

# THE POOR MAN'S BOOK OF ASSISTANCE TO THE PATH OF OPENING AND EMPOWERMENT

*Kitab F'anat Al-Mutawajih Al-Miskīn  
ila Tariq Al-Fath wa Al-Tamkīn*



Abu Al-Abbas Ahmad bin Zarrouq Al-Fasi



THE ROYAL ISLAMIC STRATEGIC STUDIES CENTRE

ENGLISH ISLAM SERIES • BOOK NUMBER 38



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*Translated by Lamya Al-Khraisha  
based on an oral translation by*

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

The illustrious, incomparable Sheikh and Imam who preceded all who came after him; the sheikh of the *tariqah* whose states and sciences combine *Shari‘ah* and *haqiqah*, *Sayyidina* and *Mawlana* and our means to our Lord, Abu Al-Abbas Ahmad son of the noble sheikh Abu Al-Abbas Ahmad son of the noble sheikh Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Issa of the Pyrenees from Fez, known as Zarrouq, may God be pleased with him and us and may He gather us with those He loves. Amen, Amen, Amen.

He—Ahmad bin Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Issa of the Pyrenees from Fez known as Zarrouq may God forgive his sins, veil his faults, and rectify his heart—confesses his sins, faults and shortcomings and hopes for the grace and generosity of his Lord in all his affairs, and says:

Praise be to God, the King (*Al-Malek*), the Plentiful Giver (*Al-Wahhab*), the Merciful (*Al-Rahim*), the Granter and Acceptor of Repentance (*Al-Tawwab*), the Guide to the Truth and to What is Correct (*Al-Hadi Ila Al-Haqq wa Al-Sawab*), the Knower of the Unseen and the Manifest, the One Who Encompasses Wholes and Parts, the One Whom None Can Overturn His Decree or Prevent His Giving, the One Whose Blessings and Bounties are Endless, the One Who Guides and Sends Astray, and the One Who Favours and Forsakes (*Waffaq wa Khathal*), Who Bestows His

Grace with Abundance; praise be to Him for His bestowing unmerited favours and we ask Him for wellbeing through His Mercy.

And [we invoke] God's complete and blessed prayers on the Prophet of mercy who is complete in grace and is the key to goodness and infallibility; *Sayyidina* and *Mawlana* Muhammad the Trustworthy, who is elevated above all the worlds, and on his Kinfolk and Companions. Prayers that fill the world with increase and growth and repeat endlessly across the ages. Prayers that connect with our constant salutations of peace on him and them and which rebound to us as *repose and a goodly provision*, and whose reinforcement leads to security and faith, and whose perfume renews for us at all times. All of this is from God's bounty, mercy, generosity and favours, and *God is sufficient for us, an excellent Guardian is He*.

As for what is before everything, and with everything, and after everything, in reality there is nothing but God. The one who holds onto the firm rope of God becomes empowered, and he who deviates from God's noble and generous door is destroyed. For nothing shields one from God's decree unless He has mercy on him. And there is no guidance except through holding fast to the rope leading to His Proximity, so that one arrives to reality (*al-haqiqah*) through the Shari'ah. And this is after one has removed every ugly and grotesque quality from himself—preferring soundness in his path, always maintaining the truth, in the 'carpet-spread' of realization, with a sound mind, and a heart constantly turning to God and witnessing His presence; and his placing everything in its place and realizing knowledge and action according to their foundations. This is very rare in these times, and especially with certain people

in certain places. But God's favours are not specific to a place or time, nor are they prevented by difficulties.

So trust that your Lord is your Protector (*Kafil*) and take Him as your Guardian (*Wakil*). For He is the One Who never lets down the one who seeks Him, and He never neglects the one who seeks refuge in Him and depends on Him. The keys of good are in seeking refuge in Him constantly; and the foundation of all matters is in depending on Him. God ﷻ says:

وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

*And whoever puts his trust (yatawakkal) in God,  
He will suffice him  
(Al-Talaq, 65:3)*

Meaning: He is enough for him, and will protect him, and grant him victory. God ﷻ says:

وَمَنْ يَعْصِمْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

*Whoever holds fast to God, he is guided  
to a straight path  
(Aal Imran, 3:101)*

And the Messenger of God ﷺ said: 'If you ask God, then magnify your request.' They said: 'Then we will do much of that, Oh Messenger of God.' And he said: 'God will do more.'<sup>1</sup> In other words: He answers much. And he ﷺ said: 'Whoever has been given [the gift of] supplication will not be deprived of its being answered. And whoever seeks forgiveness from God will not be deprived of forgiveness.'

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<sup>1</sup> Mentioned up until 'then magnify your request' by Al-Qarafi in *Al-Furuq* (8/481). The editor did not find it elsewhere. The rest of the Hadith has been narrated by Al-Tirmidhi (3479).

And God loves nothing more than to be asked for wellbeing in this world and the Next.<sup>2</sup> And the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Whoever never asks of God, He will be angry with him.’<sup>3</sup> And with the same meaning someone said:

God is angered if you abandon supplicating Him  
But when the son of Adam is asked, he is angered



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<sup>2</sup> Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Shu'ab* (4351).

<sup>3</sup> Narrated by Al-Tirmidhi (3295).

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# INTRODUCTION

## ON KNOWING THE HEART, ITS MEDICINE, AND ITS ILLNESSES

Note: The heart is the foundation of every good and every evil, and its life and its death are the keys to either benefit or harm. He who has no life in his heart has no way of protecting himself from evil, or of facilitating good for himself. And every heart that has been beautified by life is called to enthusiastic responses when reminders occur.

### 1. THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF HEARTS

The *first* is a heart whose life is sound (*sabeeh*), and its expression is eloquent (*faseeh*). Its owner speaks with wisdom and rises to the occasion as needed.

The *second* is a heart in which there is no life, and it accepts neither reminders, nor being called to attention. It does not follow the truth and does not have courtesy with God's creation.

The *third* is a heart that has been afflicted with sicknesses during its life, and has been accompanied in its states by objections (*i'tiradat*) and symptoms (*a'raad*). Its symptoms are displayed and it experiences pain when it hears about its sicknesses. This heart can be treated, and can struggle in hopes that its life will be upright, or that the disease will cease enough so that it does not end what good there is in it. Of this type of heart there are three types that either negate or affirm these things.

The *first type* is when life dominates in the heart and the disease is secondary, and this is easier to treat.

The *second type* is when the sickness is dominant in the heart, and its life is very weak, and these symptoms are terminal (*mukheefah*).

The *third type* is when sickness and health are almost equal in the heart, but in a way where it is possible to strengthen one over the other. It is like the second type previously mentioned, or it is in a condition where its sickness cannot be cured.

The presence of life [in the heart] and establishing it is manifest in one of three ways that can show whether it is hidden or manifest.

The *first way* is a symptom that manifests, and its diagnostic measurement is the actions of one's limbs.

The *second way* is the original cause and its diagnostic measurement is the movement of hearts.

The *third way* is those matters that move the person (*al-mawaad al-muwassilah*), and the diagnostic measure for that is what the soul (*al-nafs*) inclines and tends to by choice.

All of that is to be found in the words of the sheikh, imam, and scholar of high character, Sidi Abu Al-Hassan Al-Shadhili who said: 'The blindness of the inner sight occurs from three things: allowing your limbs to enter into a state of disobedience to God (*ma'aasi*); to pretend (*al-tasannu'*) to be in obedience to God; and to be covetous (*tama'*) of what God has given others of creation. Anyone who claims to have inner sight while having one of these three is either a liar and a fabricator, or his knowledge and works are incorrect.' And this is the essence of reality and the decisive word on the matter.

When sickness enters into a naïve heart (*al-qalb al-sathij*), it is easy to treat, unlike the heart that became sick after it was healthy and then relapsed because of the sickness in it, and because it has become intimate with disobedience. For that reason, if the heart becomes well, then the reality (*al-haqiqah*) becomes strong in it and the sickness is removed. This is because it becomes wary of the causes of relapsing (*al-nuks*) and feels that there is lack in the opposite [state]. But its staying firm is rare because it is easy to relapse if the means to it are easier and closer, and because the things that call to good and evil are an impetus (*al-quwah al-dafi'ah*) [in the heart] and the person's humour supports that. The humour (*al-khalt*) is moved and feels pain, and its power appears like wretchedness (*al-'adam*). Therefore, never feel secure with the state of your soul, and do not be heedless about protecting what you have of perfection. And always renew your turning to God (*al-tawbah*) in order to protect this soundness of penitence, and treat your diseases with things that you see have a beneficial effect. Do that through acquiring things that ornament the soul and remove what is self-destructive from it. And success is from God ﷻ.

## 2. ON THE TREATMENT OF THE HEART

Regarding the treatment of the heart that prefers its desires (*hawa*), and turns away from its Lord—if that heart has life in it through feeling when it does wrong and when it does right, or when it is reminded or reprimanded; there are three keys for opening and locking the door.

First, is through a diet for the body to the degree that it does not affect the intellect or sleep.

Second, is through inhaling the fragrance of sincerity by

keeping the company of the people of sincerity. If a living person is not to be found, then find news of the place of someone who is.

Third, is through using a powerful medicine (*al-dawa' al-dafe'*) by being reminded of the things of destruction (*al-mahalek*) and those things that distract one from one's path (*al-maqate'*). They are three in general and they remind the servant of what his origin is:

First, is to be a stranger in this world, even from one's own self.

Second, is [remembering] the struggle of the moment of death and one's alienation in the grave.

Third, is to remember that one day one will be standing in the presence of the Ruler of the Heavens and the Earth, and that he will be exposed to all of creation on the Day that All Actions are Displayed (*Yawm al-'Ard*).

By diminishing the appetite, the heart becomes pure, and by keeping the company of the people of good, the innermost core (*lubb*) begins to yearn (*yashtaaq*). God helps the servant in accordance with his intention, and He will give him openings based on his determination. The servant has to undertake the means and leave the openings to God.

If the soul has an aversion to being reminded, or the heart is neglectful about the means that bring about inner sight (*al-istibsaar*), then one has to force himself to undertake the means that remind him, and I mean those things that strengthen one and his reflection:

First, is to go into a retreat of leisure time (*al-khulwah ma' al-faragh*), even if it is without any remembrance of God.

Second, is to visit graveyards alone, even if it is without reflection (*fikr*).

Third, is to continuously seek God's forgiveness even if it is without presence, and to invoke prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ in all matters.

For he ﷺ said: 'Visit graves because they will remind you of the Next World.'<sup>4</sup>

And he ﷺ said: 'Whoever continuously seeks God's forgiveness, God will make for every anxiety that he has some release from it; and for every difficulty a way out, and He will provide for him from whence he does not expect.'<sup>5</sup>

And the Prophet ﷺ said: 'Prayer upon me is light in the heart, a light in the grave, and light on the Bridge (*al-Sirat*), and it is greater in extinguishing wrong actions than cold water is in extinguishing fire.'<sup>6</sup> Related by Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq<sup>7</sup> رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

### 3. HOW TO TREAT THE SOUL WHEN IT IS AVERSE TO MEDICINE

If your soul refuses and will not follow these paths either because they are too weighty for it, or because you are too preoccupied with worldly matters, then know that as for the first one, that is the ultimate sign of stupidity and lack of success. And it is proof of weak certainty (*yaqin*) and

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<sup>4</sup> Narrated with this phrasing by Ibn Majah (1558) and closely by Muslim (1622) and Abu Dawud (2815) and Al-Tirmidhi (974).

<sup>5</sup> Narrated by Abu Dawud (1297) and Ibn Majah (3809) and Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Kubra* (3/351) and Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir* (10517) and *Al-Awsat* (6473).

<sup>6</sup> Narrated by Ibn Shahin (22) on the authority of Abu Hurairah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ with the wording 'Prayer upon me is light in on the Bridge (*al-Sirat*), so, whoever prays upon me on Friday 80 times, the sins of 80 years will be forgiven for him.' It was related with this wording by Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi in *Kanz Al-'Ummal* (2149) and he attributed it to Al-Azdi in *Al-Du'afaa'* and Al-Daraqutni in *Al-Afrad*, both on the authority of Abu Hurairah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

<sup>7</sup> It is not correct to attribute the Hadith to the Prophet ﷺ and to Abu Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ at the same time without it being confirmed except attributed to the Prophet ﷺ as stated in the previous footnote.

faith (*iman*). As for the second, it is due to the fact that your own desire has overcome you and you are preoccupied (*shaghaf*) with what you have.

There are two treatments for the first one:

First, is to do the aforementioned in spite of oneself, and to preoccupy the soul with praiseworthy things, and to do so without concerning oneself with the benefit of these acts, or with doing them perfectly. One should also not consider how much he does of them, or if he does them on their own—for this alerts the soul whether it likes it or not; and it also preoccupies it from what it has been accustomed to and was raised to do.

Second, is to repeat these beliefs without clear proofs and to do so in study and in recitation until they are firmly fixed in the soul and the vision is clear in one's mind. In this way delusion (*wahm*) and ambiguity (*labs*) are lifted and one's strengths are energized, and a part of reality (*al-haqiqah*) manifests in a way that pushes away one's caprice (*hawa*). For every human being, even if he is a weak human being, there is a way of breaking things down in a manner that will increase his certainty. This is done with repetition through which meanings become confirmed and the substance of those meanings become manifest; so, understand this.

As for your busyness and your lack of leisure, it is an excuse that is unacceptable and unpalatable; because you are either busy with something that has some element [of the truth] in it, like seeking knowledge, or with something the nature of which necessitates sincerity, like doing what you are obligated to do. Or you are busy with something that has some immediate benefit, or some later benefit—and none of that should negate the ability to reflect or to be re-

minded, because none of this takes all day and all night. If indeed one spends all of his time in this preoccupied state, then he is making his reality what he is preoccupied with, and from this point of view the truth cannot become firmly established by what has been negated.

There are three treatments for this:

First, is to take one hour of your day and your night when you are alone with yourself and look at what you did that day and the day before, and reflect on death's preparation to attack you, and what the grave entails.

Second, if you are not capable of doing that because of the previously mentioned exhaustion and your preoccupation with the world, then at least steal a day out of the days of the week, or two days, or take three days out of the month, and think of it as a debt.

Third, if you are not able to do even that because you are so overwhelmed, then do it once a year. Beyond that there is no hope, because God ﷻ praises Friday and because the Prophet ﷺ encouraged us to remind ourselves on that day to speak less, and to increase our prayers on him ﷻ. He also encouraged us to fast a day during the week; and he also made refinement in these matters part of the reality of their rulings. Thus the Prophet ﷺ said: 'Do not make the day you fast like the day you do not fast.'<sup>8</sup> He also encouraged us to fast three days of the month in addition to the month of Ramadan in which seclusion (*i'tikaf*) was his sunnah.

In general, spiritual aspiration (*al-himmah*) carries the body; and a person with even the least amount of spiritual aspiration should use it to get to what he aims for. He

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<sup>8</sup> Narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah in his *Musannaf* and Al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab Al-Iman* (3491).

should use every moment of his leisure time to attain his goal and he should do it immediately. Thus if he is going to get what he aims for, he will utilize the means (*asbab*) to it. If he is not otherwise occupied (*mutajarred*), then he should make it the source of his livelihood. If he is a seeker of knowledge, then he should make it part of his activities because seeking knowledge will not occupy all of his time.

The foundation of all good, and the wellspring of righteousness and blessings is found in three things:

*First*, is seeking God's help and succor, and to seek it on the 'carpet-spread' of poverty, neediness and humiliation—even if only for just a moment during the day or the night.

*Second*, is renewing one's effort in overcoming the faults that prevent him from reaching his goal; and singling out one's spiritual aspiration without hesitation and without a moment's neglect.

*Third*, is firmness in one's initiative to reach what is desired after realizing (*tahqiq*) sincerity.

These things will all be aided by success (*tawfiq*) from God, but will be prevented by being too preoccupied by details; because sincerity—which is success—prevents branching (*al-tasha'ub*) due to its being concerned with truth (*al-haqq*). And every person's reality (*al-haqq*) is always with the consideration of his state; it manifests in what he knows and what he does.

If you remember your wrong actions, trace them closely, this will help to remove them; but beware of looking at them in great detail in a manner that strengthens them. At the same time, beware of confining yourself to just remembering your wrong actions in their entirety, and of reminding the soul of its capacity for vagueness and ambiguity. Every soul that is attracted to knowledge and wisdom will



not be able to be exhorted or reminded by other than those things, otherwise it would be repulsed. And every soul that is dominated by simple ignorance (*al-jahl al-baseet*), will be reminded and energized by any exhortation. And for every soul that is dominated by disputation (*al-jadal*), these strategies to get it motivated are rarely going to work. For God ﷻ says:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ  
وَجَدِلْ لَهُم بِأَلَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

*Call unto the way of your Lord with wisdom  
and fair exhortation, and dispute with them  
by way of that which is best  
(Al-Nahl, 16:125)*

And God ﷻ says about he who takes his caprice as his god:

فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ  
*So who will guide him after God?  
(Al-Jathiyah, 45:23)*

Therefore, these strategies do not motivate this type of soul.

The Hadith says that no people learn how to dispute without them being prevented from action. This means, and God knows best, egotistical argumentation (*al-jadal al-nafsi*) that establishes arguments based on one's desires (*al-hawa*), so that neither knowledge nor action are safe from it. This becomes so essential to a person's reality that he is unaware of this matter overwhelming him; because the nature of desire, when it firmly roots itself, brings into fruit-

ion knowledge that is in accordance with it. This strategy becomes so great in this person that it has been said: ‘To carve mountains with fingernails is easier than removing desire [from the soul] if it has become firmly rooted.’

And this quality is what forces the wayfarer (*al-salek*) to regress and reduces him to the lowest of the low, and it puts the scholar in the company of the heedless (*al-ghafilin*). I think that the majority of creation, if not all of them, did not regress after arriving except that they were unaware of this monumental principle. Reflect on the words of the author of *Al-Hikam* when he said:

It is from the ignorance of the seeker to do something with bad manners, and if the punishment is delayed, to think: ‘If this really were bad manners, God would have stopped His helping (*imdad*) me and would have distanced me from Him.’ God may remove His help from whence he knows not, even if only preventing more help. And you could become in a distant place from God without being aware of it, even if He leaves you with what you desire.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Now you know, my brother, the path of repentance (*al-tawbah*) and the way to return after you have turned to Him (*al-rujoo‘ ba‘d al-awbah*). So, if you stand before its door—which is feeling remorse about what has passed—realize it in your actions with consistency, knowing that repentance from you to Him is His acceptance of your repentance to Him. If after you are firm, you lose the repentance again, it will return to you. And if it is maintained, know that it is from His generosity to you [*karamatihi*]. Because this action [*tawbah*] that you have done exposes you

to the fragrances of His mercy, and your firmness in this is a result of His Graciousness. For this reason one must return to repentance every time there is a return to wrong action; because the attributes of the servant do not diminish the Attributes of the Lord. And He has promised His bounty and mercy (*fadlihi*) just as He has promised His justice (*'adlihi*); and neither of them is over the other (*awla*). To flee from it is a wrong, and to hasten to it is guidance, and success is His providence (*'inayah*). And if breaching it and returning to old ways is a great thing, then returning to His generosity is greater than any great thing.

As the Prophet ﷺ said: 'He is not considered a confirmed sinner who asks pardon (*istaghfar*); even if he returns [to that sin] seventy times a day.'<sup>9</sup>

And the Prophet ﷺ said: 'God loves every wrongdoer (*muftinin*) who does much repentance (*tawwab*).'<sup>10</sup> Meaning one who commits many sins and repents a lot.

And Al-Hassan رضي الله عنه was asked: 'The man who does wrong and then asks for forgiveness, then does wrong then asks for forgiveness; at what point does he stop?' He said: 'I consider this nothing other than the character of the believers.'

And in *Al-Hikam* the author says:

Never allow any wrong action that you do to cause you to despair from gaining uprightness with your Lord, because it could be the last wrong action that you are destined to do. And whoever considers it very

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<sup>9</sup> Narrated by Abu Dawud (1293), Al-Tirmidhi (3482), and Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Kubra* (10/188), and Abu Ya'la (128) and Al-Qada'i (735).

<sup>10</sup> The editor could not find it with this wording. Al-Bayhaqi narrated in *Shu'ab Al-Iman* attributed to Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه: 'The best of you is every wrongdoer (*muftinin*) who does much repentance (*tawwab*)'.

unusual (*istaghrab*) that God will save him from his appetites and extricate him from his heedlessness, has considered the Divine Power to be weak.

God ﷻ says:

وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا

*And God is Omnipotent over all things*

(*Al-Kahf*, 18:45)

So, understand, my brother, and reflect and ponder your return to having a good opinion of God. And reflect on your turning away from Him and feeling independent of Him—which alienates you from Him. And peace.

### 5. On Realizing Resolve to Achieve Hopes and Stations of the Path (*mawaqif al-tariq*)

The way to realize resolve in your actions and undertake the means by which the goal is reached is done through three stations (*mawaqif*):

The first is the rank (*martibah*) of Godfearingness (*al-taqwa*) and the final one is the ‘carpet-spread’ of unveilings of knowledge (*kashf al-ma‘arif*).

# I

## THE FIRST STATION ON THE PATH OF OPENING AND EMPOWERMENT: THE STATION OF REPENTANCE

The first station (*mawqif*) of the stations of the path is: realizing repentance through realization (*tahqiq al-tawbah bil-tahqiq*). And it revolves around three poles (*aqtab*) that are like its pillar and doors:

### A) THE FIRST POLE OF THE FIRST STATION Realization of Intention (*tahqiq al-niyyah*)

One of them is the realization of intention with absolute resolve never to return to what one is leaving behind in its totality at the outset. At the outset of *tawbah* it is not necessary to remember all the details because of the difficulties in that, but afterwards, they may be considered in detail.

That which engenders steadfastness in this resolve are three things:

*First*, is to flee from the place where one fears going back into wrong action, or at the time when this is feared or when its first causes appear.

*Second*, is to suspect the soul of having remnants of its inclinations towards the wrong action that one is trying to remove from the soul. This is in order to maintain vigilance against it—or else it will happen and without one being aware of how or when it happens.

*Third*, is preoccupying the soul from those things. If it is a sensory thing one is trying to remove, then he should

do it with other sensory things; or if it is a thing of ‘meaning’ (*ma‘nawiyyat*), then he should do it with other meaningful things. This should be done without stages or steps because the means by which one gets out of something is more important than what one is getting out of. Therefore, it has been said that it is an obligation that every time ones remembers his wrong action that he renew his remorse about it; so, understand this.

The reasons that one falls back into wrong action are three: *First*, forgetting one’s remorse, or forgetting to renew it. If that happens, then the form of the wrong action becomes fixed in the soul because it slinks in and becomes deeply-rooted.

*Second*, allowing the eye to go back to the wrong action, whether its place, cause, or time; even for a moment or even just thinking about it. Unless one repeats the remorse and has contempt for the wrong action—which is better than remorse—one might remember the wrong action with pleasure and sweetness, especially if it is in the same place where it occurred and is the same action.

*Third*, trusting the soul’s resolve and having a good opinion of its state; and also going back to the same place that caused wrong action in order to test the soul, even if just to recall it without really contemplating it. This is like sprinkling water over a diminished fire which only stokes its flame; because the soul is like a latent fire when the truth manifests over it. Only a fool trusts it and only a person of intellect is vigilant in guarding himself against it; so, understand this.

Al-Junayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said: ‘Never incline towards your ego (*nafs*), even if it obeys you in obeying your Lord.’ And they sang about this:

Protect yourself from your ego; and never trust its  
machinations

For the ego is more impure than seventy devils

One's repentance might not include all one's wrong actions, so the ruling of it is in accordance with those things that it covered in accordance with its state and its time and place. There may be a mixture of wrongs; then the ruling for the second repentance is necessary as it was for the first one. Also, it is necessary to be more vigilant now than before, and to consider how one fell back into wrong action, because the cause is not concealed from one after repentance unless it is a type of passionate caprice (*hawa ghalib*) that is firmly rooted in the soul and has been established with rationalization (*judal*). So, if the Devil objects and says: 'What is the benefit of repentance that is followed by returning to the wrong?' He should be answered: 'Just as we took returning to the wrong action as our occupation, we take our repentance as our occupation.' Perhaps death will come at this time [when one is in this good state].

