3788, and Al-Bayhaqi no. (7/133).
- ²⁵ The editor could not find it with this wording, see: *Al-Kinz* no. 44563.
- ²⁶ Al-Ramharmzi in *Al-Amthal*, and Al-Daraqutni in *Al-Afrad*, and Al-Daylami in *Al-Firdaws*, and Al-Qada'i in *Al-Shihab*.
- ²⁷ Al-Qida'i in *Musnad Al-Shihab* no. 35.
- ²⁸ Abu Dawud no. 494.
- ²⁹ Sahih Bukhari no. 3244 and Sahih Muslim no. 2824.
- ³⁰ Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir* (3/3367).
- ³¹ Ibn Uday (2/299) and Al-Tabarani in *Al-Awsat*, and Ibn Bashran in *Al-Amali* (3/661), and Al-Khatib in his *Tarikh* (10/387), and Al-Aqda'i in *Al-Shihab* (2/52).
- ³² Al-Tirmidhi no. 2534, and Ibn Majah no. 4809, and Ahmad no. 3709.
- ³³ Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Shu'ab*.
- ³⁴ Al-Daylami no. 6285.
- ³⁵ Ibn Majah no 4105.
- ³⁶ Ibn Uday (2/299) and Al-Tabarani in *Al-Awsat*, and Ibn Bashran in *Al-Amali* (3/661), and Al-Khatib in his *Tarikh* (10/387), and Al-Aqda'i in *Al-Shihab* (2/52).
- ³⁷ Sahih Bukhari no. 6446 and Sahih Muslim 1051.
- ³⁸ The editor could not find it with this wording, see: Al-Tirmidhi no. 2322, and Ibn Majah no 4112, and Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Shu'ab* no. 1788.
- ³⁹ Ibn Majah no. 2045, and Ibn Habban no. 7219, and Al-Tahhawi in *Sharh Al-Athar* (3/95), and Al-Tabarani in *Al-Saghir* no. 765, and Al-Daraqutni no. 4351.
- ⁴⁰ Sahih Bukhari no. 1295.
- ⁴¹ Sahih Bukhari no. 2320 and Sahih Muslim 1553.
- ⁴² Ibn Abd Al-Barr in *Jami' Bayan Al-Ilm* (1/45).
- ⁴³ Ibn Majah no. 224, and Abu Ya'la no. 2837, 2903, 4035, and Al-Tabarani in *Al-Awsat* no. 9, 2008, 2462, 8381, 8834, and Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Shu'ab* no. 1663-1666.
- ⁴⁴ Ahmad no. 1911 on the authority of Ibn Abbas, and no. 7417 and 9657 on the authority of Abu Hurairah.

- ⁴⁵ Ahmad no. 9504 on the authority of Abu Hurairah. Sahih Bukhari no. 741 and Sahih Muslim no. 424 with slightly different wording.
- ⁴⁶ The editor could not find it with this wording, see: Al-Tirmidhi no. 2322, and Ibn Majah no. 4112, and Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Shu'ab* no. 1788.
- ⁴⁷ Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Zuhd*, no. 157.
- ⁴⁸ Sahih Bukhari no. 4946 and Sahih Muslim no. 6733.
- ⁴⁹ Al-Tayalisi on the authority of Ibn Masoud with slightly different wording, see: *Sahih Al-Jami'* no. 4200 and 4203.
- ⁵⁰ Al-Hakem no. 7844.
- ⁵¹ Al-Nasa'i no. 3140.
- ⁵² The editor could not find it with this wording, however see: Al-Tirmidhi no. 3334 and Al-Nasa'i in *'Amal Al-Yawm wa Al-Layla* no. 418, and Ibn Majah no. 4244, and Ibn Hibban no. 936, and Al-Hakem (2/517).
- ⁵³ The editor could not find it.
- ⁵⁴ Sahih Bukhari no. 5673, and Sahih Muslim no. 2816.
- ⁵⁵ The editor could not find it.
- ⁵⁶ The editor could not find it.
- ⁵⁷ Sahih Bukhari no. 3244 and Sahih Muslim no. 2824.
- ⁵⁸ Sahih Bukhari no. 6507, and Sahih Muslim no. 2683.
- ⁵⁹ Sahih Muslim no. 2956.

Al-Raghib Al-Asfahani

Abu Al-Qasim Al-Hussein bin Mufaddal bin Muhammad, better known as Al-Raghib Al-Asfahani, was an eleventh-century Muslim scholar of Qur'anic exegesis and the Arabic language. Born in Asfahan,

Al-Raghib lived in Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate. Al-Asfahani's approach of integrating Hellenic knowledge within an Islamic religious context influenced many scholars, including Imam Al-Ghazali. Drawing heavily from the Qur'an, Al-Asfahani's work covered topics including ethics, literature, linguistics, and Islamic philosophy. One of his most significant works is *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib Al-Qur'an* which is a dictionary of Qur'anic terms.



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