If the Devil uses the excuse that one's resolve is too weak, he is answered by saying: 'What is required is the manifestations of this form [*tawbah*]; and not what is impossible for human beings to perform.' And if he says: 'Indeed it is possible,' then turn away from him and act in accordance with the words of Sufyan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: 'Leaving wrong action is easier than seeking repentance.' And God knows best.

## 1) CONCLUSION

The heart is the place of human weakness ('*ajz*), and there is nothing more helpful to it than continuously seeking refuge in God for its purification, then for its steadfastness.

And for that reason, the Messenger of God ﷺ used to make much mention of his statement: ‘Oh, Turner Over of Hearts, make steadfast my heart upon Your religion.’<sup>11</sup> This is the remembrance (*dhikr*) of this pole and its supplication (*du‘a*). As is also:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ  
إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

*There is no god except You! Glory be to You!  
I have indeed been one of the wrongdoers.  
(Al-Anbiya’, 21:87)*

This should be repeated an odd number of times at the end of every prostration, as should be the *sayyid of istighfar* and the like. And success is through God and He is our sufficiency and the best disposer of our affairs.

## B) THE SECOND POLE OF THE FIRST STATION OF REALIZING REPENTANCE *Redressing Grievances*

The second pole of the first station is redressing grievances (*radd al-mazalem*) and what was lost in the first place. This is an obligation in order to realize resolve and perform what is obligatory and to repel injustice (*al-hadeemah*). The recourse in this is to reflect on the things one was lax in and consider when one was steadfast and when one was not.

### 1) PEOPLE’S STATIONS REGARDING GRIEVANCES

There are three milestones (*ma‘alem*) for this: Know that wrongs revolve around three aspects and milestones:

<sup>11</sup> Narrated by Tirmidhi (2066), Ahmad in *Al-Musnad* (11664), Ibn Abi Shaybah (7/28), Al-Hakem (1881), and Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir* (758) and *Al-Awsat* (1588).



### 1.1) The First Milestone: Pure Evil Deeds that Cannot be Reversed and Whose Injustices Cannot be Remitted

First, are pure evil deeds (*al-sayyi'at al-mujarradah*) as a result of things that one has lost and also wrongs committed. There is no expiation of them except resolve and remorse about what has passed, and steadfastness in following-up and replacing former negligence.

The signs of sincerity in this are three things which are known by those who have living hearts:

*First*, is experiencing the sweetness of leaving evil deeds rather than enjoying reflecting on them.

*Second*, is forgetting creation because of the wrong action (*zanb*), and also [God's] subjugating [for His purposes] them [creation] as a reminder of the Sunnah of the Lord.

*Third*, is acting in a manner that engenders steadfastness, and also being vigilant about one's thoughts in all directions.

The signs of there being remnants of the evil deed in the soul are three through which regression and falling back occur:

*First*, is gaining intimate joy from remembering, even if it is for the sake of feeling guilt and revulsion.

*Second*, is having an uncomfortable state with the stations of the soul as a way of procrastinating, even if it is just allowing a passing thought about a wrong to reoccur, whether light or heavy.

*Third*, is seeking out those who have the same tribulation, even if it is to feel compassion towards them; and dwelling on the matter, even without going too deeply into it.

### 1.1a) *The Inheritance of Leaving Wrongs*

The inheritance of leaving wrongs (*al-ma'asi*) are three and all of them are good during one's life and after his death:

*First*, is the delight of devotion to God, as the Prophet ﷺ indicated: 'Whoever lowers his eyes for the sake of God, God will provide him with a devotion the delight of which he will taste.'<sup>12</sup>

*Second*, realizing the will; and this is the 'carpet-spread' of mercy and is a benefit from God. For it has been said: 'If souls habituate to leaving wrongs, they would explore God's dominion (*al-malakut*), and will return with wonders of wisdom that are not knowledges that are taught. And this is one of the wonders.

*Third*, the existence of salvation that is accompanied by a good life. God ﷻ says:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا  
وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

*And whoever fears God, He will make a way out for him;  
and He will provide for him from whence  
he never expected  
(Al-Talaq, 65:2-3)*

And other such verses.

### 1.1b) *The Inheritance of Committing a Sin and Persisting in it*

The inheritance of committing a sin and persisting in it has three aspects:

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<sup>12</sup> The narration that is better known is the one that uses the word 'sweetness' (*halawah*) instead of devotion (*'ibadah*) as is found in Al-Hakem's *Mustadrak* (7988).

*First*, the humiliation of the soul.

*Second*, being exposed and having one's regression be seen by others.

*Third*, a small portion of good.

And the Real (*Al-Haqq*) drew attention to this in His Majestic Book of great wisdom and concise word, for He ﷺ says:

إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

*They the evildoers shall not prosper.*

(*Al-An'am*, 6:21)

And He ﷺ says:

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

*And whoever does not repent, those —  
they are the evildoers.*

(*Al-Hujurat*, 49:11)

And He ﷺ says:

وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ

*And rally to God in repentance, O believers,  
so that you might be prosperous.*

(*Al-Nur*, 24:31)

And Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: 'Whoever wants riches without wealth, and dignity without a clan, then let him change from the humiliation of wrong actions to the dignity of obedience.'

### 1.1c) *Point*

Most of the wrong actions (*zunoub*) that are between a slave and his Lord can be traced back to appetites (*shahawat*) that prevent him from being close to his Lord and which dominate the soul in a manner that makes it incline to them without ambiguity. If a wrong action crosses his mind, he should shun it without facing or confronting it; because facing a passing thought (*al-khater*) through pushing it back necessitates its taking hold without succeeding in repulsing it. And he should occupy his time with what is opposite of the wrong action that is neither declaration nor insinuation. Therefore, when there are evil whispering suggestions (*waswaas*), God commands us to remembrance (*dhikr*) and not thought (*fikr*). And it is said that the Devil crouches on the heart of man, but when there is remembrance of God he slinks away. And when man becomes heedless, the Devil whispers evil suggestions. If he is met with remembrance, the truth is reached and through repetition, it takes hold. Thus it has been said: ‘He who abandons an appetite seven times, will not be tested (*yubtala*) with it, and God is more generous than to punish a heart with an appetite that was abandoned for Him. So, know this and work towards it for it is tried and true and wondrous. God ﷻ says:

وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ

*But God speaks the truth and He guides to the way.*

*(Al-Ahzab, 33:4)*

### 1.2) The Second Milestone: Returning Lost Rights in the Proper and Correct Way

The second milestone and what it entails of meanings is re-

turning lost rights in the proper and correct way. It has three aspects, each of which has a ruling and an approach:

*First*, that returning of lost rights be known in number (*mahsourat al-‘adad*) and in terms of one’s responsibility towards them (*zimmah*). Achieving this is the greatest obligation and is of the greatest importance, and it should be done in a manner where there is no doubt about it and in a means where there is no shortcoming in it. This is achieved by undertaking the highest number, and being moderate in it (*aqsa al-maqdour al-wasat*), even if there are other better ways of doing it. For a trade-person’s capital is that he complete his transaction, and everything that negatively affects it is not palatable.

*Second*, that the returning of lost rights be of determined ruling (*muhaqqat al-hukm*), and not known in number. Committing to the most judicious of the two numbers is the praiseworthy position. But one should not exaggerate in caution at the first glance, but after finishing, whether with an interval or without. This is because resolving to go to extreme (*istiqsaa’*) will weary the soul, and to outwit it is better than to return to it.

*Third*, that the returning of lost rights be of doubted ruling (*mashkoukat al-hukm*) and number, or not of doubted number. And the person who is in doubt should rely on a considerable principle (*asl mu‘tabar*) or not to rely on that but instead to use his own judgement. The first is seen in something that should be in what you are attempting to fulfill (*al-hukm al-muntafa’*). And the second is seen in the ‘carpet-spread’ of Godfearingness (*al-wara’*) which comes after religion has become firm. And to leave what one has to do is a type of treachery, for it is not appropriate for a beginner to attempt scrupulousness at this stage until he has

realized rationality (*al-aql*) and avoidance of what is wrong. This is so that he does not go to extreme in religion because it will result in his leaving the people of guidance. The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘The best of your religion is the easiest of it<sup>13</sup>.’

### 1.2a) *Warnings*

*First*, the one who does the least amount of what he is able to do will enter the path to reaching the furthest of what he is able to reach. Because ‘the one who goes to extreme does not traverse any of the land and breaks the back of the beast of burden<sup>14</sup>.’ The diversity of states are commensurate with the diversity of rulings. It is not appropriate to become misled about the resolve of people of great determination in being able to do what is owed from many months in one day; nor should one do what is considered frivolous and blameworthy. One should look at the least amount that seems moderate at one’s level, then one should undertake it without shortcoming while considering the words of the scholars on these matters for they are the examples to be followed. And strength and power are through God.

*Second*, as for responsibilities that have been realized, or one thinks he has realized, or doubts he has realized due to a sign; there is no escaping them until he fulfills them by obligation in the first two and out Godfearingness in the last one. And whoever puts before him the extreme of what he wants, will rarely reach what he desires. So, repeating the prayers of a lifetime because of evil whisperings (*was-*

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<sup>13</sup> Referenced by Al-Ajlouni (1249) with the wording: ‘The best of your religion is the easiest of it, and the best of worship is *fiqh*.’

<sup>14</sup> Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Kubra* (3/18) and in *Shu‘ab Al-Iman* (3729), and Al-Qada‘i in *Musnad Al-Shihab* (1066).

*wasah*) is blameworthy because it is doubt without outward proof, and some of our sheikhs told us that the *Thakbeerah* mentions that that is not permissible, and God knows best.

*Third*, the rights related to money are similar to the rights related to the body; indeed, they are even greater. The obligation of *zakat* and also expiation (*kaffaraat*) is binding, indeed, being vigilant about these responsibilities is more important than being vigilant about rights related to the body. The reason for this is that the soul by its nature finds it easy to do the first and is lazy about the second. And for that reason, the predecessors (*salaf*) were more scrupulous in matters concerning wealth than those concerning water. And God knows best.

*Fourth*, it is not permissible to free a slave if one has debt, and God does not accept supererogatory devotions (*nawafil*) if there are obligatory acts that have not been fulfilled. The most important of one's affairs is fulfilling rights that are obligations before one does any supererogatory devotions. Thus, it has been said: 'Anyone who deems a supererogatory act more important than an obligatory act is deluded.' And it has been said: 'The destruction of creation is in two things: being preoccupied with supererogatory devotions while being neglectful of obligatory acts; and the limbs performing deeds without the heart being attuned.' As it is said in *Al-Hikam*: 'One of the signs of following one's caprice (*hawa*) is to hasten to supererogatory devotions and to be lazy about implementing the obligatory rights that are upon one'. It is a disease that is difficult to cure, so, beware of it.

*Fifth*, it is obligatory to know the number of rights owed that should be redressed because the soul has a natural inclination to things that come to an end. Doing it in only

one way leads to boredom, thus, when trying to fulfill something, one should vary it, from a small number to an average number to a higher number. Then the soul will benefit and gain strength in perfecting and embellishing its efforts.

*Sixth*, a weak incentive (*ba'ith*) engenders laziness in rising up and will result in falling short of steadfastness. If you find that, and you do not find any help, then remind the soul and exhort it, then rise up as an angry person rises up and you will find the energy. If the matter is between giving up what you need to fulfill or a supererogatory act, always leave the supererogatory act. But if the soul calls to doing the supererogatory act or to leave everything, then Sheikh Al-Qawari, God have mercy upon him, issued an edict (*fatwa*) to choose the lesser of two evils. And God knows best.

*Seventh*, the soul, sensing its weakness, can sometimes be bewildered by how many rights are upon it, and thus will seek out laziness instead of performing its obligation which was due to repentance. The cure for this is to do what is easy on the soul without it changing any legal ruling (*al-akhth bil khilaf*). This occurs mostly with expiation (*kaffarah*), and it is either due to ignorance of what one is obligated to do, or due to going to some extreme in the ruling. So, do not constrict your soul out of fear that it will take advantage; but also do not make it too easy out of fear that the soul will take command of you. And success is from God.

### **1.2b) *The Inheritance of Work as Required to Recover Lost Rights***

The benefits of acting according to the aforementioned are three:



*First*, it will make your uprightness easier in the future.

*Second*, the heart itself is freed and emptied of anything other than the truth emptied of anything other than the truth emptied of anything other than the truth emptied of anything other than the truth.

*Third*, one is firmly stationed in the place of sincerity—and this is the place where the heart and the body become illuminated, and where one’s aspiration becomes high, and where evil is repelled and the facilitation of affairs occurs. And God knows best.

The results of neglecting this are: the shortcomings of the heart in reaching perfection, and the body returning to its original condition; and the loss of sincerity and sweetness of actions [that are in obedience to God]. The keys to falling short are three for the alert person:

*First*, the inclination to dispensations that are connected to these legal rulings.

*Second*, difficulty for the person to be steadfast in prioritizing the best way.

*Third*, doing too much and doing it hastily, which is the foundation of laziness and nullifying one’s acts.

He who wants to undertake these things must do things that lead him to the [aforementioned] second point, and to be resolute, moderate and steadfast. He must not allow loose interpretations, nor become so overwhelmed that he gets into a state of petrification. And seeking the help and succour of God and refuge in Him is the greatest foundation, and the absolutely firm edifice. And God knows best.

### 1.3) The Third Milestone: On Redressing Grievances in the Best Way

The Messenger of God ﷺ said: ‘Oppression (*al-zulm*) is

multiplied darkneses (*zulumat*) on the Day of Judgment<sup>15</sup>.’ And the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Whoever has in regards to a brother a wrong, let him rectify that before he has no dinars and dirhams<sup>16</sup>.’ And one of the scholars (*‘ulama*) said: ‘There are three types of wrongs (*zunoub*): a wrong that God does not forgive (*la yaghfirhu*) and that is associating others with God (*shirk*); a wrong that God does not leave (*la yatrikhu*) and that is the oppression (*mazalem*) done to other people; and a wrong that God has no concern with (*la ya‘ba’ bihi*) and that is the rest of wrong action (*al-sayyi’at*).’ What that means is that God will forgive whoever asks for forgiveness, and whoever He wants to forgive, and even anyone below that; so, understand this.

People are three in relation to your wrongs against them, and it is incumbent upon you to redress every wrong to each one according to your knowledge:

*First*, someone you have oppressed in his self by killing him or wounding him, and you must fulfill the *qisas*. If the soul is too precious, or there is no *wali al-amr* or you cannot find one, the storehouses of God’s generosity are great. One must seek refuge in God by attempting to do his best in all aspects according to his capabilities, especially by trying to do things that cause love (*al-widad*) and also by exposing the ego to those things that will destroy it for the sake of God, such as jihad.

*Second*, a man you have wronged regarding his wealth by taking it by force (*al-ghasb*) or by stealing (*sariqah*) or by treachery (*khiyanah*). What you owe is to return the like of what you took if you are able, or to ask for forgiveness

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<sup>15</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhari (2267), Muslim (4675), Al-Tirmidhi (1953), and Ahmad (5568).

<sup>16</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhari (2269), Al-Tirmidhi (2343), and Ahmad (9242).

if possible, and to repent to God. You should attempt to please the person by serving them, showing them respect, or giving them something in return. If the person dies [before you can return what is owed], then you should give charity (*sadaqah*) with the amount owed. Being cautious about the amount is very important, and to take the more cautious position is better and more complete.

*Third*, a man who you have oppressed in his honour (*'irdih*) by causing something that leads to contempt or dejection from his good name. What emanated from you is one of three things:

*One*: that it is something that causes him harm, like spying on him (*al-si'ayah*) or gossiping (*al-namimah*) about him, or testifying that he has blameworthy qualities (*thamimah*). Thus, it becomes an obligation upon you to tell the person to whom you lied that you lied; and to retract what you testified to if it was indeed false testimony. For you are the person who is most deserving of bearing the stigma of this shameful thing, and there is no room for forgiveness for what has emanated from you. This is also after you have asked for forgiveness and clarified that you no longer believe in what you said and transmitted.

*Two*: that it be something that causes great disgrace, such as fornication (*zina*) with someone's wife, even if only one time. This is a great tribulation (*baliyyah*), and it is God Who you should be making your excuses to. Your obligation is to rectify your absolute determination to free yourself completely from this act. If you tell people; this is slander (*qathf*) against the one whom you fornicated with and a total dishonouring of yourself. It also harms the person [wronged] if he remains silent, or leads to his destruction if he becomes so jealous and enraged that he is not able

to hold himself back. And all of this is forbidden (*haram*) and will destroy society. And there is a difference of opinion about fornication: does it relate to the rights of God or to the rights of creation? Another [possible means of expiation] is freeing a bondsman or woman from servitude (*al-farj al-mamlouk min al-'ibad*), such as emancipation and the like. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Whoever frees a soul, God will free for every member of the freed person's body a member of his body; even private parts for private parts<sup>17</sup>.'

Three, that there is backbiting (*ghibah*) involved, or saying something about a person that involves detracting from him or casting doubt on him. One must free himself from this through the person, as long as nothing comes from him that necessitates otherwise. If there is, then, instead of going to him and confessing the wrong, praise him, ask God for forgiveness for him, and do something of service to him. All these actions are rewarded.

Some have said that asking for forgiveness from that person is not permissible because of the problems that will then occur. Others have said that it is permissible if it involves something that warrants that. If it is transmitted and it is a lie, then it is contingent upon the person to expressly state the name of the person wronged. Therefore, renew your contract, make sound your contract, ask God for forgiveness more, guard yourself to the best of your ability, and make your excuses to God. And He is the One Who is Sufficient for you. And peace.

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<sup>17</sup> Narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah and Al-Nasa'i in *Al-Kubra* (4877) and Abdel-Razzak in his *Musannaf*, and Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir* (184) and *Al-Awsat* (3880). Without the phrase 'even private parts for private parts' which is in the narration of ibn Abi Awanah in his *Mustakbraj*. And Al-Bayhaqi said: 'and some add "even private parts for private parts"', which means that the addition was not confirmed for him.

### 1.3a) *Benefits Concerning This*

*First*, in the *Hilyah* it says that Maymoun bin Mihran—one of the most virtuous and pious of the *tabi'een*—said that whoever has wronged someone and asks forgiveness for him five times after every prayer, has done what he is obliged to do towards that person. This is for that which concerns backbiting (*ghibah*), and not for something tangible that is owed them (*'ayn*). And God knows best.

*Second*, there is a difference of opinion regarding the permissibility of someone relinquishing his right. Some say that it is recommended (*mandoub*), and one group of scholars preferred this opinion because of the Hadith of Abu Damdam and others. And some of them say absolutely not, because God has a right (*haqq*) in the matter, and perhaps God wants to punish the person. In this case your relinquishing of your right is a choice (*ifti'atan*). The third opinion is the opinion of Imam Malik رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: if it is a right in which there is no oppression, then it is permissible, but if there is oppression, then it cannot be forgiven. And God knows best.

*Third*, it is necessary to ask for forgiveness implicitly in order that the right (*haqq*) be maintained outwardly, if one thinks that that will prevent him from doing more wrongs. Whereas one can explicitly pardon, if he thinks that person will benefit, and also if he thinks he will continue to maintain the rights that are incumbent upon him. This is if pardoning in that matter maintains sanctity (*hurmah*) more and prevents the person from doing it again. And a man said to Ibn Sireen: 'I spoke ill of you; so, remove this wrong from me (*ij'alni fi hill*).' And Ibn Sireen said to him: 'It is not for Ibn Sireen to make anything *halal* that God made *haram*.' As for the Hadith of Abu Damdam, it is what is

between a man and his Lord. And it has been said: ‘it only concerns the past, not the future.’ And God knows best.

*Fourth*, concerning the rights of one’s father and mother, they are like foreigners (*ajaneb*). So, whatever a son takes from them, it is binding upon him to fulfill those obligations if there is no indication from them that they are content; just as the wealth of people who are not relatives is binding upon him. And any money that the son takes that he fears they will know about and he has hidden is like the money of others in terms of the obligation that it must be returned. This is the opposite of the parents taking money from their son, with the exception of what concerns him in terms of his honour and the like; then he is like a foreigner to them. So, understand.

*Fifth*, spreading secrets is a type of treachery that sometimes has the rank of backbiting (*al-ghibah*) in certain circumstances. In other circumstances it has the rank of gossiping (*al-namimah*); and in other circumstances it has the rank of slander (*al-qathf*). As the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘If a man speaks to you and looks around, that means that this is a trust (*amanah*)<sup>18</sup>.’

*Sixth*, whoever is sincere with God in redressing grievances, God will find a way out for him—a matter tried and proved true more than once. Unless there is a valid reason, the only reason people flee from redressing grievances is because of weakness of faith, and the power of delusion, and sympathy for one’s ego; so, do not throw yourself to destruction. And God knows best.

*Seventh*, to oppress a *dhimmi* (one who is under the pro-

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<sup>18</sup> Narrated by Abu Dawud (4225), Al-Tirmidhi (1882), Ahmad (13950), and Abu Ya’la (4049).

tection of Muslims) whether in their honour, or family, or their body is the same as oppressing a Muslim because he has the *dhimmah* of Muslims. And the Messenger of God ﷺ said: ‘Whoever oppresses a *dhimmi*, I am his adversary (*khaseemuh*) on the Day of Judgement. And whoever oppresses a *dhimmi* will not smell the fragrance of paradise.’<sup>19</sup>

*Eighth*, whenever there is some responsibility (*dhimmah*) and the people to whom it is owed are unknown, then it is necessary when it is returned that it be done with diplomacy (*siyasah*) in order that no manifest harm ensues. And one must also consider who the person and his dependents are, and to do what must be done without any extravagance or stinting in a manner that infringes on their rights; for he is from among the needy. This has been related by some of our sheikhs and perhaps they took it from Imam Al-Ma’zari.

*Ninth*, as for a prostitute and the like, if she has sought forgiveness from God and has money from a man, some say that she should return it because it came without any right to her. Others say no, because it was given in a state of *batil*, so, it should be given to charity. Thirdly, if this was from passionate love (*ishq*), then she should give it back to the man because he was in an overwhelmed state (*magh-loub*). And if it was from other than that, then no.

*Tenth*, whenever it is possible to veil (*al-sitr*) [oneself] when redressing a grievance, and it is possible to conceptualize fulfilling one’s obligation without causing any stigma (*wasm*) to the servant, then it is not permissible (*la yahill*) to make known the matter in that case. This is because it is not permissible for one to disgrace himself and

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<sup>19</sup> The editor could not find it with the same wording.

spread knowledge of his sin among others. Thus it is said: whoever sins in secret should repent in secret; and whoever sins in public should repent in public. And God knows best.

### 1.3b) *The Inheritance of Redressing Grievances*

What you inherit by redressing grievances are three things:

*First*, the illumination of the heart because one is causing joy to the one who was owed. [The illumination] replaces the darkness [that was in one's heart] because he aggrieved him and which continues until it is rectified.

*Second*, the realization (*tahqiq*) of the purpose of repentance by knocking aside one's ego and by removing its desire (*hawa*) for the sake of God. And this is one of the foundations of truthfulness that lead one to God and open the path to Him.

*Third*, one will have the inexhaustible dignity (*al-'izz*) that comes from being in the dignified state of humbling himself in the expenditure of his wealth seeking the pleasure of God, and by manifesting his state.

And this is also the inheritance of forgiving the wrongdoer, for the Prophet ﷺ said: 'And God increases the honour of one who forgives.'<sup>20</sup>

### 1.3c) *The Inheritance of not Redressing Grievances*

They are three:

*First*, darkness (*al-zulmah*) is firmly rooted in the heart.

*Second*, there is an increase in one's audacity [to do wrongs] in the future.

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<sup>20</sup> Narrated by Malek (1590), Muslim (4689), Tirmidhi (1952), Ahmad (6908), Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan* (4/187), Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir* (11982), and others. And Muslim's phrasing is: 'Wealth does not diminish by giving charity. And God increases the honour of one who forgives; and the one who displays humbleness to another seeking the pleasure of God, God will exalt him in ranks'.



Third, repentance (*tawbah*) is lacking, and one will not benefit from it in terms of openings (*al-fath*). Thus, regarding this it is said: ‘Whoever refrains from redressing grievances and seeking repentance, his foot will slip and he will not have openings; because sacred legal rights are a protection (*‘ismah*) [for the human being]’—or something along those lines.

### 1.3d) *The Reasons for not Redressing Grievances*

They are three:

*First*, arrogance (*al-kibr*), and the ego’s pride (*‘izzat al-nafs*) concerning the one one has oppressed. This is if he is not fearful in redressing something; and if he is fearful then the ruling for this is different, as previously mentioned.

*Second*, miserliness (*al-bukhl*) and false interpretations (*al-ta’wil*), and these two things will destroy his spirituality (*al-diyana*) in any station (*maqam*).

*Third*, imagining and deluding oneself into believing that no help will come or that there will not be any benefit in redressing the grievance, or that it will not be accepted if he does do it. No one can be free in that situation except by strong conviction and a sign that he treats with absolute certainty. All of these result from weak spiritual aspiration (*himmah*) in realizing one’s repentance and freeing oneself from these responsibilities. And God knows best.

### 1.3e) *The Incentives for Taking on the Responsibility of Redressing Grievances*

They are three: *First*, contempt for the ego (*nafs*) and assigning it to its proper place.

*Second*, trust that God will accept it and rectify any infringements because of that state.

*Third*, one's spiritual aspiration is energized as a result of his certainty about the final abode, and from what he knows regarding what happens to the one who has oppressed his brother. And all of these are benefits that are derived from hearing the news that has come regarding oppression; and also those stories that have happened in the past because of oppression, and all the wrongs resulting from it. And God knows best.

#### 1.4) Conclusion

The foundation of all this affair is that one must seek help from God, and its manifestation is fleeing to God, and its foundation is absolute dependence on God. There is wisdom behind these means because with them blessings and tribulations manifest. If it ever occurs to you to incline towards a wrong, then put your hand on your chest (*sadrak*) and say: *Subhan Al-Malik Al-Khallaq Al-Fa'aal*, 'in yasha' yuthhibkom wa ya'ti bi khalq jadid wa ma thalika 'ala Allah bi 'aziz':

إِنَّ يَشَاءُ يُدْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ  
 وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ

*If He will, He can take you away and bring [about] a new creation. And that for God is surely no great matter.*

(Ibrahim, 14:19-20)

Recite this seven times, and you will see the blessing (*barakah*) of this in its time, especially if you add to it asking for forgiveness and reciting prayers on the Chosen Prophet ﷺ.

If some obstacle that incapacitates you from doing what you need to do presents itself, then say: 'Allahumma la

*hawla wa la quwwata illa bihawlika wa quwwatika, fa hab li hawlan wa quwwatan asta'eenu biha 'ala ta'atika,*' and especially in prostration. ('Oh God, there is no power or strength but through Your power and Your strength, so, grant me power and strength to assist me in my obedience to You.')

Its effects are clearly discernible, so, do this a lot. If your soul absolutely refuses to redress rights that are owed, then say: *'Allahumma aati nafsi taqwaha wa zakkiha Anta waliyyuha wa Mawlaha.'* ('Oh God, bring to my soul Godfearingness and purify it; You are its Guardian and its Protector'). And say this much in your prostration and in most of your states. And if you want to return something to someone you have wronged, and you are fearful of him not accepting it from you, then say: *'Allahumma Anta Al-Aziz Al-Kabir wa ana 'abduka al-da'eef al-thaleel wa la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah. Allahumma sakhkhir li fulanan kama sakhkharta al-bahr li Musa bin 'Imran wa alin li qalbahu kama layyanta al-hadid li Dawud fa innahu la yantiq ila bi ithnika, nasiyatuhu fi yadik wa qalbuhu fi qabdatik tuqallibuhu kaifa sh'ita Ya Arham Al-Rahimeen.'*

'Oh God, You are the Mighty, the Great and I am your weak and humiliated slave. There is no strength and no power but through God. Oh God, subjugate for me so-and-so as you subjugated the sea for Moses son of 'Imran عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and soften his heart towards me, just as You made iron soft for David عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. For no one speaks except by Your permission. His forelock is in Your grip, his heart is in Your grasp; You turn it just as You wish, Oh Most Merciful of those who show mercy.'

Know that these invocations that are used for these purposes are not guaranteed to give one the benefit of what they are specifically used for with absolute certainty; rather,

the existence of their benefit is general. Therefore, if the exact result is not attained, the gentleness of God remains. And every meaning that is intended—if there is weakness in aspiration—will not be as effective, and the opposite is true. Therefore, gather your heart, seek your Lord, and abandon your wrong action. Then you will achieve the station of Godfearingness (*maqam al-taqwa*)—and this is the pole (*qutb*) on which this section [of the book] rotates. And God knows best.

### C) THE THIRD POLE OF THE FIRST STATION (REPENTANCE) *Godfearingness or Avoiding Prohibitions*

The third pole of the first station: avoiding prohibitions (*ijtinab al-maharem*)—and this is Godfearingness (*al-taqwa*)—and it depends upon it. Its pillars (*arkan*) are four, and by them it is completed.

#### 1) THE PILLARS OF GODFEARINGNESS

##### 1.1) The First Pillar of Godfearingness: The pillar of knowledge

The first pillar of Godfearingness has four parts. Sometimes they are permanent and sometimes they are intermittent.

The first part of knowledge is the incentive and means to gain it. There are four types, and each one necessitates firmly adhering to it and following it.

##### 1.1a) The Types of Incentives for Godfearingness

*The first type of Incentives for Godfearingness:* knowledge and its virtues and all the good that results from knowledge for the people of knowledge.

Regarding this point it is sufficient to quote God's ﷻ words:

وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

*And the [best] sequel will be for those who fear.*  
(Al-Qasas, 28:83)

And God's ﷻ words:

وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَى

*and the [best] sequel will be in favour of God-fearing*  
(TaHa, 20:132)

And God's ﷻ words:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا

*Truly God is with those who fear*  
(Al-Nahl, 16:128)

And God's ﷻ words:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا

*And whoever fears God, He will make  
a way out for him*  
(Al-Talaq, 65:2)

Some scholars have said that Godfearingness is mentioned in the Qur'an approximately two hundred times, and that is the first proof of its exalted status. Had it not been for that, God ﷻ would not have given it as the advice that He gave to the first people and the last people, for He ﷻ says:

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ  
 مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ

*We have charged those who were given the Scripture  
 before you, and you, 'Fear God'*  
 (Al-Nisa', 4:131)

And God ﷻ enveloped nobility (*al-karamah*) in *taqwa*,  
 for He ﷻ says:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَى

*Truly the noblest [akramakom] of you in the sight of  
 God is the most God-fearing (atqakom) among you*  
 (Al-Hujurat, 49:13)

And many other places where it is mentioned that we  
 cannot enumerate with their many virtues.

**The second type of incentives for Godfearingness:** on dis-  
 paraging the opposite of Godfearingness and the calamities  
 and regressions that afflict the one who leaves it. This is  
 known by necessity in this religion, and the faults that come  
 from it are well-known. The matrixes (*ummahatiha*) from  
 which they emerge are ten, and all of them are vast and con-  
 siderable: *First*, is humiliation that occurs immediately [in  
 this world].

*Second*, is humiliation that occurs later [in the Next  
 World].

*Third*, is being branded with the brand of corruption.

*Fourth*, is the existence of punishment if it does not  
 occur in the Next World.

*Fifth*, is the possibility of being exposed to a bad end (*su'  
 al-khatimah*).

*Sixth*, is being exposed to the wrath of God, which will destroy a person.

*Seventh*, is losing the possibility of the virtue of having openings (*fath*) regarding the sciences.

*Eighth*, is that actions will generally not be accepted.

*Ninth*, is being held back from doing good works.

*Tenth*, is missing the most complete goal.

Each one of these has proofs (*dalil*) that would take too long to explain. The one who is qualified by disobedience to God is known, may God protect us from this and may He prevent our limbs and our hearts from falling into it. He is the Protector, the Generous, the Exalted, the Magnified.

***The third type of incentives for Godfearingness:*** knowledge in detail after the incentive for it has come, and this revolves around three foundations which are the keys to all good and to arrival:

*First*, the firm rooting of reality in the mentioned knowledges with thought that is firmly rooted in the soul in the known manner. And it is to look at its virtues and benefits, and to listen to what has been transmitted of its effects and advantages [to the soul] until those things are clearly understood and one recognizes their truth. And that is after the premises of this understanding take place, such as seclusion (*khulwah*), lightness of stomach, and other such things; so, understand.

*Second*, seeing one's wrong actions at the time one is doing them and considering the loss of benefits depending on one's spiritual aspiration, and becoming aware of self-purification (*tazkiyah*) and what it does in seeking perfection. This will cause the soul to see the ugliness of one's

state, and also the states of other people, good or bad. This helps the soul whose nature is to emulate the righteous. Thus we have been commanded to be in the company of the righteous and avoid the company of the sinful; so, understand this.

*Third*, one should be aware of what he is getting and its benefit. One should not seek perfection in the beginning because seeking perfection will cause one to be bewildered, and trying to take on all of the realities of this religion will not energize him. If one wants to connect with his capital, then he should begin by accepting his state. There is great benefit in acceptance but not in accepting wrong action as that is not permissible. So, reflect on this and act according to it, and success is through God.

*The fourth type of incentives for Godfearingness:* knowledge and the different places [where it is applicable] and this is beneficial.

It has four branches that manifest in balance or in deviation:

**The first branch:** concerns the place of knowledge in acts of devotion by understanding what happens when one is deficient in them and when one increases them.

This has three aspects:

*One:* it occurs in the action that you do, whether done intentionally, or out of ignorance, or out of forgetfulness. Its rulings are outlined in detail in the books of jurisprudence; so, refer to those books and to the masters of that science.

*Two:* it occurs in meanings, such as deficiency in presence where it is required or an increase in understanding. Godfearingness in this is in accordance with the act, be-



cause any deficiency in the goal of the action is an infringement on the reality of that action, even if the outward is not given that ruling. And every ruling that is not strengthened by the outward form, then Godfearingness is in abandoning the act if the meaning is deficient. So, for example, it is not considering sound what was lacking in presence. Second, refusing to participate in conversation in doubtful matters and in ambiguous matters and problematic matters and the like, which will be discussed in more detail later, God willing.

*Three:* it occurs in relation to the legal ruling itself and this is innovation (*bid'ah*); because an innovation is the belief that something is a devotional practice (*qurbah*) when it is not; or it is to believe that something is not a devotional practice when it is. Or it is to give something a ruling that is not for it by Sacred Law; and this is a more specific type of situation.

### 1.1b) *Classes of Innovation*

There are three types of innovation: *First*, is an unambiguous innovation, and this is in contradistinction to a sound sunnah. There is no doubtful element in it, nor is there any proof that it has been transmitted and can carry the legal ruling. An example is using a lot of water in ablutions (*wudu'*) while believing that it is recommended; or rubbing the water into the skin too vigorously—there are many examples, so, beware.

*Second*, is an innovation that has been added to the religion, and circumstances and intention affect it. An example is seeking blessings (*tabarruk*) from religious relics (*al-athaar*), and gathering in groups for supplication and making remembrance of God (*dhikr*).

*Third*, is an innovation that is a result of a difference of opinion amongst the imams (*bid'ah khilafiyah*), and these are under the rubric of the original insights of the imams in the proofs. And the imam attributes the sacred ruling that he derives through his deliberation (*ijtihad*) to the principle that he is following. So, one of them might say that something is from the Sunnah, and another will say that it is not from the Sunnah at all but an innovation. Neither of them is an innovator (*mubtade'*); because each one is only adhering to what he understands the truth to be and is following it. If we indeed said that one of them were an innovator, it means that all of the imams are innovators, and this is error, stupidity, and darkness. Godfearingness here is in accordance with the [states of] people, and is based upon the perfectedness of their knowledge and also its deficiencies.

There are three types of people:

*The first type of person* is the scholar who understands the various aspects of juristic preference (*wujuh al-tarjih*); and it is an obligation upon these scholars to take the strongest (*al-arjah*) proof always, and to prefer from those proofs the most cautious (*al-ahwat*) position. This is the ground of safety, without being concerned about the permissibility or the rewards from that. For this reason, many of the scholars give a legal ruling (*fatwa*) different from what they themselves do. A scholar would commit himself to doing that which is more difficult, and for other people he finds what is easier, unless he knows that a person is capable of doing the same thing that he can do. And God knows best.

*The second type of person* is the one who follows his imam in his transmissions and his principles (*usuluh*), and it is his duty to take the most cautious position from his school of thought (*madhab*). If he is able to take the more

cautious position from another *madhab*, out of caution, he can do that, as long as it is not something his imam rejects or is disliked (*makruh*) in his school of thought. Because his imam has a preference in his soul about a matter, it becomes a preventative for one to move to another [school of thought], because it is not permissible for him to act in any way except to what his knowledge has arrived at, or if he knows its source.

*The third type of person* is a common person (*al-‘aamiyy*), and he is a follower of whatever is thrown to him from the imams of his school of thought. He should not seek out licenses, but rather the cautious opinion if he wants to be from the people of Godfearingness; otherwise this man is a man we give no consideration to. It is an obligation upon him to ask about the opinion of his school of thought in his undertakings, and it is not permissible for him to take matters without regard, nor is it permissible for him to take them from someone who does not have religion or realization. And for this reason the mufti is appointed and it is incumbent upon the rulers (*al-umara’*) to institute his position for the commonality of the people because they do not know the various aspects of juristic preference and follow them; so, understand this.

### ***1.1c) A detailing of the most important points regarding what has been discussed***

First, you should know that the school of jurisprudence of the *usuli* [the one who knows the comprehensive proofs] and the *faqih* [the one who knows the particular proofs] both revolve their science around removing difficulties for people (*musqitat al-haraj*). And the school of thought of the Sufi, or the scrupulous (*al-wari’*), revolves around those things that will necessitate perfection (*muwajibat al-kamal*).

The ruling of the *faqih* is to take from the clearest thing (*al-abyan*), and the ruling of the Sufi is to seek out what the most excellent thing to do is (*al-ahsan*). All of them are guided, although some are more guided than others; so, understand this.

### 1.1d) *The Sufi Sadahs School of Thought in Beliefs and Rulings*

For this reason the methodology of the people of Sufism in theological issues (*i'tiqadat*) followed the methodology of the pious predecessors in the affirmation of absolute transcendence (*tanzih*) and absolute negation of any anthropomorphism (*nafy al-tashbih*) without exposing themselves to interpretation (*ta'wil*); nor did they have any inclinations towards falsehoods. But if they did indeed speak about things concerning interpretation, they did so only after negating what was impossible (*nafy al-muhaal*) and for the sake of knowledge and displaying their understanding and not as an absolute certainty. And they say regarding every Attribute we know of God (*sifah sam'iyah*) the same thing that Imam Malik said regarding *al-istiwaa'* (sitting) when he said: '*al-istiwaa'* is known (*ma'loum*) [from the Qur'an], and the 'how' (*kayf*) is irrational (*gayr ma'qoul*). Belief in it is an obligation (*wajeb*), and to ask about it is an innovation.' Meaning that it has been added to the religion and is a matter of difference of opinion amongst the imams. It is like the debate in theology regarding the Name and the Named; the Essence and the Attributes (*al-Dhat wa al-sifah wa al-ittisaaf*); recitation and the Recited; power (*alqudrah*) and the *maqdoor*, and existence and the existing. Or it is like going into detail about the states of the Next World, such as the reality of death and non-existence (*al-fanaa'*),

and *al-thahaab* and *al-bilaa'*, and the Balance and what is measured. And all the other things that should not be discussed, unless it is being learned to dispel ignorance, with the belief in what the intellect necessitates and what textual transmission affirms, and without adding things to it—because nothing is more convincing than one who has a proof with his proof.

What was good enough for the pious predecessors is good enough for us, and it will not harm us to be ignorant of what these particulars mean, and to negate what is obviously impossible. It will not harm one to be ignorant of what colour the prophets were, or their genealogy, but he should know that they have the distinction of perfection, and he must negate anything that detracts from their perfection. All of them are human but not like other humans, just like the ruby is a stone but not like other stones. And if some of them were preferred over others, that is because of a judgement (*hukm*) given by God, because all of them fulfilled what they were commanded to fulfil, without any stinting (*taqsir*), and without any infraction (*ikhlal*). Anything that came down concerning them that has been firmly established [in the Qur'an], the outward of which indicates some blameworthy quality (*'itab*), we completely invoke their transcendence (*nazzahnahom*) in relation to the same that is said of other people. And we assert the honour and reverence that their stature gives them by right, knowing that the Master says to his servant what He wants; but we have to have absolute courtesy (*adab*) with the servant because of his relation with the Master. We avoid entering into discussions about these things in every case; and God is the One who guides to what is correct.

Their school of thought in the rulings is that they follow

the scholars. Many of the scholars are the jurists (*fuqaha'*) who establish this science, and teach it and work to bring it forward. They prefer what is closest to the Hadith and the most cautious position that brings us closest to establishment (*tathbit*); as long as there is nothing in it that has been rejected by their imam, because the scholars of these legal rulings have rarefied and purified the proofs, and reject what is false. It is therefore necessary to follow them in what they have clarified to us, and to depend on them in what they have purified in their teachings. Therefore, the Sufi does not deviate from the Pious Predecessors in his belief, and he does not disagree with the jurists in what he depends upon for his legal rulings—because the credal belief that he founds his religion upon is his capital, and the legal rulings are the foundation of his actions. To take any risks with these two is harmful, and there is deception in acting according to other than these two aforementioned methodologies. In terms of meritorious acts (*al-fada'il*), they follow the methodology of the people of Hadith due to these scholars having confirmed and verified these transmissions. And from this perspective, what we mean by the consensus of following the school of Hadith scholars is understood; because of what is mentioned in the actions of those who are steadfast, such as Imam Al-Junayd who was a Thawri, and Al-Muhasibi who was a Shafi'i, Al-Shibli who was a Maliki, Al-Jurairi who was a Hanafi, and Al-Jilani who was a Hanbali, and many others.

Their methodology in matters pertaining to spiritual courtesy (*al-adab*) were by principles that were dependent upon various states, and that was due to their absolute concern with emptying the heart of anything other than God. They would take the route of anything that would help

them realize that, whether it was a dispensation (*rukhsah*) or something that had resolution (*‘azimah*) in it; even if there was some disagreement or ambiguity about it that did not eliminate the possibility of someone totally rejecting it. And for that reason, they did things and stated things that were not accepted by those who did not understand their principles (*usulahom*); and those people were justified in their rejection. But another people came along and followed them not understanding its principles [those of spiritual courtesy], and these people went astray and led others astray with things such as public gatherings for spiritual singing (*al-sama‘*), or obscurity (*khumoul*), or abandoning the body’s needs, or talking about *al-khawas*, or travelling alone, and other such things, so, understand.

Their conditions regarding what was previously mentioned are three, and it is necessary to know them to avoid any errors: *First*, that any actions or words not compromise the principle (*mukhillan bi al-asl*) which is the attempt to join (*al-jam‘*). For example, wrong actions that are clearly wrong; anything agreed to be inappropriate; any innovation that is explicitly an innovation; and any innovation that is an additional innovation. All of this is darkness, and darkness does not bring light; rather, it eliminates the possibility of light coming in. Whoever desires light from this has done something that is not sound and has no basis.

*Second*, to rectify one’s aims and intentions in terms of moving towards the goal and the means and grounds upon which one moves towards it. One should not compromise the courtesies that a specific time necessitates, nor should one attempt to move towards certain things before one has determined what their benefits are, and also what state they necessitate.

*Third*, one should restrict oneself to the absolutely necessary in terms of what he is seeking to realize, because necessities are limited to the degree that is necessary. To be lenient about permissible things compromises the principle of what one was intending, and this empowers the ego to demand more of them. This is something that has caused many of the seekers of the path to stop in their path to arrival, and it has also sent back many of those of arrival to the lowest of the low. As Al-Junayd pointed out in his words to Yusuf bin Al-Hussein: ‘May Allah never allow you to taste [the pleasure of] your own soul, because if you taste it, you will never have success after that.’

This is also derived from the answer that Al-Junayd gave to the one who asked him about public gatherings for spiritual singing, when he said: ‘Anything that helps gather (*jam‘*) a servant unto his Lord is permissible.’

Al-Suhrawardi mentioned in his book, *Adaab Al-Muridin (The Courtesies of the Seekers)*, the dispensations of this school, and that there is no dispensation for those without resolve in their actions, because seeking out dispensations is a blameworthy trait by consensus. Therefore, cling to the rules of Godfearingness and safety. And peace.

**The second branch:** concerns the place of Godfearingness in acts of worship and what imposes itself on them of ugly desires (*qabih al-iradat*).

These revolve around three aspects:

*First*, the aspect of either taking or leaving something, and this concerns what is permissible (*halal*) and what is impermissible (*haram*), and what is prohibited and what has a license (*al-man‘ wa al-jawaz*). If there is a change in the ruling, it becomes an innovation; otherwise it is in ac-



cordance with it. And the most important of all these matters is doubtful matters (*al-mutashabih*), for what is *halal* is absolutely clear, and what is *haram* is absolutely clear, and whoever leaves doubtful matters has maintained the innocence of his religion and honour. But the obligation concerning avoiding doubtful matters is the avoidance of what is clear, like the mixture of something prohibited with something else that is prohibited. Beyond that it becomes a matter of scrupulousness, unless there is some foundation for it. Doubt without clear signs for it is whisperings (*waswasah*); and some types of scrupulousness are perhaps harmful. So, learn discernment (*tafaqqah*) after the *fiqh* concerning the states of the soul if you want safety. And God knows best.

*Second*, is how one takes (*tanawul*) these things, for there are prohibited things like silk and the like; and there are permissible things, and there are recommended things. Changing these rulings is innovation; and limiting oneself only to what is recommended is uprightness; and taking what is permitted is Godfearingness. Anything beyond that is either prohibited or disliked (*makruh*). And God knows best.

*Third*, the places of life's vicissitudes, and that is the ground of courtesy; such as filial piety towards one's parents as an obligation, and towards the teacher, out of obedience and courtesy, and obedience to the rulers (*al-umara'*) in what is not in contradistinction to Sacred Law. This is hearing and obeying, even if he is an Ethiopian slave with a mutilated face.

Omar رضي الله عنه said : 'If he curses you, be patient; if he hits you, be patient; if he takes your property be patient, but if he attempts to seduce you (*rawadak*) from your religion,

say: “No obedience from me; my blood rather than my religion.” Do not remove one hand from his obedience.’

And the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Hear and obey even should the back be struck and the property taken.’<sup>21</sup> And he ﷺ said: ‘Give them their due, and their reckoning is with God ﷻ.’<sup>22</sup> And the Messenger of God ﷺ said: ‘No people marched against a ruler, even a hand span, in order to humiliate him except that God will humiliate them.’<sup>23</sup> And he ﷺ said: ‘No person ever cursed their ruler except that they were prohibited from gaining any good from him.’<sup>24</sup> And he ﷺ also said: ‘The believer does not humiliate his own soul.’ And it was said to him, ‘And how would he do that, Oh Messenger of God?’ And he replied: ‘He exposes himself to authority (*al-sultan*) [without just reason] and he will get nothing from that but fatigue (*nasab*).’<sup>25</sup> And God says in a Hadith Qudsi: ‘I am God and there is no God but me. I am the King of kings. The hearts of kings are in My hand. Whoever obeys Me, I will make those kings a mercy to him; and whoever disobeys Me, I will make those kings a tribulation for him, so, do not preoccupy yourselves with cursing them. Call on Me, and I will make them compassionate towards you.’<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Narrated by Muslim with similar wording (3435), from the Hadith of Hu-thaifa bin Al-Yaman and the Prophet’s ﷺ words: ‘Hear and obey the ruler (*amir*) even should he strike your back and take your property; so, hear and obey.’ Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Kubra* (8/157), and *Al-Shu‘ab* (7242), Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir* (3003), and similarly by Al-Hakem in *Al-Mustadrak* (8450).

<sup>22</sup> The editor could not find it with this wording. In the Sahih (3196) it is narrated that he ﷺ said: ‘Give them their due, for God will question them about what He asked them to guard.’ Ibn Awanah (5756), and similarly in the *Musnad* of Al-Shashi.

<sup>23</sup> Narrated by Abdul-Razzaq in his *Musannaf* (20715).

<sup>24</sup> The editor could not find it with this wording, and the author of *Kanz Al-Ummal* cited a number of Hadiths with this meaning (6/6).

<sup>25</sup> Cited by the author of *Kanz Al-Ummal* (3/802).

<sup>26</sup> The editor could not find it with this wording.

In reality kings are a mercy in one aspect, and a tribulation in another. So, whoever neglects their rights is destroyed in this world and the next; and whoever exposes himself to them loses in this world and the next. And peace.

**The third branch:** on bad character and good character; and people are three concerning this:

*First*, is a man whose spiritual aspiration and resolve have risen to a very high level, and so his rank grows higher and his worth grows greater. Three destructive things will accost him.

- a) Covetousness (*al-tama'*): and the ground upon which it emerges is weakness of faith. The stuff that it is made of is illusion (*al-wahm*), its end result is deprivation, and its incentive is heedlessness and being comfortable with material means. It has been said that if covetousness were asked: 'Who is your father?' it would answer: 'doubt about the divine decree (*al-ma'qdour*).' And if it were asked: 'What is your occupation?' it would answer: 'the acquisition of humiliation.' And if it were asked: 'What is your aim?' it would answer: 'deprivation.'
- b) Miserliness (*al-bukhl*): and the ground upon which it emerges is fear of poverty and a weakness of soul. Its incentive is envy and its means is aggression and oppression and depriving others of their rights.
- c) Arrogance (*al-kibr*): and the ground upon which it emerges is an overweening sense of self, and the stuff that it is made of is contentment with the soul. Its result is loss of objectivity and constant devia-

tion and ignoring the rights of others. Even if the person with this trait were in the most extreme state of degradation, he would still be arrogant. So, know this.

*Second*, is someone who has some status (*al-rif'ah*), and the foundation for this stems from three things:

- a) Lack of concern about one's state because he depends on his rank.
- b) Making claims because one is aware of his distinction from others.
- c) Being at peace with one's acts of disobedience as a way of justifying his own desires in the state that he is in.

*Third*, is someone who rushes into impetuosity with the impetuous (*mutahawwirin*) and becomes tyrannical alongside those who are tyrants (*mutahayyizin*). And the foundation of his pitfalls is comprehensive and are three, and the soul inclines to them:

- a) Seeking out other people's news (*al-tajassus*). From this manifests every lowly action, such as backbiting and gossiping, and every harmful and blameworthy thing because the one who seeks out news about others will not be safe from the evil of what he discovers.
- b) Allowing [the soul] to roam freely in the pastures of its nature concerning matters that result in the ugly and the non-ugly, without going into detail about the states [of the soul]; nor being concerned about its deficiencies and perfections. This is from overwhelming stupidity or from craving affection,

or from a heart that is completely absent from reality; because the actions of intelligent people are always connected to aims and purposes. He who unleashes his soul falls into the valleys of destruction, as it is said in the Hadith: ‘In every valley of the heart of the son of Adam there is a byway (*shu‘bah*). Whoever allows his heart to follow those byways, God has no concern about which valley He destroys him in<sup>27</sup>.’

- c) Proudly and aggressively holding on to one’s opinions resulting in a love of praise and also exposing oneself to the places of slaughter.

So wake up, brother, and you will find in these principles I have described the roots of all wrong actions. They emerge from them and return to them, and they occur from three things:

*First*, imitating people whom one has some belief in who do those things.

*Second*, heedlessness about the sources of the soul’s states and their origins due to the lack of taking the soul to account.

*Third*, having a good opinion of the soul and giving it free reign.

So, be aware of your soul first, and be aware of other people second, without having a bad opinion of them. As Imam Malik رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said: ‘Cling to what you have no doubt about, and leave people, for perhaps they have a valid position.’ With your religion do not imitate men, but rather imitate true knowledge for which you have proof and which is in accordance with what the people of knowledge

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<sup>27</sup> Narrated by Ibn Majah (4156) and Al-Qada’i in *Musnad Al-Shihab* (1064).

and wisdom have understood that God and His Messenger brought. Take your soul to account daily in every minor and major thing in order to know what occurred in your day. Do not depend on general matters as long as you have not clearly determined from a sound point of view what their principles are, and what their benefit are and what will result from them. This is because people's caprice (*hawa*) in these days have overwhelmed them; and truth's traces have disappeared except in those people of *karamah* and *wilayah*—those who have tied their outward forms with absolute adherence to the Sunnah and have caused their internal states to realize the station of witnessing the gifts and blessings of God. They are able to maintain this special distinction in their souls without any excess, and take the most cautious positions in devotional practices and in their habitual practices, in accordance with what the Messenger of God ﷺ said. 'If you see greed being obeyed and caprice being followed, and every opinionated person amazed at his own opinion, then take care of your own special concerns (*khuwaysah*).'<sup>28</sup> Such people will not be harmed by those who disagree with them; nor by those who go against them, as the Hadith says. May God make us from them by His bounty and generosity.

**The fourth branch:** defining unknown aspects (*al-majhoul*) in reality (*al-waqe'*) and what happens with praiseworthy qualities from the impediments on the path.

The axes around which this revolves are three:

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<sup>28</sup> Brought forth (*akbrajahu*) by Abu Dawoud (3778), Al-Tirmidhi (2984) who said it was *hasan gharib*, and Ibn Majah who was the only one to use the word (*khuwaysah*), and Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Kubra* (10/92) and in *Al-Shu'ab* (9273), and Ibn Habban (386).

*First*, knowledge of the praiseworthy aspects of the impediments that occur on the path. And this will be made clear in the section on uprightness (*istiqamah*).

*Second*, the methodology of discerning the unknown (*al-majhoulat*); and in the third pillar (*rukn*) it is even more important.

*Third*, the aims of matters in which both shortcomings and perfections manifest. This is more appropriate to be in the third station (*mawqif*), and will be dealt with in more detail later, God willing.

## 1.2) The Second Pillar of Godfearingness: How to implement it

The second pillar relates to the different aspects of acting in accordance with Godfearingness and what weakens it and its foundation, and what strengthens it. The axes around which they revolve are three that have been previously mentioned, but they return in the end because there are consequences.

*First*, knowledge becomes firmly rooted in the soul through Godfearingness, and this results from reflection on its beauty, and on the ugliness of wrong actions and from reflecting in detail on the first one [beauty], but generally on the second one [ugliness]. Reflecting on particulars engenders visualizing them in one's imagination, and caprice and passion (*shahwah*) are overwhelming and affect one's intellect, knowledge, and clarity.

*Second*, one must repel the first impulse of doing wrong, because it has been said that the outset of a wrong is a thought (*khatirah*), just as the outset of a flood is a drop. So, if one accustoms himself to repelling it immediately with disgust, it will cease; otherwise it will constantly challenge

him. If he responds to it with disgust, he can repel it; if not, it becomes whisperings of the Devil or excessive compulsiveness (*waswasah*). It must be responded to with struggle, otherwise inflamed passions (*shahwah*) coupled with the overwhelming power of one's caprice will overwhelm one's intellect, knowledge, and clarity.

Third, one must exercise absolute caution in abstaining from wrong actions by completely leaving anything that calls to them. The key to doing this is by interpreting being able to abstain from wrong actions as a great blessing, or extinguishing the ego by remembering this blessing, or by deeming the soul to be transgressing in its desires. Everyone will be destroyed except those whom God protects, and how few they are.

### **1.2a) Note of Warning**

The axis of this last pillar just mentioned is in preferring safety in all of its sections. The key to this is desiring to be safe because things that call to action by their nature can be risky; especially when it is possible to destroy oneself through something deemed light. There is no light thing in wrong actions, even if there is a difference in opinion regarding it. So, understand this and success is through God.

### **1.3) The Third Pillar of Godfearingness: The particularization of its states**

The third pillar concerns the particularization of the states of Godfearingness and what recurs from them and grows stronger. The frame of reference for this is those things that activate one's limbs, and those things that one should leave, and those things that one should take. So, look at which aspect overwhelms you and concern yourself with that one



and not with the others at this point. Once you have finished with what is most important and have not moved on to something less important, your concern with the lesser thing should override it.

And in that there are three examples in particular that overwhelm everyone:

*First*, laying loose the tongue in backbiting and excessive speech in matters that do not concern one and are of no benefit.

*Second*, never ceasing to partake in both commission and omission of things that one loves, hates, praises or blames, and other such things.

*Third*, the heart being attached to created things and heedless of attachment to the Creator of things.

Each of these has abundant places of origin, and we will mention from among them the general ones that are most important:

The foundation of the first one is conformity and asking for news.

The foundation of the second one is not being content with what one has been given, and love of acquisition.

And the foundation of the third one is heedlessness about the vicissitudes of the night and day.

The way in which you abandon the first one is by limiting your exposure to people. The abandonment of the second one is by being content with what comes from you and what comes to you. And the abandonment of the third one is by reflecting on what your state is, and that the closest thing to you is far, and the greatest thing that you have in your existence is of no benefit to you.

By cutting off these three things, spiritual aspirations rise, and blessings are completed. In leaving the first one,

one achieves a sound heart and a good opinion of Muslims. By leaving the second one, one achieves scrupulousness (*wara'*) and an illuminated heart. By leaving the third one, the pain of interactions with other people is finally extinguished with satisfaction with the decree of the Lord of the Worlds. May Allah provide us with that.

#### 1.4) The Fourth Pillar of Godfearingness: The inroads of faults

The fourth pillar: on the inroads of faults and how the hidden faults of the self are known.

As for the inroads of faults, there are three:

*First*, that one's concupiscent appetite (*al-shahwah*) overpowers him, and nothing can repel that except struggling against the self (*mujahaddah*) and fleeing from the places where it occurs generally and in particular.

*Second*, that one's caprice (*al-hawa*) overpowers him, and nothing can repel that except acting with cautiousness and closing the door of justification.

*Third*, that heedlessness (*al-ghaflah*) overpowers one, and his response to that should be getting to work and mindfully awakening to the range of one's states.

There is no way to all of that except by opposing the soul and examining the areas of its faults, both general and specific, firstly in regard to knowledge, and finally in regard to its state. As for knowledge, scholars such as Al-Muhasabi, Al-Ghazali and Al-Sulami have discussed this in their books generally. And the best that was mentioned about this is what Al-Muhasabi and Al-Sulami wrote, so, refer to that—and not to your self—while seeking help from God in warding off evil and accruing benefit.

As for one's state, it is identifying the unknown things (*al-majhoulat*) in the soul, and there are four aspects to this:

*First*, you must have penetrating inner sight, a present heart, and complete vigilance. Through these you will come to discern the state that you are in, and what will prepare your soul for your future. This will never work except by abandoning contentment with the soul completely, and this is almost impossible because we are naturally inclined to loving our soul and turning a blind eye to its faults. If the sentiment of this aspect is conceptualized properly, it is understood to be in particulars and not in generalities.

*Second*, take a sheikh of sound action and sound knowledge to advise you. He will raise you to a station like his own and will benefit you in a manner that will benefit him in his grave. He will expend himself in trying to benefit you, and he will do his utmost to try to perfect you. Such a person no longer exists in either the East or the West, and if he is indeed found, consider it more wondrous than the wondrous phoenix. You will find either somebody who has a state (*hal*) with God and has aspiration (*himmah*), but does not have knowledge (*‘ilm*) or action (*‘amal*). Or you will find somebody who has knowledge and action, but does not have aspiration. If you do indeed benefit [from such a person], the benefit derived is not from the aspect mentioned, but from other unknown means.

*Third*, take a righteous brother who also has inner sight and knows what should be overlooked, but is also able to motivate you. He will help you with his compassion and advice, and will protect you from deficiencies and disgrace. He will not exalt you in a way that is inappropriate, nor will he have contempt for you in a way that leads to his neglect of you. The Messenger of God ﷺ said: ‘Whoever God desires good for, he will provide for him a righteous friend. If he forgets, that friend will remind him, and should

he be in a state of remembrance, that friend will help him.<sup>29</sup> This too is more strange in this world than even the strangest thing, and more distant than the most distant thing, and closer than the closest thing because of the corrupt age we live in, and because people are so engaged in flattery.

*Fourth*, return to the Interpreter of the Truth (*Tarjuman Al-Haqq*) in reality, and that is what is on the tongues of people, because the tongues of people are the pens of truth, and their states interpret what is true or close to the truth.

## 2) Section

Remove from yourself, both secretly and openly, everything ugly that other people speak of. Do not interpret its existence as coming from a different state, because the roots of faults are not about states, and perfection is leaving deficiency in all situations; so, understand this. Do not neglect anything you hear from other people in their states, about you or about other than you, for it is a fault in itself. Do not start finding fault in existence (*al-wujud*) while that fault is existent (*mawjud*) in you.

Know that the Way (Sunnah) of God has necessitated that for every beginner in repentance there are three things that will constantly remind him of his wrong actions, expose him to his own faults, cause him to reflect on what has passed, and will give him practice in learning to submit to Divine decree (*al-qada*).

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<sup>29</sup> The editor could not find it with this wording. What is correct is what Abu Dawoud narrated (2543), Al-Nasa'i (4133), Ahmad in his *Musnad* (23278), Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Kubra* (10/111) and others; that the Prophet ﷺ said: 'If God desires good for a ruler, he will provide him with an honest vizier. If he forgets, he will remind him, and should he be in a state of remembrance, he will help him. If God desires other than that for him, he will provide him with a harmful vizier, if he forgets, he will not remind him, and should he be in a state of remembrance, he will not help him.'

*First*, [God] will subjugate others to finding fault in one, and they will abandon and abuse him, leading him to turn to his Lord because they remind him of his faults.

*Second*, the soul becomes unbearable because of whisperings and because of its defiance in all the different times and breaths that one takes, leading him to turn to his Lord.

*Third*, the assault of tribulations (*al-balaya*) and calamities (*al-mihan*), and the delay of assistance and help because these are reminders (*muthakkirat*) and expiate one's wrongs (*mukaffirat*). God ﷻ says:

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ  
وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

*And whatever affliction may befall you is on account of what your [own] hands have earned.*

*And He pardons much.*

(*Al-Shura*, 42:30)

Tribulations will be of three types:

*First*, those that expiate wrong actions (*mukaffirat*); these are a right for the one who has patience and submission, without opposition and vexation.

*Second*, reminders (*muthakkirat*); these are a right for the one who remembers why they are happening to him, and they are not restricted to the actual thing that caused them. In fact, God's Sunnah is to veil people; and so, calamities are a result of one's wrongs but do not necessarily appear at the time of the wrong action.

*Third*, punishments (*'uqubat*) which increase vexation, constriction and anger at God's decree. We ask God for wellbeing by His kindness and grace.

### 3) Conclusion

The branches of repentance are many and its inroads are abundant, and rectifying it is the foundation of the soundness of every station. The place of repentance in relation to stations is like the place of spirits in relation to bodies, because every station has its rulings, and every ruling has its mastery. The good actions of the righteous are the bad deeds of the ones brought close to God; and the good actions of the ones brought close to God are the bad deeds of the people of perfection. Godfearingness enters into every station, and it proceeds in accordance with the degree of its relationship to that station and its cause. Repentance and Godfearingness are firm intention, unwavering determination, and then finally, authority (*hukm*). Every matter in existence is strong or weak in accordance with its means and material. And the material [of this path] is constantly asking for forgiveness (*istighfar*) and invoking prayers upon the chosen Prophet ﷺ.

Sheikh Abu Al-Hassan Al-Shadhili رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ said: ‘If you want truthfulness (*sidq*) in your speech, then help yourself by reciting *Surat Al-Qadar*. If you want sincerity (*ikhlas*) in your work, then recite *Surat Al-Ikhlas*. If you want protection in the outward, protect yourself by reciting *Surat Al-Falaq*. And if you want protection from the evil of people, help yourself by reciting *Surat Al-Nas*.’

And the Messenger of God ﷺ said: ‘If you desire to be safe from explicit *shirk* and implicit *shirk*, then say every morning and every evening three times: ‘*Allahumma*, I seek refuge in You from associating anything with You while I know about it, and I ask for forgiveness from You for that which I do not know about.’<sup>30</sup>”

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<sup>30</sup> Narrated by Abu Ya‘la in his *Musnad* (52) with wording that is close, and by

In totality, the fortress of the station of repentance after it has been realized is to maintain uprightness and realization. And success is through God.

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Al-Hakim Al-Tirmidhi in *Nawader Al-Usul* (4/101). Also narrated by Ahmad with a slight difference in wording (18781) and similarly by Ibn Abi Shaybah in his *Musannaf* (7/88), Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir*, and Al-Tabarani in *Al-Awsat* (3613).

## II

### THE SECOND STATION ON THE PATH OF OPENING AND EMPOWERMENT: UPRIGHTNESS

The second station (*mawqif*) on the path of opening and empowerment is uprightness (*istiqamah*), and what it is calling you to in terms of guidance and dignity. There are three comprehensive and achievable grounds for it for people of aspiration.

#### A) THE 'CARPET SPREADS' OF UPRIGHTNESS ARE TYPES OF REALIZATION

##### 1) THE FIRST 'CARPET SPREAD' (*BISAT*): WORSHIP (*AL-IBADAT*)

This is done by realizing what has to be done and also increasing in it. It is either a devotional practice that is an obligation; or a sunnah that is desirable; or it is a supererogatory practice that is confirmed and has not been abrogated. Uprightness in obligations is through adherence to Godfearingness and rejecting impediments. Establish Godfearingness through performing the obligations without stinting; and through negating impediments by leaving disliked matters (*al-makruhat*), and also through doing things with perfection (*al-kamal*). This is not achieved except through scrupulousness in adherence to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ; and by abandoning actions that have in them dispensations and innovations.



Examples of innovations in purification (*al-taharah*) is the presence of obsessive thoughts (*al-waswaas*), and believing that that is from the actions of righteous people, such as specifying certain remembrances (*dhikr*) for every limb in the belief that this is from the Sunnah. But it is not an innovation if one does not think that he is performing a sunnah; nor is it an innovation to wipe the neck, or wipe the forehead extensively or wipe the limbs with a handkerchief, even though these are not recommended by Imam Malik because they are in contradistinction to the proofs. Other innovations are slapping (*latm*) the face with water and also shaking off the water from the hands before they reach the face if it is thought to be a ruling; and also cleaning the private parts from passing wind, and other such things. Also saying *Allahu Akbar* when one washes his face, and such things; or saying the *Shahadah* when one washes his face—because no one said to do that except one Shafi‘i, and he was refuted. Another is following the creases of the ears, and this is according to Ibn Al-Hajib, who said that wiping is done in order to facilitate (*al-takhfif*) and approximate (*al-taqrib*).

These are all added innovations (*bida‘ idafiyyah*); some of them are not a matter of difference of opinion amongst the imams (*wifaqiyyah*) and some of them are a matter of a difference of opinion (*khilafiyyah*). The worst that can be said about them is that they are disliked (*al-karahah*) if purification (*al-taharah*) is complete.

Also, there are innovations regarding prayer times: hastening the times of prayer as a way of trying to push it to the closest time possible; and also delaying the prayer without an excuse and without making an effort to pray on time. And also musical chanting (*al-tatrib*) of the call to

prayer (*adhan*); and also following it up with words and actions that have not been established in the rules of our faith. Another innovation is following up the *iqamah* with *istighfar* and also those things that follow after it that are not from its actions; and so on from things that are not sound devotional practices that bring one closer to God, even if the slave is not disobeying God through them.

Regarding innovations in prayer there is reciting the *Fatihah* before one actually prays; and reciting remembrances (*athkar*) that are not from the Sunnah when one prays; and also specifying certain recitations or remembrances that were not specified by the Lawgiver (*Al-Shari'*) ﷺ, for instance, performing every prayer with a specific surah and never using another one. Or, secondly, reciting only *Surat Al-Ikhlās* in every prayer. And in order to gain the benefits of certain surahs, reciting specific surahs; like reciting *Surat Al-Buruj* in the afternoon prayer (*‘asr*); or *Surat Al-Sajdah*, or *Surat Al-Qadar*, or *Surat Al-Sharh* in the dawn prayer (*fajr*). All this is in contrast to what has been proven regarding *Surat Al-Ikhlās* and *Surat Al-Kafirun*. And specifying after the sunset prayer (*maghrib*) only *Surat Al-Kafirun* and *Surat Al-Ikhlās*. Another innovation is finishing the prayer for guidance (*salat al-istikharah*) by saying: ‘*And your Lord creates whatever He will and chooses.*’ (*Al-Qasas*, 28:68). Regarding this there is nothing mentioned apart from reciting *Surat Al-Ikhlās* and *Surat Al-Kafirun*—even though the foundation of the Hadith regarding this is that one can recite anything from the Qur’an.

Other innovations include prayers on specific nights and days that are meritorious or otherwise, because all these hadiths are fabricated (*mawdou‘ah*) and false (*batilah*), not to mention what they contain of additional enhancements;

things that adversely affect one's religious stature; and corrupt people's intentions. As for *salat al-ragha'ib*, there is a weak hadith that mentions it and some scholars said one could do it and others said one could not do it. The most preferable position is to avoid all of these things in totality, like doing supererogatory devotions (*al-nafilah*) in congregation (*al-jama'ah*), even if Al-Shafi'i permitted it, because the predecessors (*al-salaf*) did not do it, and Imam Malik stated that it is disliked. Another innovation is raising one's hands to the level of *ihram* other than in the *ihram* during prayer because the Prophet ﷺ prohibited doing that.

Imam Malik رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ pointed out that responding to the *iqamah* with remembrance is not from the actions of the predecessors, but rather the response (*al-jawab*) should be to the *adhan* and not the *iqamah*. Regarding the repetition (*tasmi'*) [of the *adhan*] there is a difference in opinion that should not be ignored, for it disrupts people's prayer and preoccupies people from presence with their Lord. Even worse than that is the *nida'* they do for the funeral prayer (*al-janazah*) by going to extremes in artifice which is possibly agreed upon that it invalidates the person's prayer.

Other innovations are supplicating after prayer in a group in a specific place where people will think that it is from the sunnah of the prayer. And also reciting a part of the Qur'an (*hizb*) [after prayer in a group]; for there is no doubt that it disrupts other people who are praying. Another issue is remembrances that are not from the Shari'ah or ones done after the prayers that are done in a way that is not legislated—this is an explicit innovation. Perhaps, also, the recitation of the *Fatihah* a certain number of times or in a certain way can be considered an innovation, unless it is done in accordance with the Shari'ah's

description of it. Other innovations are shaking hands after the Friday Prayer and other prayers, and also reciting *Surat Al-Sajdah* after the afternoon prayer (*‘asr*), especially if it is done with its prostration. Other issues are joining certain verses (*ayat*) in a cycle of prayer (*rak‘ah*) in a specific way; and so on and so forth that would take a long time to enumerate. But the universal principle here is that the person should realize (*yuhaqqeq*) the foundation of knowledge with the sunnah that is accompanied by the actions of the predecessors. And he should leave everything he is in doubt about generally and specifically in this and other matters.

Many have spoken about this, including Ibn Al-Hajj in his *Madkhal* and Sheikh Abu Ishaq Al-Shatibi in his *Hawadith*. The various chapters of the books of jurisprudence in the *madhab* are resplendent with these examples, especially *Al-‘Utbiyyah* and its commentaries. A good amount of this was also presented by the jurist (*faqih*) Abu Al-Qasim Al-Barzali in the various chapters of his book; so, look into this. One should not depend on his own interpretations regarding action, but rather have a good opinion of people. And success is through God.

## 2) THE SECOND ‘CARPET SPREAD’: HABITUAL PRACTICES (*AL-‘ADAT*)

Uprightness (*istiqamah*) in habitual practices is to leave lowly things that are determined to be lowly both by Sacred Law and social propriety. If something is censured by the Shari‘ah, or human nature is elevated above it, then uprightness is to abandon it as a way of maintaining the purity of one’s aspirations, and not out of arrogance towards those who have fallen into it from the Ummah.

Human beings are three types:

*First*, is a person who leaves lowly matters in order to avoid their foulness and also to maintain his dignity, and not for any other reason. The sign of this man is that he will not go near them even to avoid death. This type of person is not safe from arrogance, nor from seeing a portion of his own ego, and no consideration is given to him regarding his own internal state even if his outward state is beautiful.

*Second*, is a person who avoids these things due to what will occur from other people as a result of them, such as attack from them, or their looking down on him and what might reach him from others of harm or disturbance. The sign of this person is that if nobody is around and he feels safe from other people, he will do these things. And if there were a situation in which he was forced to do them, he would, unless he has a very strong sense of his own honour, then he will not fall into that. This person is also someone not given a lot of consideration, because even if he is someone of high rank, he is looking to other than his Lord, and his actions are in accordance with other than his Lord.

*Third*, is a person who does not credit his ego (*nafs*) with a lot of worth and so does not elevate it, nor is he concerned with created beings and so, does not take them into consideration. The sign of this person is that he has no concern for how creation views his state, nor what rank his soul belongs to. This person is on the carpet-spread of reality and if he is in accordance with the truth, then this is perfection; and if not, then he is inclining towards it.

The people of this rank are of three types:

*First*, is a person whose outward has followed his inward. He has adopted the rulings of Sacred Law that are concerned with chivalrous behaviour (*al-murou'ah*) in

order to manifest the grandeur of Islam, and establish the outward form of wisdom by following legal rulings.

*Second*, is a person who has considered for his outward the rulings of chivalrous behaviour and established them. His inward has in it what is in it and he is not arrogant as to what results from that. He allows his nature to do things that are permissible if the situation warrants that in terms of his nature, as long as he is not worried that some *fitnah* might result; and this man has a completeness.

*Third*, is a person who is concerned with going against his inward state, and is persistent in being vigilant about reigning in his outward, so, his state (*hal*) goes to its opposite through spiritual exercise, just as the nature of something will go to its opposite in those situations. For that reason, some of the scholars have commanded those who have pride to expend themselves as that is the most beneficial thing for them ...

### 2.1) *Verification*

If you want to know the reality of your state from all the stations we have mentioned, then expose your soul to the opposite of what you are in. If it refuses, then know that your soul is in what you understand it to be. Unless the reason it refuses is because of an adherence to Shari'ah at the outset, and unless there is some redressing afterwards, then it is from your soul's passion. If the opposite action is impermissible from a legal perspective, look at what the law necessitates. And act with determination to do the opposite of what your station indicates that is permissible. If it refuses, then increase looking at the permissible things (*mubahat*) of that type.

For example, if it is difficult for you to do everyday af-

fairs due to your social status (*al-mansib*), then do something that does not diminish your position, but do something close to that. Such as carrying your own belongings from the market; or wearing old clothes, if it is not exposing oneself to beseeching. Manifest poverty and do this until you get used to it, then go back to your original state, and continue to do things such as these as a way of treating the soul.

If it is worse than that, and the ego refuses, for example, to go out without a head covering, then force yourself to do it, and be completely resolute in your determination; then do not go out. Keep doing that until it is something that the ego is not bothered by. Examples of this are many; one group that did them was destroyed, and another group was destroyed by neglecting them. So, beware, and success is through God, and ‘*God is sufficient for us, an excellent Guardian is He.*’

### 3) THE THIRD ‘CARPET SPREAD’: PRAISEWORTHY CHARACTER AND DEALINGS WITH OTHERS

The foundations of praiseworthy character (*al-akhlaq*) are three: *First*, to repudiate the self by forcing it to be fair and just with others, but abandoning its own right to demand fairness and justice, unless the Sacred Law’s rulings necessitate it and it is inevitable and the decision must be accepted. The sign of such a person is that he is not concerned upon whose tongue the truth manifests, nor which way is beneficial. And his desire for others to benefit is more than his desire for his own benefit, unless it is a matter of rewards in the Next World, and that should be the incentive. He should also desist from any incentives of leadership as much as he is able. So, understand this.

*Second*, for one's breast (*sadr*) to be sound from the incentives of caprice and the demands of one's rights, so that he is free of spitefulness and envy, and he does not oppress anyone, and does not demand his own rights if he is oppressed. He does not see that his own soul has any preference in any of that, rather, he gives to the one who withholds from him, maintains kinship ties with the one who severs them, and forgives the one who oppresses him, without revealing that, and without feeling proud or displaying magnanimity.

*Third*, to have a contemptuous attitude towards the temporal world (*al-dunya*) and everything that is inclined towards it; and having a distaste for anything that indicates it. For love of the *dunya* is the root of every wrong action, and abandoning the *dunya* is the root of every virtuous action. The sign of sincerity in this is that one is not miserly with what he has, and does not grieve over what he does not have; rather, he sees his loss as a gain.

Imam Bukhari narrated from some of the predecessors that there are three things that are the foundation of all good: to spend when one is in straitened circumstances; to spread peace to the world, and to demand of the self its responsibilities.

The Messenger of God ﷺ said: 'There are three things

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<sup>31</sup> Narrated by Al-Tabarani in *Al-Awsat* (5610) with the wording: 'There are three things that destroy: greed that is obeyed; caprice that is followed, and an individual being enamoured with his own self. And there are three things that save: being fair when pleased and when angered, being economical in both wealth and poverty, and having awe of God secretly and openly.' And narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab Al-Iman* (764) with the wording: 'There are three things that destroy: greed that is obeyed; caprice that is followed, and an individual being enamoured with his own self. And there are three things that save: having awe of God secretly and openly; being economical in both wealth and poverty, and the truthful word when pleased and when angered.'



that save, and three things that destroy.<sup>319</sup> And he made mention of those things that save: having awe of God secretly and openly; being economical in both wealth and poverty; and being fair when pleased and when angered. And he ﷺ mentioned those things that destroy: greed that is obeyed; caprice that is followed, and an individual being enamoured with his own self. These indeed are the real foundations, so, firmly root them in your heart and seek God in your actions in accordance with them. These are from the Perfected Master and the Absolute Gnostic ﷺ and their particulars and universals revolve around deliberation and caution in every matter. So, take note of that as it will help you fulfill these, and success is through God.

#### 4) AREAS OF OBSERVATION IN DEALINGS WITH OTHERS: THEIR MEANS AND OBJECTIVES

As for dealings with others (*mu'amalat*), these are areas of observation (*marasid*) which are both means and objectives.

##### 4.1) The first observation: dealings with the soul

These revolve around three types:

*First*, is being qualified with Godfearingness, and some of what relates to that has already been discussed. The books of our scholars are resplendent with details of this because it is well-known and easy, thus, one does not need a sheikh for this, nor a *murid*; but if there were, it is to affirm Godfearingness and not to bring it about.

*Second*, is ornamenting the soul with uprightness (*istiqamah*) as opposed to crookedness; and this is by undertaking every virtuous act that does not lead to deficiency, or to the rejection of some principle, or to an internal struggle. This is because anything that leads to deficiency is defi-

ciency in itself—even if it appears perfect. And it is more important to reject whatever rejects a principle—even if it follows along these lines—than it is to reject what is its opposite. And what leads to an internal struggle will lead to a deviation in reality (*i'wijaj al-haqiqah*) in his state. Repetition makes it firmly rooted in one's perceptions (*khayal*) and so, it begins to overcome the soul in all of its different states. Thus, we say: seeking out all of the virtues is blameworthy; and coveting all of the general benefits is distracting, and one should isolate his direction.

*Third*, is the soul's realization of gnosis (*al-ma'rifah*) and knowledge (*al-'ilm*); and mention will be made of this in the third station (*mawqif*), God willing.

#### 4.1a) *Addendum*

Sometimes rights and realities are in opposition, like attempting to please one's parents in seeking out means while the soul is not eager. And the Shari'ah dictates that one must learn the outward sciences, but one's mind can become preoccupied with them when one is involved in them, or part of them, or is reminded of them. Therefore, it is necessary to hold to the first principle (*al-asl*) while fulfilling the right if one is able. Otherwise, one has to go into each one to the best of his ability while being vigilant of the first principle. And when one seeks, he should seek in the best way, just as the Messenger of God ﷺ said.

And Al-Hassan رضي الله عنه said: 'Seek this knowledge in a way that does not harm your devotional practice (*al-'ibadah*), and seek this devotional practice in a way that does not harm knowledge.'

The way in which one avoids harm from one or the other revolves around three things:

First, is to encompass all one is doing without falling back, or regressing, or interpreting, and without having recourse to another.

Second, is to encompass what he is undertaking without branching out and becoming preoccupied with other things. And he should not start anything before he finishes what he has already begun; and he should not leave something before he has fully grasped it.

Third, is to encompass how to achieve this and it is through three ways. First, is studying with sheikhs, and a sheikh is anyone who surpasses oneself in knowledge. Second, is teaching beginners, and that is anyone who knows less than oneself. Third, is reviewing the subject with one's peers, even if they are behind him in understanding or have surpassed him, or are at his level.

All of these need three more things, and they are absolutely necessary:

First, is to go into something in a way where one gives benefit but he also benefits, and without transgressing, otherwise matters will branch out and he will not gain any benefit, except after a long time.

Second, is that one should resign himself to what his sheikh gives him even if it is not what he wants, and he should not become preoccupied with it, neither in accepting it nor in rejecting it.

Third, is that he be balanced in his states and give every rank its due without mixing things because the key to knowledge is in its order. One should not occupy his mind with a branch of knowledge that he has never studied and does not understand, rather he can conceptualize what it is about, otherwise he will not benefit from it. And for every knowledge he has conceptualized, he should gather what

he needs to know from it through research and investigation and the like. When one has comprehensive knowledge of the chapters of a science, he can begin to look at its forms and proofs. This concerns all the facets of a field of knowledge and all of the arts and sciences. But if one concerns himself with the details in the beginning, this will prevent him from reaching mastery, because every field of knowledge has endless possibilities.

Imam Malik رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was once asked about seeking knowledge and he said: ‘It is good; but you should know what you need [to know] from morning until evening, and do not prefer anything over that.’ And this constitutes the ultimate statement in this entire chapter, and we return to it as a foundation and reference.

As for his statement, ‘What you are going towards does not have greater priority over what you are leaving,’ this refers to a specific time determined by specific circumstances. Knowledge is the occupation of a lifetime; but as for the Next Life, it must be cultivated.

#### 4.2) *The Second Observation: Transactions with People*

In this there are three matters:

*First*, consider yourself a stranger amongst people, and do not seek any right from them; nor see in what they are doing any preference to what you have. Leave them to what they have gone to; and occupy yourself with what will save you from your Lord’s judgement. Expect their harm; respect them and magnify them in accordance with what you are commanded and prohibited from doing.

*Second*, say *Allahu Akbar* four times over humanity and consider them dead so that you never depend on them regarding your state, nor give them any consideration in your

actions. Realize that nothing that comes from them is in reality from them; rather they are subjugated by God and He is the One who has given them any authority they have. Then return to your Lord with gratitude when they are good to you, and seek refuge in your Lord by necessity when they are cruel or harsh.

*Third*, have compassion for others as they are. Connect with them as much as you are able concerning the benefits of religion and this world regarding those things in which no harm will come back to you sooner or later. This is because one's benefit is preferred over the benefit of someone else in religion and this world. No one gives precedence to the benefit of another except a fool. Rather, deference to others is in fulfilling needs, and not in meeting necessities. This is a chapter that needs a great deal of knowledge—from outside—for anyone who has been tribulated with the company of people. It also requires serious understanding (*fiqh*) inwardly for those who are present in the ground of the truth. So, cling to God and avoid associating with people to the best of your ability, and may God grant you success.

#### 4.2a) *Addendum*

One must have a livelihood (*'aysh*), intellect (*'aql*), and knowledge (*'ilm*). One's livelihood is for one's own self (*nafs*); the intellect is for working with other people; and knowledge is in order to fulfill God's commands. Know that creation (*khalq*) is in the prison of human nature; and it is not possible to please everyone except by making everyone angry. Anyone who imitates men in their religion will fall into the pitfalls of destruction because this is a corrupt time and helpers are not to be found, just as Sheikh

Abu Abdullah Al-Siraj رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said to us in poetry:

This time is a corrupt time  
Where oh where is the escape?  
Haram has spread everywhere  
So what livelihood is sought?  
The scholars are blinded by doubtful matters  
For this, even one who wonders should wonder  
Who can I ask for help  
In rectifying my religion?  
And who in this time is a sheikh  
Who can rectify our souls?

As Fudayl bin 'Iyad رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said: 'This is a bad time, so, guard your tongue, hide your place, purify your heart, take what you know, and avoid what must be rejected.'

Know this, brother: I have tested humanity, individually and collectively, and I only found the following people: someone who wants to complete his worldly life through you; or someone who wants to use you to amuse himself; or someone who is looking to have some intimate conversation regarding what he is interested in. And perfection is this: knowledge with truth; action with sincerity; and a state with reality. You will not achieve any of this except what has already been apportioned for you; so, do not hasten in your search and do not delay in using the means. God is our Protector in What we are seeking from all of this, and *God is sufficient for us, an excellent Guardian is He.*

#### 4.3) *The Third Observation: Fulfilling God's ﷻ Commands*

Fulfilling God's ﷻ commands rests on three things:

First, complying with God's commands with initiative

and without delay. Some would abandon their work the moment God's command had to be obeyed out of fear that they would work before answering it. In a Hadith Qudsi God ﷻ says: 'My slave, if My command comes to you, then be like fire, or I will put you into the Fire.' For some people, complying with God's commands stems from an overwhelming feeling of awe and majesty, and for other people, it stems from a greatness of fear and humility. Both groups are guided, even if some are more guided than others.

Second, being vigilant in fulfilling God's commands to the utmost of one's ability in accordance with the Sunnah, in both dispensations and discomforts, as both are outside the realm of concealment. As Omar رضي الله عنه said: 'Whoever is mindful of the prayer and guards his prayer will be mindful of everything else. And whoever is negligent of the prayer will be negligent about everything else.' And Al-Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn Arabi said: 'I saw thousands upon thousands, innumerable numbers, who were vigilant about the prayer, but I can only count five who were mindful *in* the prayer.' And indeed it is like that.

Third, guarding the sanctity (*hurmah*) of God by submitting to all of His rulings and being content with what He commands us to do and not to do, and leaving anything that will invalidate any of these rulings, such as making mention of God with magnification but casting doubt about His majestic attributes. This is enough of an allusion to what we are discussing because we are prohibited from making God the object of our oaths. We are also prohibited from cursing the gods of other people so that they do not respond to us with the same. And success is through God.

## 5) CONCLUSION

Know—may God give you and I success and rectify our worldly and otherworldly lives and grant us adherence to the way of truth in our journeys and in our sojourns—that repentance (*tawbah*) is a key and Godfearingness (*taqwah*) is vast; and uprightness (*istiqamah*) is the source of rectification. Furthermore, a servant is never free of either blunders, shortcomings, or lassitude. Therefore, never be heedless about repentance and never turn away from the act of returning to God, and never neglect acts that bring you closer to God. Indeed, every time you stumble, repent and return. Every time that you make a mistake, listen and obey. Any time you display shortcomings or show lack of enthusiasm, do not desist in your efforts.

Let your main concern be to remove anything displeasing from your outward state, then continue building your outward state through counsel. Continue doing this until you find that your fleeing from anything outwardly displeasing is second nature, and that your avoidance of the boundaries of prohibited things is as if a protective net is placed before you. At this point, it is time to turn inward towards your heart's presence and its reality with both reflection and remembrance. Do not hasten the end result until you have completed the beginning; but, likewise, do not begin without looking towards the end result. This is so because the one who seeks the outset at the end loses providential care; and the one who seeks the end at the outset loses providential guidance.

Act in accordance with principles and legal rulings and not in accordance with stories and fantasies. Do not pay attention to the stories of others except as a tonic to strengthen your resolve; and certainly not as a reference



based upon their outward forms or what they seem to be revealing. In all of this, depend upon a clear path you can refer to and a foundation that you can depend on in all of your states. The best of these is the path of Ibn Ata'allah given that in it is a clear direction to God. Do not listen to the words of other people unless it is in accordance with your own path, but submit to their implications if you desire realization.

Avoid all forms of vain speech to the utmost of your ability, and cast aside anything whose benefit you cannot discern immediately. Beware of being too hard on your soul before you have mastered it; but also beware of being too lax with it in anything that concerns sacred rulings. This is so because the soul is constantly fleeing from moderation in everything and it inclines towards extremism in matters of both deviance and guidance.

Seek out a companion to help you in your affairs and take his counsel concerning matters of both your inward and outward states. If you do indeed take on his companionship, then treat him in a manner commensurate with his state, and give him of yourself based on his deficiencies and perfections, because the perfected friend is no longer to be found. Indeed, in these times even a suitable companion who is agreeable rarely lasts. Beware of the majority of people in matters that concern your religious and worldly affairs except one with a sound relationship with his Lord based on knowledge free of caprice or love of leadership, and a sound intellect free of the pitfalls of politics.

Do not be heedless regarding the machinations of others or their hidden states; and consider these two from both their origin and their action. A person of character and family distinction rarely affects you with other than good;

and a person of lowly origins will disregard you when times become difficult.

Be vigilant of the dominant qualities of a given people in any given land, and do not be heedless of the divine wisdom in creation; and notice gatheredness in separation. I have clarified some of this in *Al-Qawa'ed*, so, look there.

Organize your time in an appropriate manner, employing gentleness and tolerance, and beware of harshness or laxity, as indulging in permissible matters attracts hearts backwards, and the resolute man becomes like the child of his offspring.

Work for this world as if you will live forever but work for the Next World as if you will die tomorrow. So, do not neglect the externals of your worldly needs while also caring for your final ends and your final resting place.

Beware of positions of leadership, but should you be tried with such matters, know your own limitations. Be absolutely sincere with God with the sincerity of one who knows Who is placing demands on him. And surrender completely to His decree with the submission of one who knows he can never overcome Him. Have a firm foundation for all your affairs and you will be safe from their pitfalls. Organize your devotional practices and you will find blessing in your time. Never be fanatical about anything, whether it is true or false, and your heart will remain sound. Never claim what you are entitled to, not to mention what you are not entitled to, and you will be safe from tricks and treachery. This is because anyone who claims a rank above his own will have it stripped from him, while anyone who claims a station less than his own will be elevated beyond what he deserves. Never give your companion anything of your state other than what his own state warrants. This is

because if you lower your state, you will be shown contempt; and if you raise his state up to your own, you will be abandoned.

Never demand a right from anyone whether the person is someone close or a stranger, because the stranger owes you nothing; and someone close is too precious to blame. Never assume that anyone in the world can really understand your circumstances other than from the perspective of his own circumstances, because everyone only sees things in accordance with their own frames of reference and their own personal path. However, when aims and aspirations are similar, people tend to work together towards a common goal. Never belittle talk that involves absent people even if there is no harm in it, for there is always the possibility of harm entering into it. Guard your secrets, even if you feel safe with someone, because there is no safer place for your secrets than your own heart.

Never leave an atom's weight of your regular devotional practice and never be lenient with yourself in either lax times or in times of high resolve. Indeed, should you miss some of your practices in a given time, redress it at another time. If you are not able to do it, occupy yourself with something else that is similar.

Never obey your ego (*nafs*) even for a moment, nor believe any of its claims no matter what it says. Be vigilant about your resolve in all your efforts to the utmost of your ability; and should you resolve to do something, do it immediately before your resolve wanes. Examine your soul (*nafs*) constantly in matters that you are obliged to do, and leave anything you are in no need of doing, even if it is something recommended. That means not involving yourself in anything other than something absolutely necessary

or a real discernible need. Treat others as you would want to be treated and fulfill what is due.

All of this is epitomized in the words of the one who said:

If you desire to live such that your religion is safe  
And your portion is full and your honour is sound  
Guard your tongue and never mention others' faults  
Remembering you yourself have faults and others  
have tongues  
Watch your eye should it ever reveal to you the fault  
of others  
And say to it: Oh my eye! Others have eyes, too  
Live treating others well and avoid aggression  
And should others aggress, leave them, but in  
the best way

The words of the Messenger of God ﷺ are the source of these lines, for he ﷺ said: 'Be conscious of God wherever you are, do good deeds after doing bad ones, the former will wipe out the latter, and behave with the most excellent of character towards people<sup>32</sup>.' And the Messenger of God ﷺ said: 'Every child of Adam makes mistakes; and the best of those who make mistakes are those who repent<sup>33</sup>.' And he ﷺ also said: 'The Holy Spirit inspired my heart's core: no soul will die until it fulfills its decreed portion of this world and its appointed time. So, be conscious of God, and make your request beautifully<sup>34</sup>.'

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<sup>32</sup> Narrated by Tirmidhi (1910) and he declared it *sahih*, Ahmad (20392), and Al-Hakem (165) and he declared it *sahih*, from the Hadith of Sayyidna Abu Dharr رضي الله عنه.

<sup>33</sup> Narrated by Tirmidhi (2423), Ibn Majah (2441), Ahmad (12576), and Al-Hakem (7752) and he declared it *sahih*, from the Hadith of Sayyidna Anas رضي الله عنه.

<sup>34</sup> Narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah, Abdel-Razzaq (20100), and Al-Hakem (2095).

In summation, repentance (*tawbah*), Godfearingness (*taqwah*), and uprightness (*istiqamah*) are the foundations of all good things. The truth is manifest, and its details are weighty and significant; and the affair belongs to God; success is in His hand. And Peace.

### III

## THE THIRD STATION ON THE PATH OF OPENING AND EMPOWERMENT: REALIZATION, KNOWLEDGE, AND RISING IN THE STATIONS OF EXCELLENCE

The third station (*mawqif*) is the station of realization, knowledge (*'irfan*), and rising in the stations of excellence (*ihsan*); and the axis upon which these turn are three stations (*maqamat*) that are followed by three suppletory matters.

**The First Introduction:** on the perfection of embodying noble character traits (*al-takhalluq*) and the axis upon which these turn are three:

*First*, is to realize Godfearingness (*taqwah*) through scrupulousness (*wara'*) until nothing remains in one's intellect of uncertainty, nor in one's knowledge of doubt, nor anything remiss in his actions. This cannot be arrived at except through God; and the key to it is seeking God sincerely, and doing one's best, given his state. Because God helps a servant commensurate with his intention; and he will give him openings commensurate with his aspiration. These things manifest through his state and deeds; so, whoever exercises scrupulousness in distancing himself from what he is able to do, God will protect him from what he is unable to endure. Stories and details about this are manifold, and much

of the aims and purposes of the speech of the people of this science are based on this foundation.

*Second*, is the perfection of uprightness (*istiqamah*) by realizing adherence to scrupulousness and abandoning what is doubtful in both devotional practices and habitual matters, as long as it is not an obligation. So, one always takes the most cautious opinion in what he does and exercises inner sight; because the one who draws knowledge of his state from the words of scholars will be given an opening based on that. And the one who draws knowledge of his state from the texts of Sacred Law will have an opening based on them. As for the one who uses both, he is someone who has been given inner sight, and he has a more perfect light and is in a more complete state. And God knows best.

*Third*, is to negate preoccupations and disturbances through abandoning appetites and habits precisely because they are appetites and habits—and not because of anything inherent in them. One should do this until there is no enticement to other than the truth and reality, and one constrains his soul even if he gives it free reign outwardly. The foundation of this is that he never enters into an affair except with a sound intention that is in accordance with an incentive that is true until nothing preoccupies him.

**The Second Introduction:** is on the ground of ornamentation (*al-tahalli*) and it revolves around three matters:

*First*, weakening the psychic power of the soul (*al-quwa al-nafsaniyyah*) that prevents its perfection in terms of meaning and the sensory. This is done through hunger, staying up at night, and practicing silence and retreat in a balanced way and in a state of distance (*'uzlah*). Thus, he is commanded not to attend public gatherings for spiritual

singing (*al-sama‘*) during this time. He should also leave listening to news, and speaking to others, in addition to all his habitual affairs except what is an obligation; in order for his reality to be completely gathered for that which he desires.

*Second*, strengthening the incentives to continually make remembrance of God (*dhikr*). The remembrance should be varied in the beginning, singular in the middle period, and then gathered in the end. This is because the first is purification, the second is bringing about the sought after stations, and the third is illumination. If you want to maintain this, then commit to what will necessitate it. Thus, the beginner should do this continuously in order to become accustomed to it. And God knows best.

*Third*, taking on the path of reality through contemplation (*fikr*). Contemplation other than in its right place, only exhausts one with egoistic chatter (*hadith al-nafs*) and obsessive thinking (*waswaas*) which might cause him to be veiled from these realities permanently; so, understand.

**The Third Introduction:** the manifestation of divine meanings (*tajalliyat*): There are three areas regarding this.

*First*, is the emergence of privation and impoverishment, whether because this is in reality one's state, or due to necessity. This is done through engendering one's experience of his own human deficiency and impoverishment before God, and not from one's own enthusiasm and obedience. The purpose of action is to occupy the soul with the truth, and not to look upon the secrets of the Truth. Because what God gives is a gift, even though the grounds for this gift is following the Sunnah.

*Second*, understanding the existence of the absolute in



the essence of limitation and clinging to the truth in accordance with the necessities of the belief in one God (*al-tawhid*). This way one is not veiled from the inward quality by the outward manifestations of action, and does not invalidate the rules of action in what he knows through his own efforts or what is given to him through God. Indeed, he should seek meanings while clinging to the forms through which those meanings come. Anything that he cannot comprehend at the beginning of his path, he should not accept at the end of his path. So, he should not dismiss it before he has taken it back to one of its possible meanings, nor should he confirm it without sound proofs.

*Third*, giving every reality its ruling without entering into its various aspects. Otherwise one will fall into illusion (*wahm*) in what he imagines or hopes. This ground is faulty, and its place is one of constriction and hopelessness, except for those whom God grants intimacy; and how few are they.

Due to the difficult nature and constriction of this matter, three things are needed, and these are the suppletory matters that we mentioned earlier:

*First*, a sheikh is needed who will guide one to grow on this path through his secret (*sirrihi*) and his action (*sayrihi*). The second does not exist while the first does exist. Each one of them exists without the other in these times; so, take each one as he is, and it is difficult except for whom God makes it easy.

*Second*, a brother who has a state with God and who helps one through his state (*halibi*) and through his action (*'amalibi*), and he is impossible to find. If he is found, he has already crumbled; this is what we have discovered. We have never seen anyone perfected from every aspect. *'Surely*

*we belong to God, and to Him we will return*'. But one who is near to that will raise you up to other than him. So, pay attention.

*Third*, one should continue to strive for a state of completedness (*kamal*) and fear losing the state that he has attained. He should also redress his actions when he is remiss.

My opinion concerning people such as us is that we should be concerned with rectifying the first two stations (*mawqifayn*); and should be concerned about the third station only sometimes. This is in order to expose oneself to the fragrances of God's mercy, especially during meritorious times, such as the last days of Ramadan, and the ten days of *Dhu'l Hijjah*, and other such times, because our Lawgiver gave them great regard. We should also overlook, in all these matters, blame and reproach; and we ask God for help in this affair. Then we should try to single out our aspirations in our aims and purposes, and also single out the reality in what is being sought. We should also keep the Next World (*akhirah*) at the forefront of our minds if we become absentminded. We should not listen to those who thunder and roar, nor to those who jump up and sit down, because the people of this age call to the truth through difficulty, and others move towards the truth like cripples. They have no knowledge about what is prohibited that should prevent them from doing it; nor do they have any scrupulousness about laxities that should repel them. And the Imam of Jurisprudence said to those who saw him in dreams after his death: 'The only thing that benefitted us was the few prostrations we performed in the watches of the night on the coast of Alexandria.' And the Imam of *tasawwuf*, Al-Junaid رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, said the same despite all his learning and worship.

It is true that there is no perfection without knowledge, and there is no fortress of knowledge without action, so, do not listen to anyone who pulls you away from either of them, nor to anyone who gives preponderance to one over the other. And by God tell me: If knowledge is a function of time, when will you stand before God in a state of sincerity and truth? And if you make preoccupation the habit of your time, when will you ever achieve realization in your actions?

*Allahumma*, You know that I only wrote this book in order to benefit my soul and to benefit my brothers and those who, like me, are on this path; so, benefit us by it; a benefit like the benefit of one who has Your support and is helped by Your assistance; one who did not neglect what was demanded of him and was not heedless about his faults. Benefit through him all who see him, and spread his light in the reality of everyone who follows his example. Let his light reach my heart and their hearts in complete wellbeing in state and in end. For indeed You are the Guardian and the One Who is able do that, *Ya Mawlai! Ya Mawlai! Ya Mawlai! Ya Allah*, You are our Sufficiency and the best disposer of affairs. All praise is to God and He is enough for us and may peace be upon the servants whom He chose.

The manuscript was completed on 24th Shawwal, 883 by the author—the *faqir* to his Lord, Ahmad bin Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Issa of the Pyrenees from Fez, known as Zarrouq, may God rectify him. May God let us know good through him and after him in Bijayah, may God keep it safe. And Praise be to God Lord of the Worlds and may peace and blessings be upon our Master Muhammad and his kinfolk and Companions.

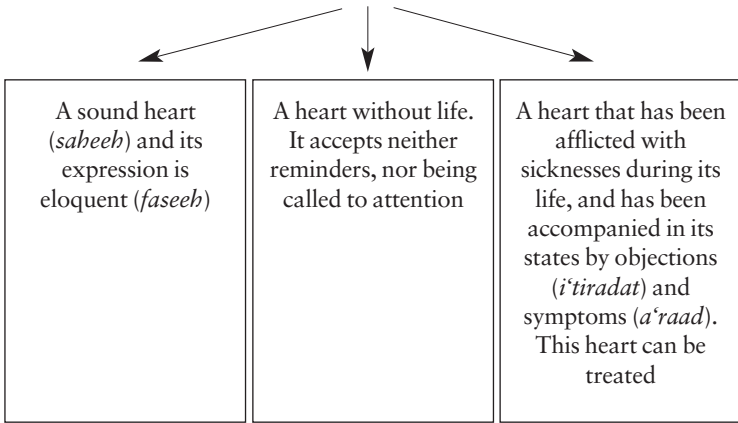


# *Appendix*

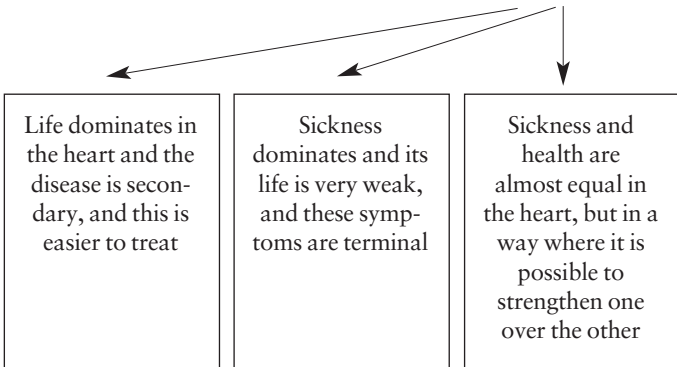
## CHART OF DELINEATIONS AND CAUSES AND EFFECTS



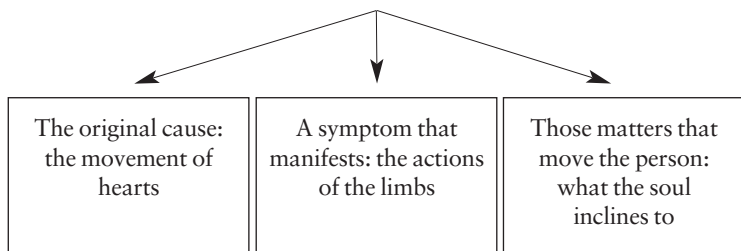
### 3 TYPES OF HEARTS



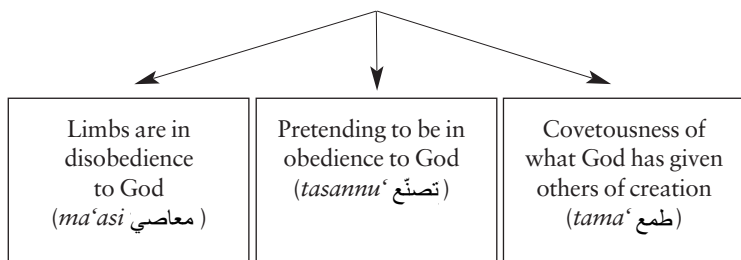
### 3 types of this heart



### 3 WAYS IN WHICH THE PRESENCE OF LIFE IN THE HEART IS MANIFEST OR HIDDEN

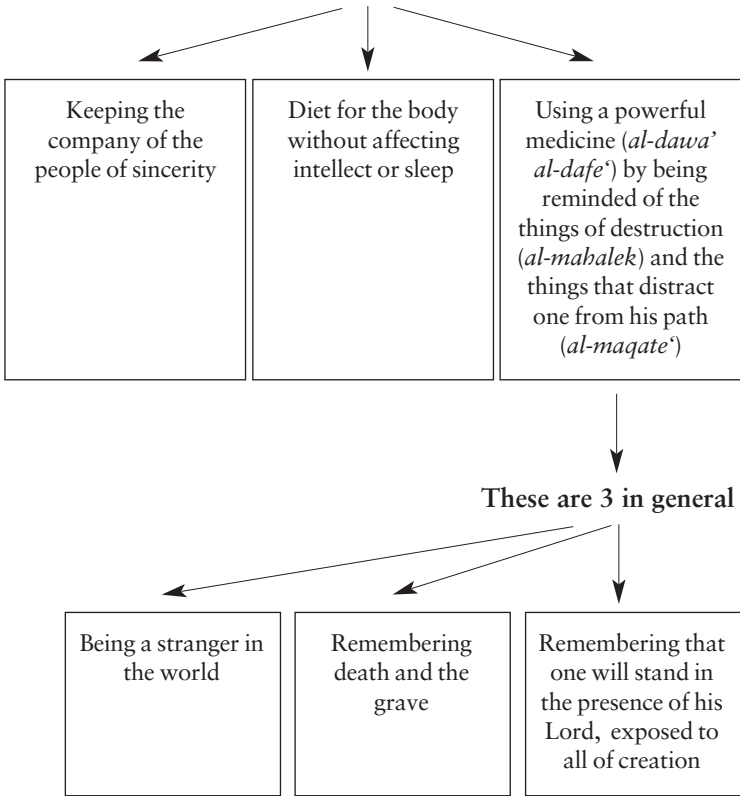


### REASONS FOR THE BLINDNESS OF INNER SIGHT

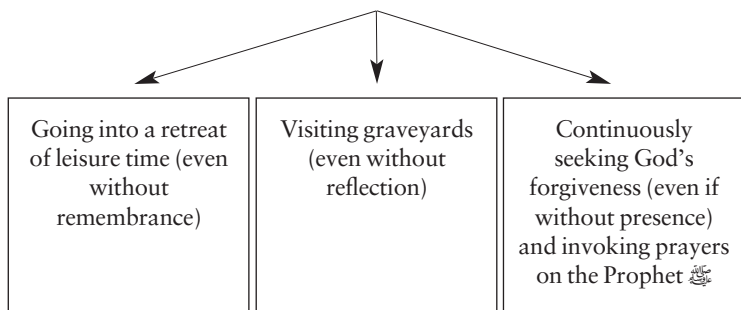




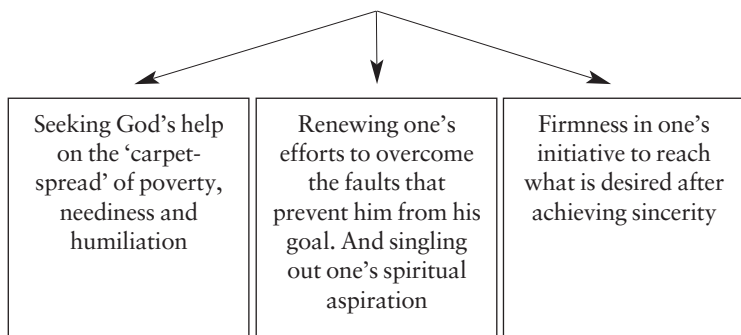
# TREATING THE HEART THAT TURNS FROM ITS LORD BUT STILL HAS LIFE



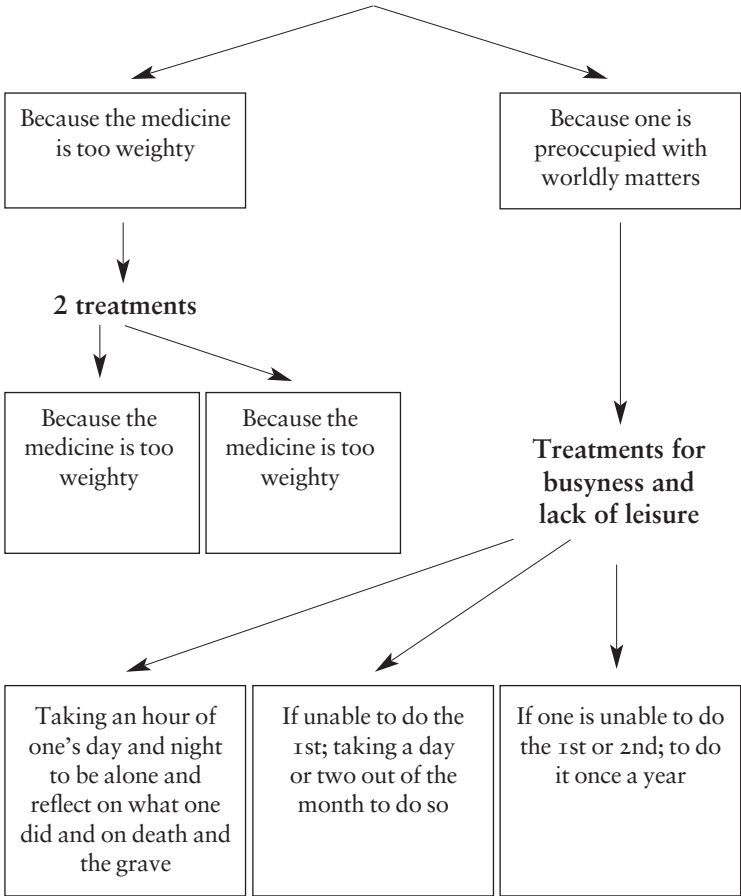
## THE MEANS THAT BRING ABOUT INNER SIGHT



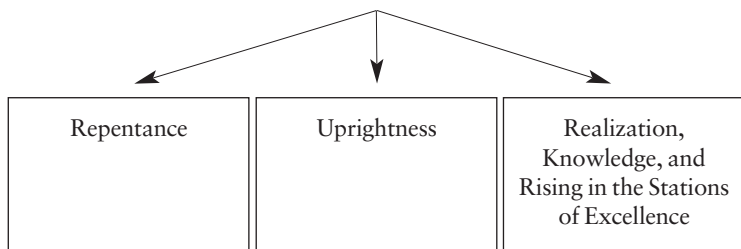
## THE WELLSPRING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND BLESSINGS



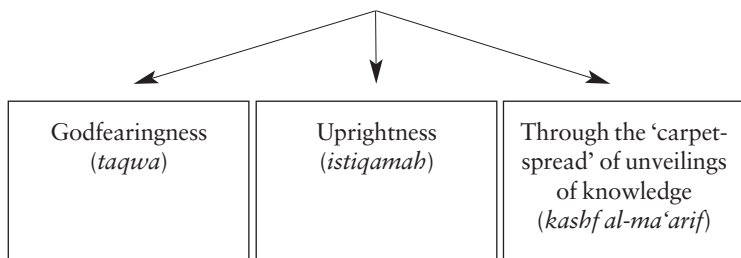
## 2 REASONS WHY THE SOUL IS AVERSE TO MEDICINE



THE STATIONS ON THE PATH OF OPENING  
AND EMPOWERMENT



REALIZING RESOLVE IN ACTIONS AND  
UNDERTAKING THE MEANS BY WHICH  
THE GOAL IS REACHED



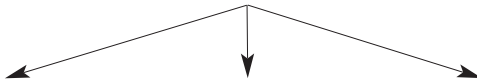
# THE STATION OF REPENTANCE



Realizing repentance  
through realization  
(*tabqiq al-tawbah bil-tabqiq*)



## 3 Poles engender steadfastness in this resolve



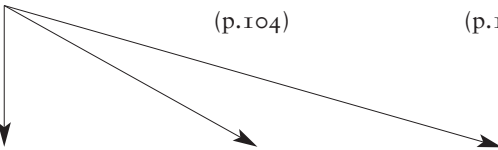
Realization of  
intention (*tabqiq al-  
niyyah*) and resolving  
never to return to  
wrong action

Redressing  
grievances  
(*radd al-mazalem*)

Godfearingness  
or avoiding  
prohibitions

(p.104)

(p.109)

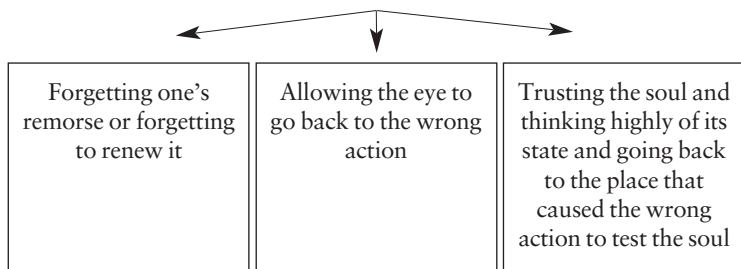


Fleeing from the  
place and time of  
wrong action

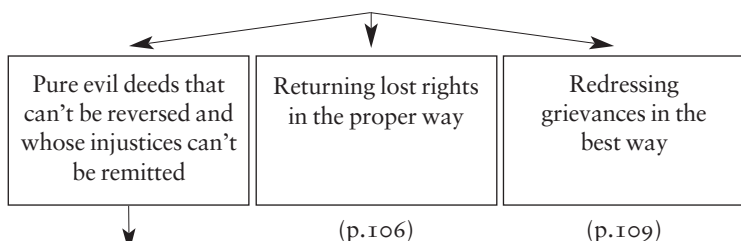
Vigilance against  
remnants of  
inclination to wrong  
action

Preoccupying the  
soul from wrong  
action and renewing  
remorse

## THE REASONS THAT ONE FALLS BACK INTO WRONG ACTION

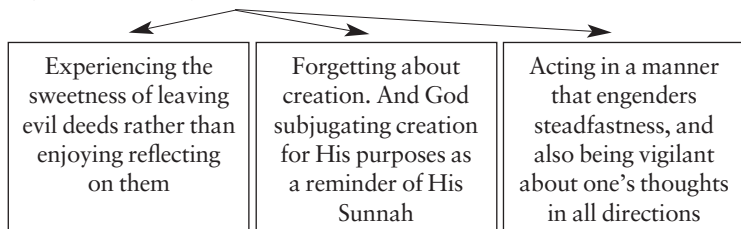


## THE SECOND POLE OF THE STATION OF REPENTANCE: REDRESSING GRIEVANCES PEOPLE'S STATIONS REGARDING GRIEVANCES



Pure evil deeds (*al-sayyi'at al-mujarradah*) as a result of things that one has lost and also wrongs committed

### Signs of sincerity in remorse from them



## SIGNS OF REMNANTS OF THE EVIL DEED IN THE SOUL



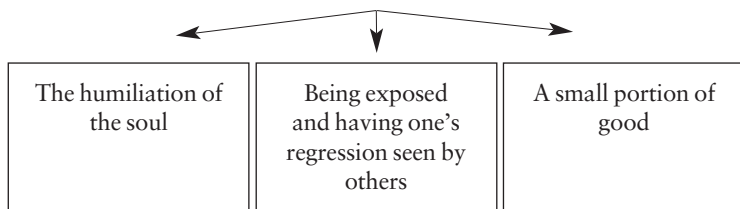
|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Gaining intimate joy from remembering it, even if it is for the sake of feeling guilt and revulsion</p> | <p>Having an uncomfortable state with the stations of the soul as a way of procrastinating, even if it is just allowing a passing thought about a wrong to reoccur</p> | <p>Seeking out those who have the same tribulation, even if it is to feel compassion towards them; and dwelling on the matter</p> |
|--|--|---|

## THE INHERITANCE OF LEAVING WRONGS

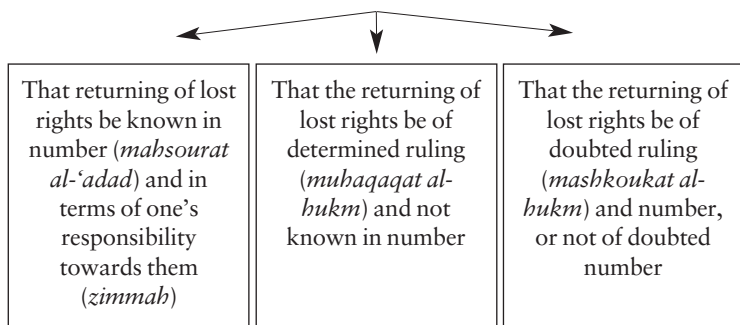


|   |                                       |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <p>Realizing (<i>tahqiq</i>) the will; and this is the 'carpet-spread' of mercy and is a benefit from God</p> | <p>The delight of devotion to God</p> | <p>The existence of salvation that is accompanied by a good life</p> |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|

## THE INHERITANCE OF COMMITTING A SIN AND PERSISTING IN IT



## THE SECOND MILESTONE IN PEOPLE'S STATIONS REGARDING GRIEVANCES: RETURNING LOST RIGHTS IN THE PROPER WAY

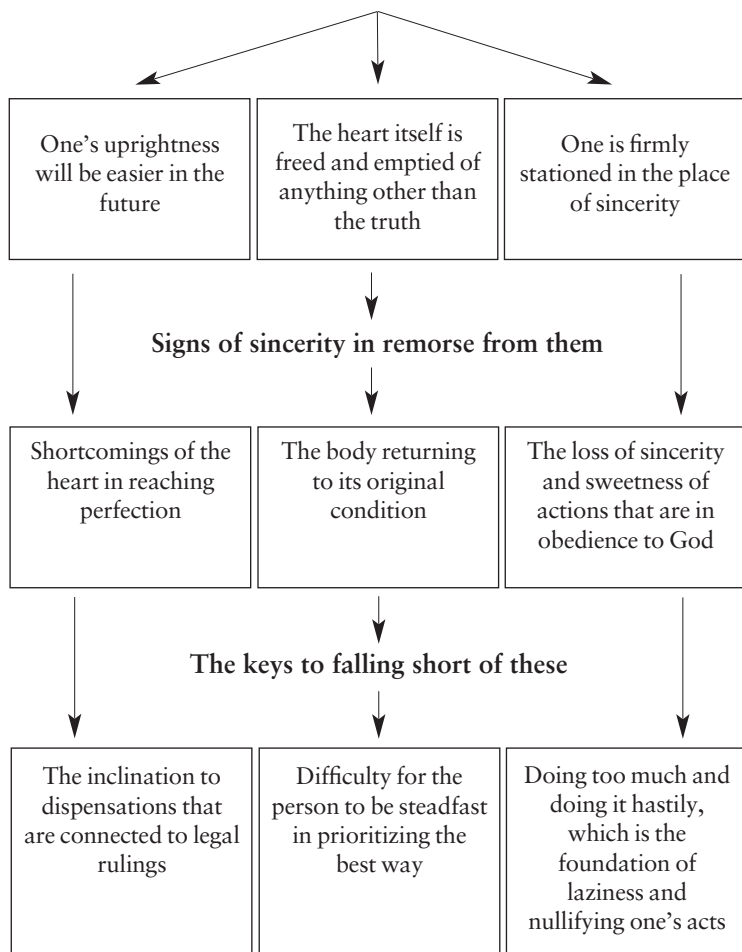




## 7 WARNINGS

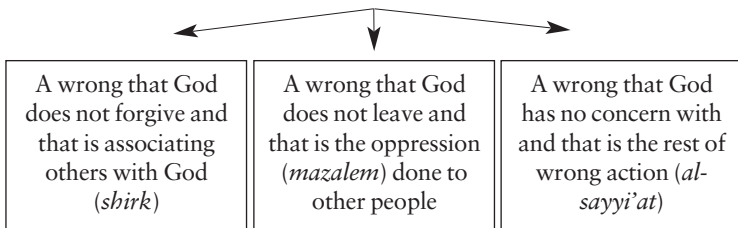
|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p>One shouldn't be misled into doing what is owed from many months in one day; nor should one do what is frivolous and blameworthy. One should look at the least amount that seems moderate at one's level, then undertake it without shortcoming while considering the words of the scholars on these matters</p> | <p>Regarding responsibilities that have been realized, or one thinks he has realized, or doubts he has realized due to a sign; there is no escaping them until he fulfills them by obligation in the first two and out Godfearingness in the last one. And whoever puts before him the extreme of what he wants, will rarely reach what he desires</p> | <p>The rights related to money are similar to the rights related to the body; they are even greater. The obligation of <i>zakat</i> and also expiation is binding. Being vigilant about these is more important than being vigilant about rights related to the body. This is because the soul by its nature finds it easy to do the first and is lazy about the second</p> |
| <p>God does not accept supererogatory devotions (<i>nawafil</i>) if there are obligatory acts that have not been fulfilled</p>  | <p>It is obligatory to know the number of rights owed that should be redressed because the soul has a natural inclination to things that come to an end. Doing it in only one way leads to boredom, thus, when trying to fulfil something, one should vary it, from a small number to an average number to a higher number</p>                         | <p>A weak incentive (<i>ba'ith</i>) engenders laziness in rising up and will result in falling short of steadfastness. If the matter is between giving up what one needs to fulfil or a supererogatory act, one must always leave the supererogatory act</p>  |
| <p>The soul, sensing its weakness, can sometimes be bewildered by how many rights are upon it, and thus will seek out laziness instead of performing its obligation</p>   |  |   |

## THE INHERITANCE OF WORK AS REQUIRED TO RECOVER LOST RIGHTS

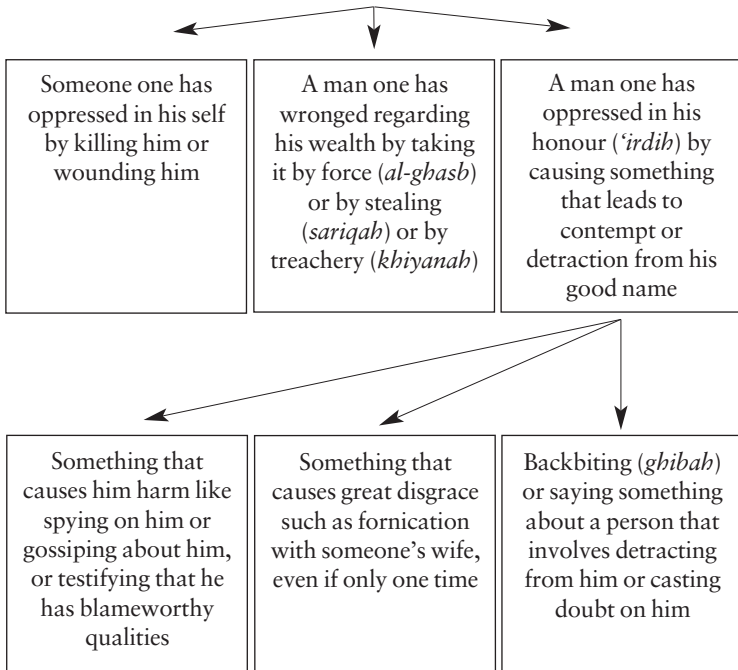


## THE THIRD MILESTONE IN PEOPLE'S STATIONS REGARDING GRIEVANCES: REDRESSING GRIEVANCES IN THE BEST WAY

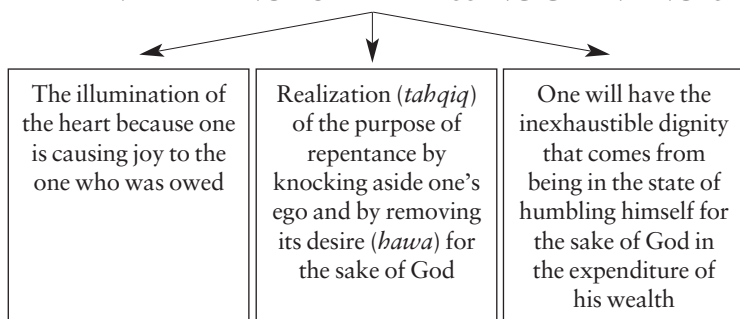
There are three types of wrongs (*zunoub*)



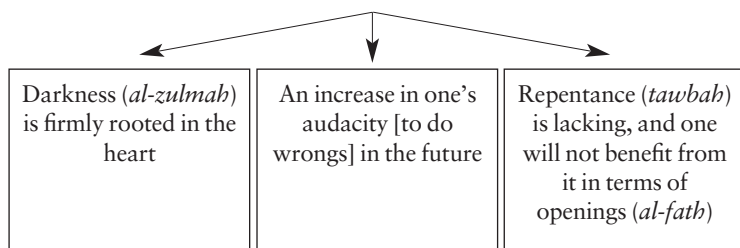
People are three in relation to your wrongs against them



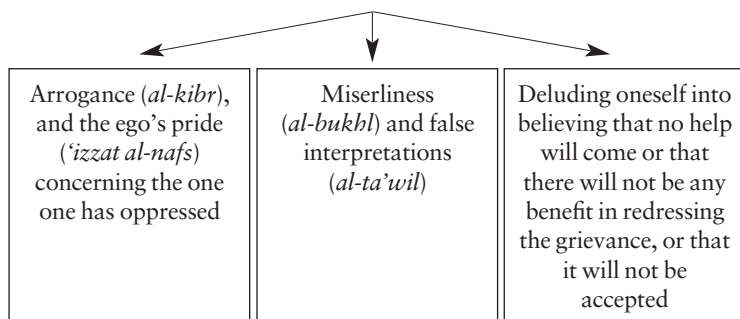
## THE INHERITANCE OF REDRESSING GRIEVANCES



## THE INHERITANCE OF NOT REDRESSING GRIEVANCES



## THE REASONS FOR NOT REDRESSING GRIEVANCES



## THE INCENTIVES FOR TAKING ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF REDRESSING GRIEVANCES



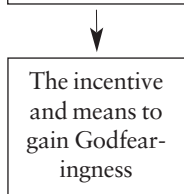
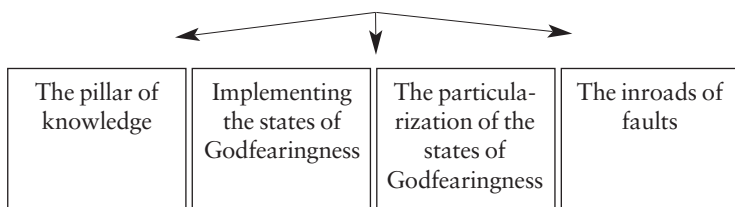
Contempt for the ego (*nafs*) and assigning it to its proper place

Trust that God will accept it and rectify any infringements because of that state

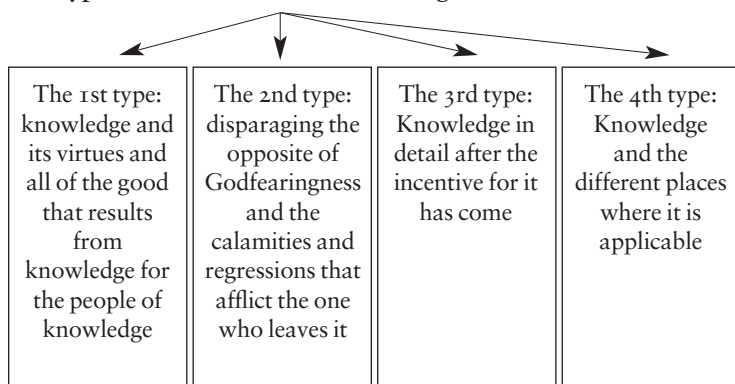
One's spiritual aspiration is energized as a result of his certainty about the final abode, and from what he knows regarding what happens to the one who has oppressed his brother

# THE THIRD POLE OF THE STATION OF REPENTANCE: GODFEARINGNESS OR AVOIDING PROHIBITIONS

## THE PILLARS OF GODFEARINGNESS



### The types of incentives for Godfearingness



↓  
*(see opposite chart of page 113)*

↓  
*(see opposite chart of page 113)*

↓  
*(see page 114)*

[...]

**The 2nd type: The matrixes from which the calamities and regressions that afflict the one who leaves Godfearingness emerge**

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Humiliation that occurs immediately [in this world]            | Humiliation that occurs later [in the Next World]  | Being branded with the brand of corruption | The existence of punishment if it does not occur in the Next World | The possibility of being exposed to a bad end ( <i>su' al-khatimah</i> ) |
| Being exposed to the wrath of God, which will destroy a person | Losing the possibility of the virtue of having openings ( <i>fath</i> ) regarding the sciences | Missing the most complete goal             | Actions will generally not be accepted                             | Being held back from doing good works                                    |

[...]

**The 3rd type: Knowledge in detail after the incentive for it has come**

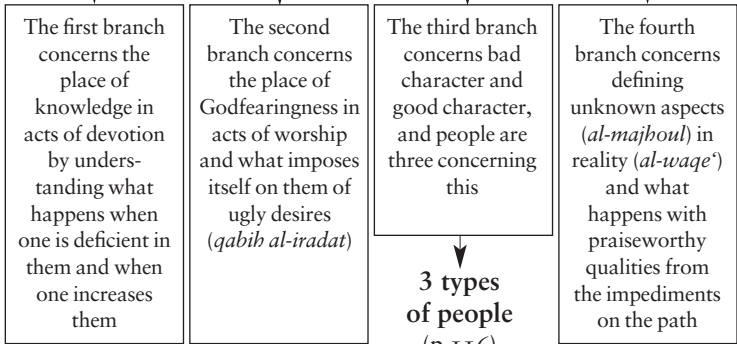
**3 foundations that are the keys to all good and to arrival**

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| The firm rooting of reality in the knowledges with thought that is firmly rooted in the soul | Seeing one's wrong actions at the time one is doing them and considering the loss of benefits depending on one's spiritual aspiration, and becoming aware of self-purification ( <i>tazkiyah</i> ) and what it does in seeking perfection | Being aware of what one is getting and its benefit, and not seeking perfection in the beginning but rather accepting his state |
|--|---|--|

[...]

The 4th type: Knowledge and the different places  
where it is applicable

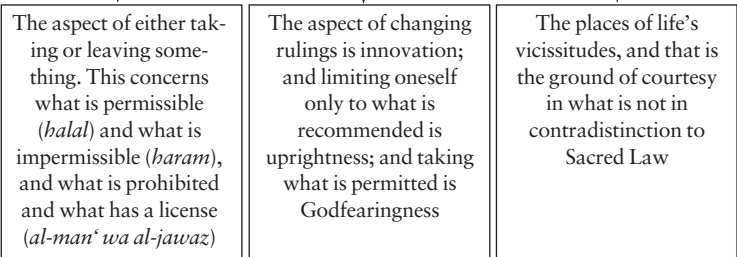
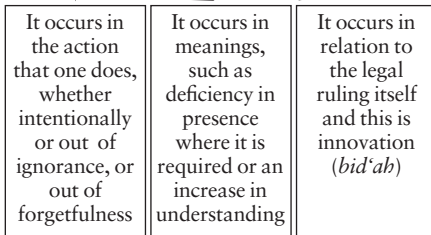
4 branches



3 aspects

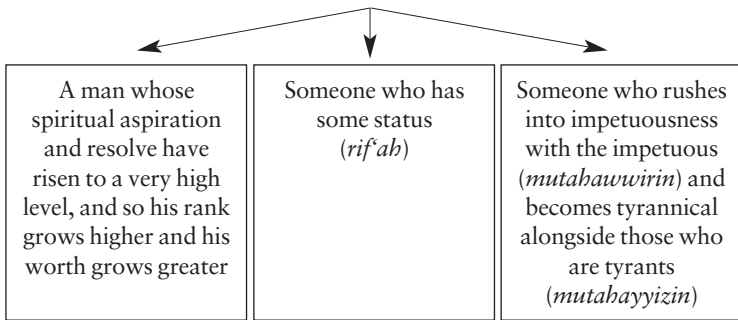
3 aspects

3 axes  
(p.118)





**THE THIRD BRANCH OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE  
DIFFERENT PLACES WHERE IT IS APPLICABLE:  
BAD CHARACTER AND GOOD CHARACTER:  
3 TYPES OF PEOPLE**



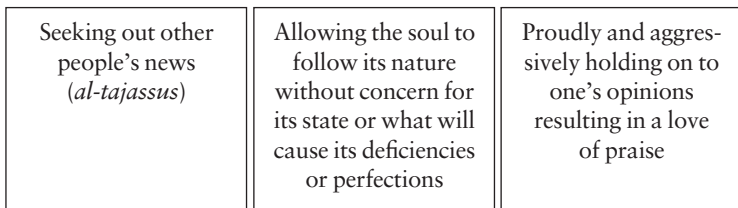
**3 things will accost him**

- Covetousness  
*(al-tama')*
- Miserliness  
*(al-bukhl)*
- Arrogance  
*(al-kibr)*

**Stems from 3 things**

- Lack of concern about one's state because he depends on his rank
- Making claims because one is aware of his distinction from others
- Being at peace with one's acts of disobedience as a way of justifying his own desires

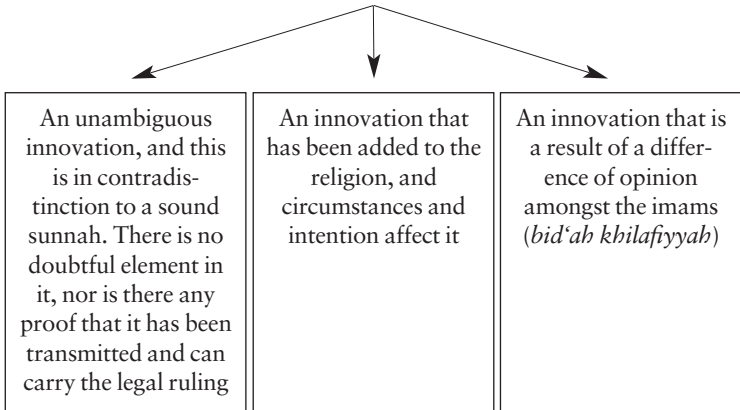
**The foundations of his pitfalls**



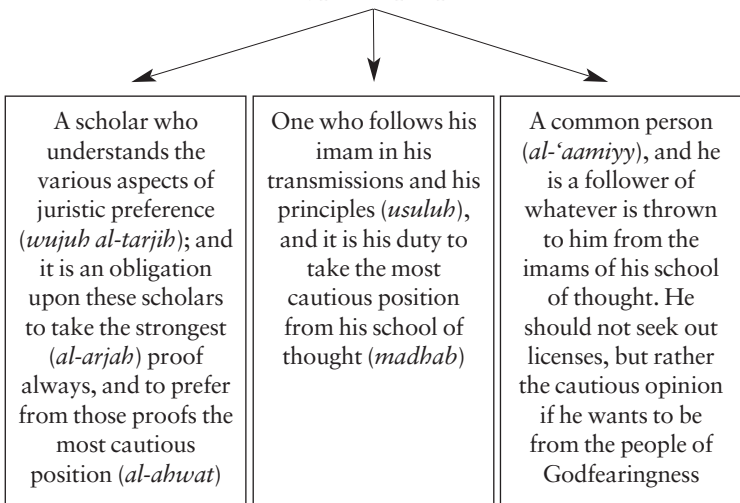
**causes**

- Overwhelming stupidity
- Craving affection
- A heart absent from reality

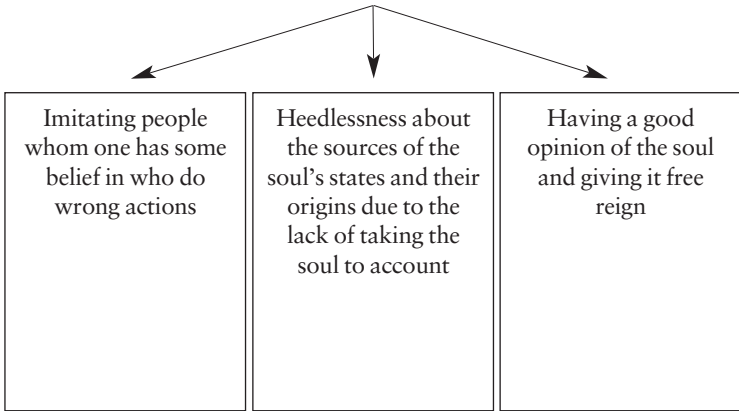
## Classes of Innovation



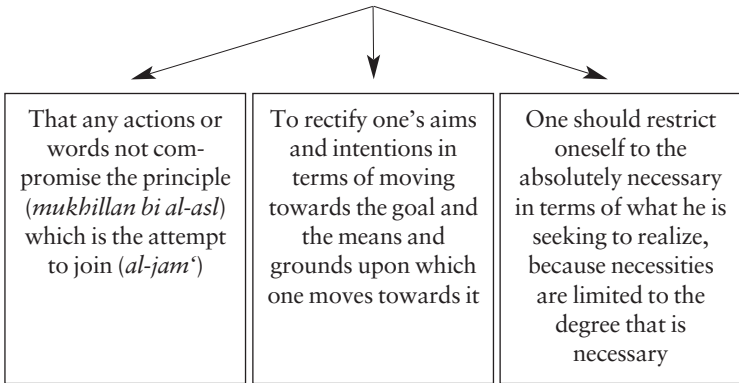
## 3 types of people



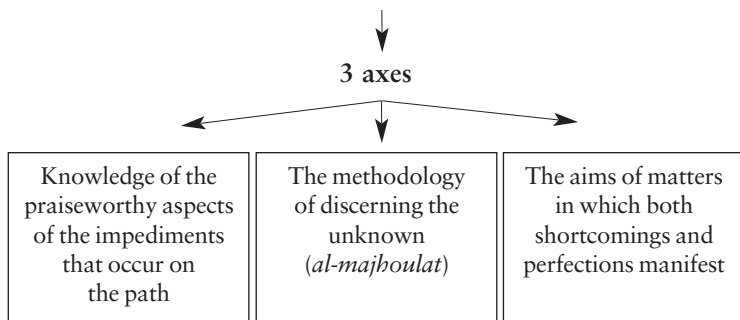
## THE ROOTS OF ALL WRONG ACTIONS



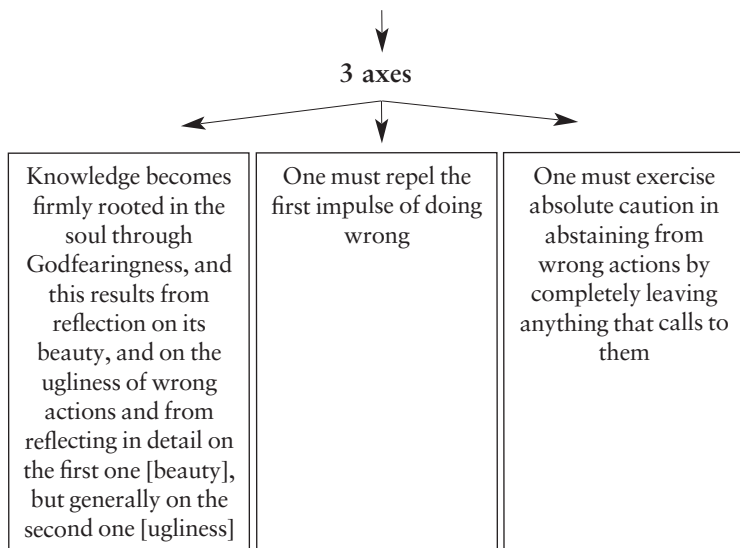
## THE SUFI SADAHS CONDITIONS IN THEIR METHODOLOGY IN BELIEFS, RULINGS, AND SPIRITUAL COURTESY



THE FOURTH BRANCH OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE DIFFERENT PLACES WHERE IT IS APPLICABLE: DEFINING UNKNOWN ASPECTS IN REALITY AND WHAT HAPPENS WITH PRAISEWORTHY QUALITIES FROM THE IMPEDIMENTS ON THE PATH

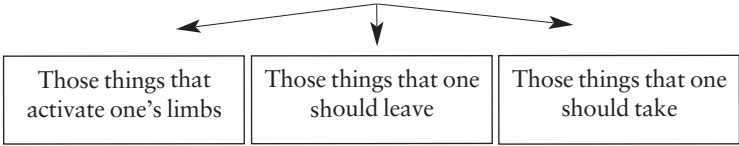


THE SECOND PILLAR OF GODFEARINGNESS: IMPLEMENTING THE STATES OF GODFEARINGNESS

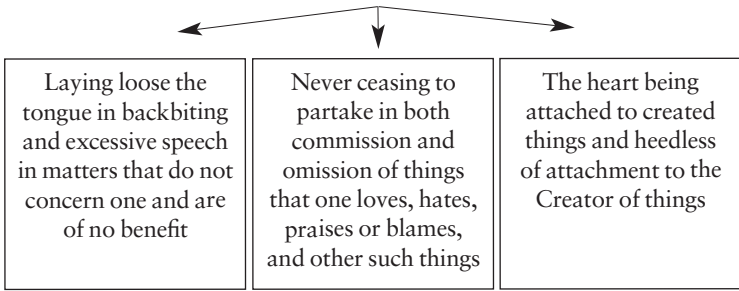


**THE THIRD PILLAR OF GODFEARINGNESS:  
THE PARTICULARIZATION OF THE STATES  
OF GODFEARINGNESS**

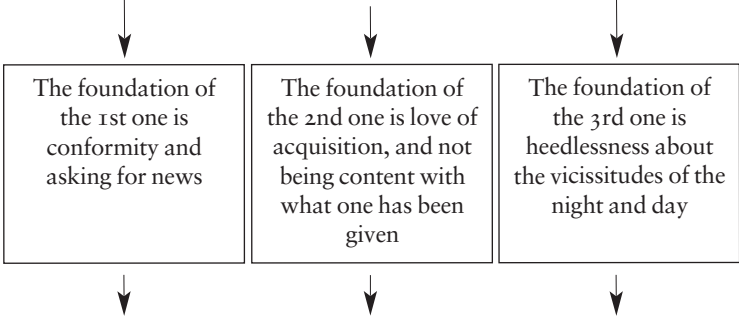
The frame of reference for the particularization of the states  
of Godfearingness



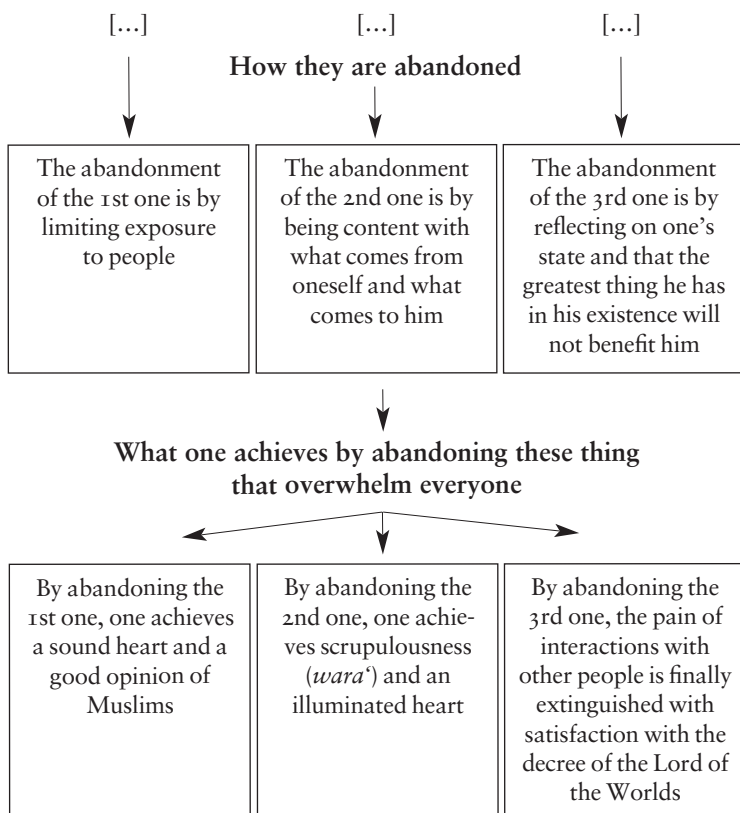
**3 things that overwhelm everyone**



**Their foundations**



*(chart continues on page 120)*



## THE FOURTH PILLAR OF GODFEARINGNESS: THE INROADS OF FAULTS



|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>That one's concupiscent appetite (<i>al-shahwah</i>) overpowers him, and nothing can repel that except struggling against the self (<i>mujahaddah</i>)</p> | <p>That one's caprice (<i>al-hawa</i>) overpowers him, and nothing can repel that except acting with cautiousness and closing the door of justification</p> | <p>That heedlessness (<i>al-ghaflah</i>) overpowers one, and his response to that should be getting to work and mindfully awakening to the range of one's states</p> |
|---|---|--|

## THE 4 ASPECTS OF IDENTIFYING THE UNKNOWN THINGS (AL-MAJHOULAT) IN THE SOUL

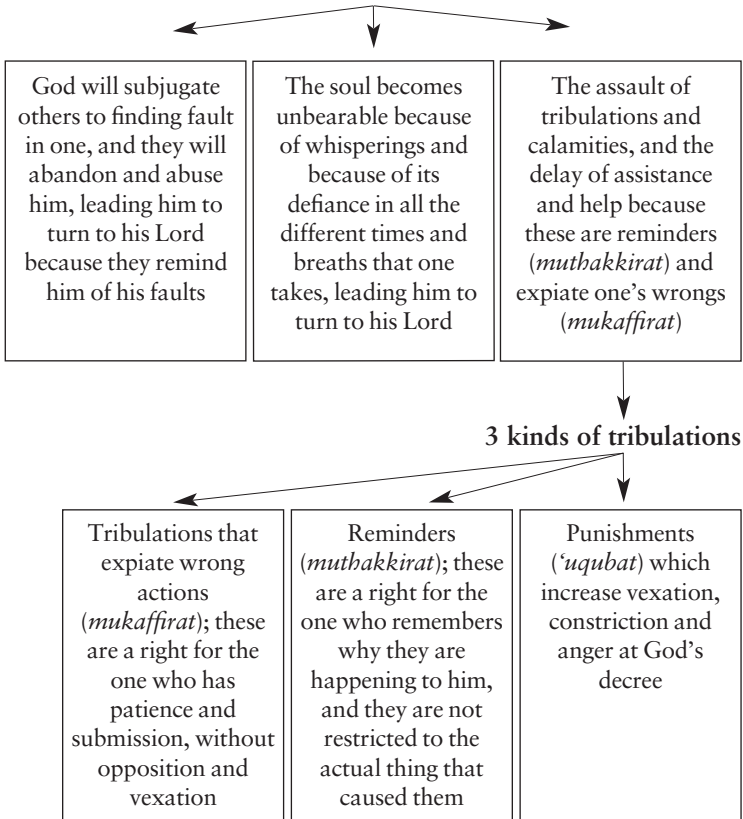


|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>One must have penetrating inner sight, a present heart, and complete vigilance. It is done through abandoning contentment with the soul completely</p> | <p>One must take a sheikh of sound action and sound knowledge to advise him</p> | <p>One must take a righteous brother who also has inner sight and knows what should be overlooked, but is also able to motivate one</p> | <p>One must return to the Interpreter of the Truth (<i>Tarjuman Al-Haqq</i>) in reality, and that is what is on the tongues of people, because the tongues of people are the pens of truth, and their states interpret what is true or close to the truth</p> |
|---|---|---|---|



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Somebody who has a state (<i>hal</i>) with God and has aspiration (<i>himmah</i>), but does not have knowledge (<i>'ilm</i>) or action (<i>'amal</i>)</p> | <p>Somebody who has knowledge and action, but does not have aspiration</p> |
|--|--|

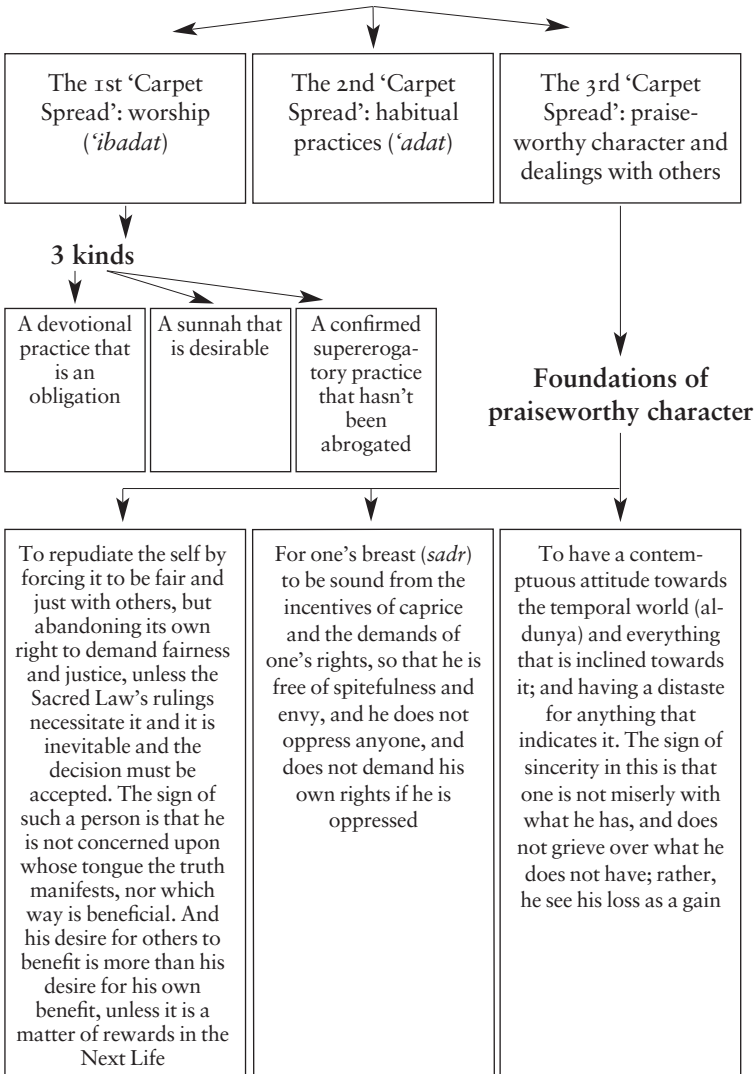
## THE WAY (SUNNAH) OF GOD FOR EVERY BEGINNER IN REPENTANCE



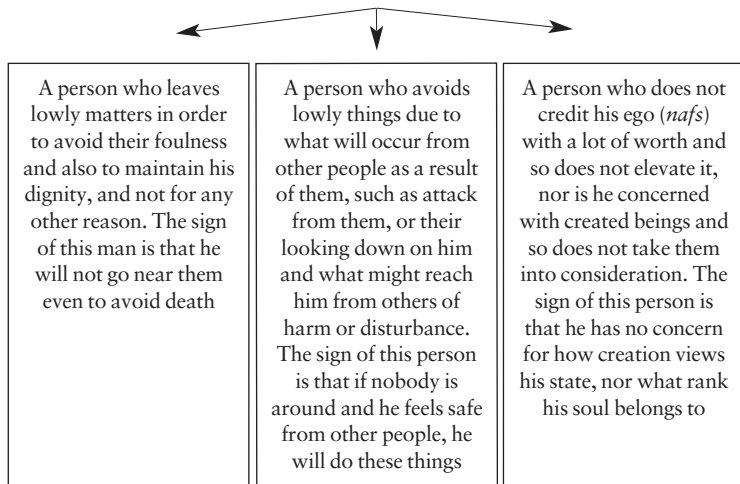


# THE SECOND STATION ON THE PATH OF OPENING AND EMPOWERMENT: UPRIGHTNESS

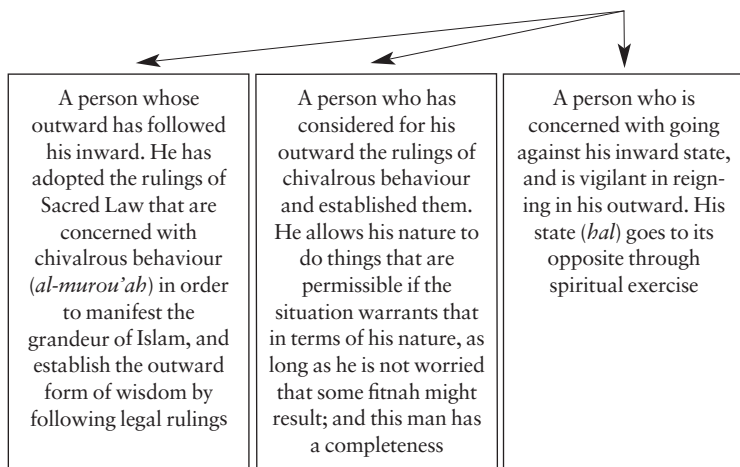
## 3 ‘Carpet Spreads’ to achieve uprightness



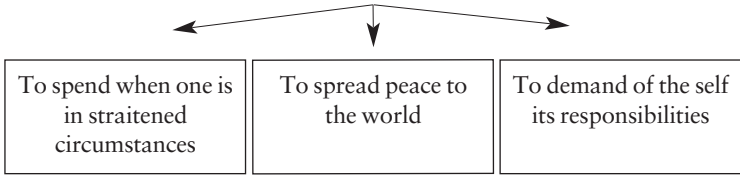
## HUMAN BEINGS ARE THREE TYPES



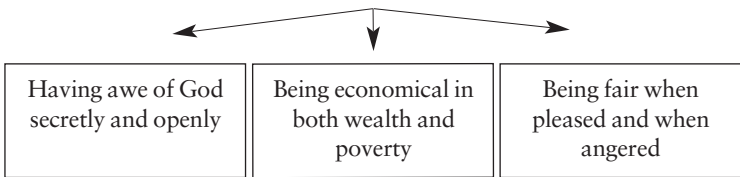
### People of this rank are of three types



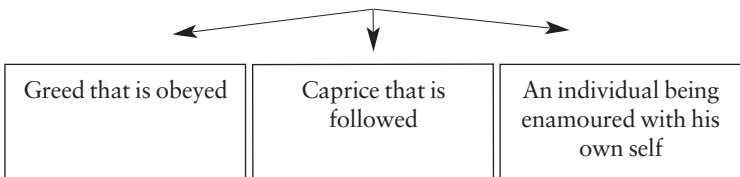
### 3 THINGS THAT ARE THE FOUNDATION OF ALL GOOD



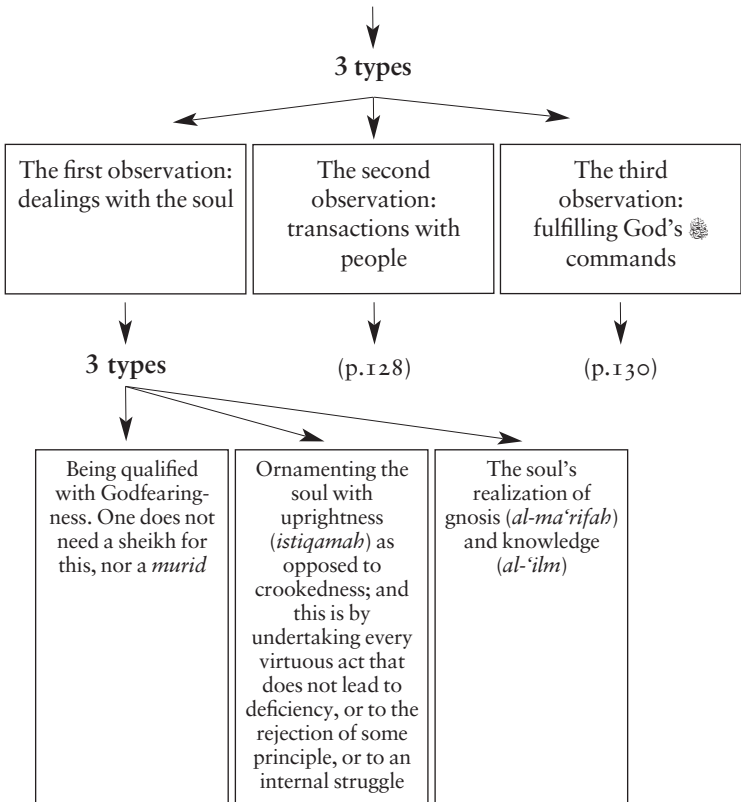
### 3 THINGS THAT SAVE



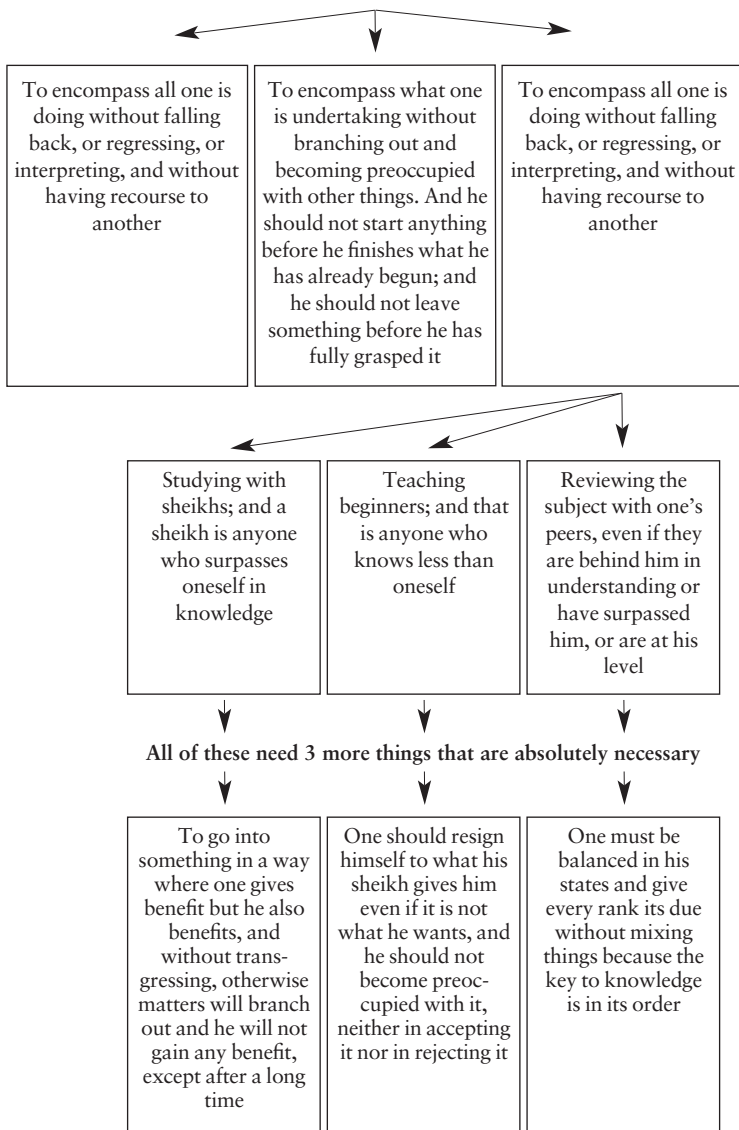
### 3 THINGS THAT DESTROY



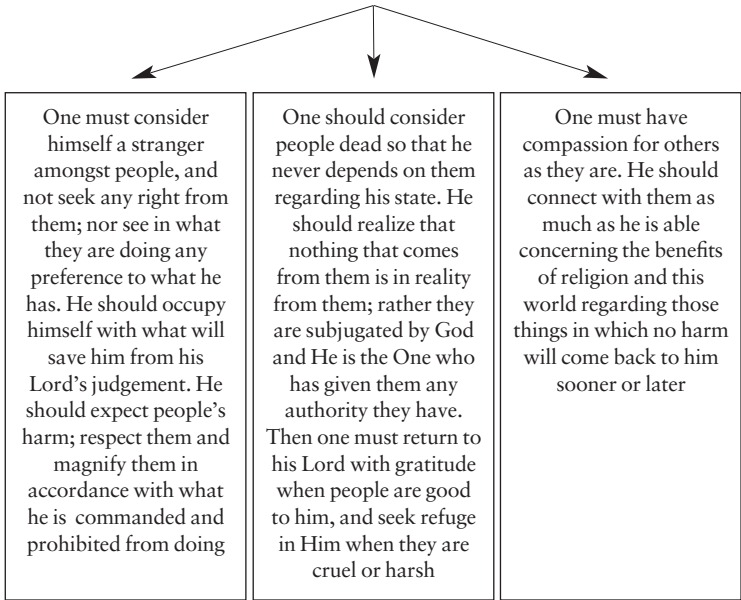
**AREAS OF OBSERVATION (MARASID) IN DEALINGS  
WITH OTHERS (MU‘AMALAT)**



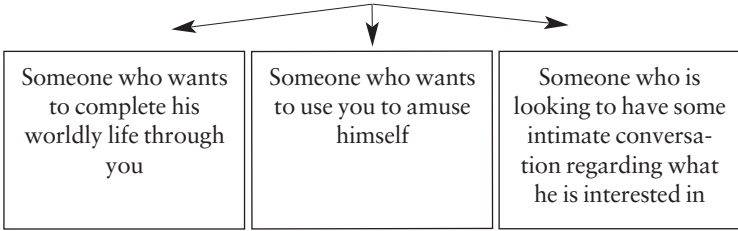
## HOW ONE AVOIDS HARMING HIS DEVOTIONAL PRACTICE (AL-'IBADAH) AND HIS KNOWLEDGE



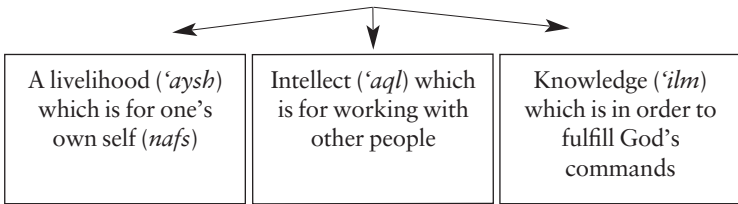
## THE SECOND OBSERVATION: TRANSACTIONS WITH PEOPLE



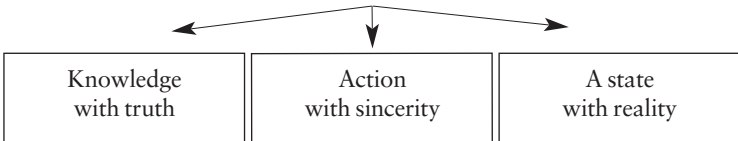
### 3 TYPES OF PEOPLE



### ONE MUST HAVE 3 THINGS

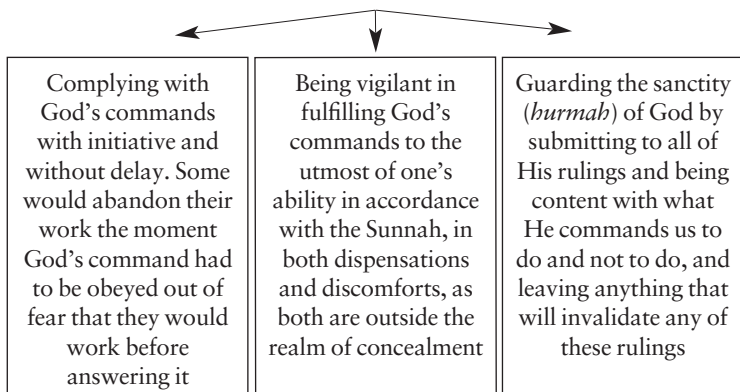


### PERFECTION COMES FROM 3 THINGS

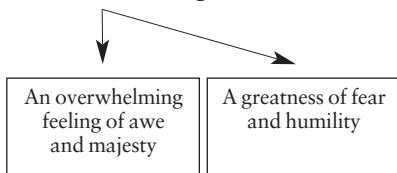


## THE THIRD OBSERVATION: FULFILLING GOD'S ﷻ COMMANDS

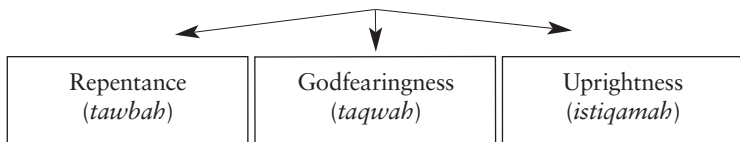
Rests on 3 things



Stems from 2 things



## THE FOUNDATIONS OF ALL GOOD THINGS

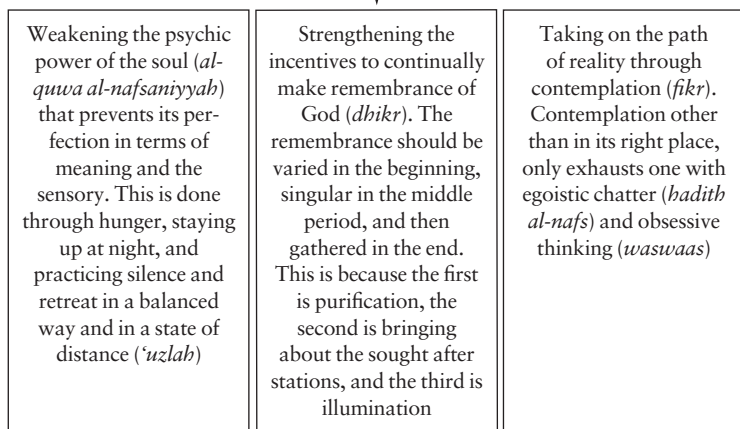




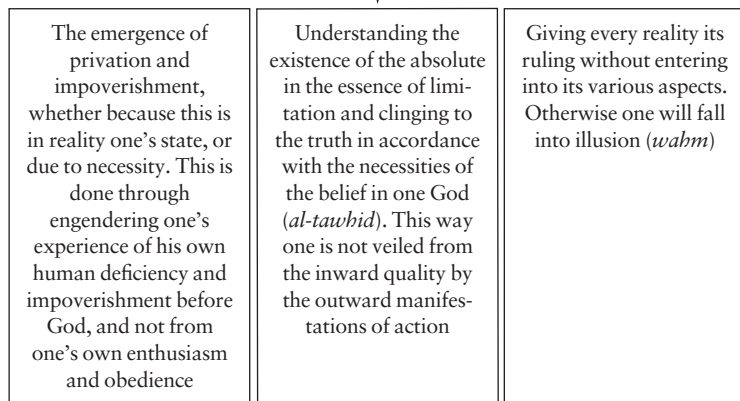


## ORNAMENTATION (*AL-TAHALLI*)

Revolves around three matters



The areas regarding the manifestation of divine meanings  
(*tajalliyat*)



### 3 NECESSARY SUPPLEMENTARY MATTERS TO THE 3 STATIONS



A sheikh is needed who will guide one to grow on this path through his secret (*sirrihi*) and his action (*sayrihi*). The 2nd doesn't exist while the 1st does exist. Each one of them exists without the other in these times

A brother who has a state with God and who helps one through his state (*halibi*) and through his action (*'amalibi*). He is impossible to find, but one who is near to perfection that will raise one up to other than him

One should continue to strive for a state of completedness (*kamal*) and fear losing the state that he has attained. He should also redress his actions when he is remiss









*'The heart is the foundation of every good  
and every evil, and its life and its death are  
the keys to either benefit or harm.'*

SIDI AHMAD ZARROUQ

Sidi Ahmad Zarrouq was the founder of the Zarrouqi branch of the Shadhili Sufi order. He wrote *Kitab Al-I'anaḥ* in 883 AH, when he was just thirty-seven years old. The book is a detailed elucidation of the different kinds of hearts, their diseases, and how to recognize and treat them. It also instructs the reader on how to achieve repentance, uprightness, and realization.



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