

The Revelation of Mystery

(Kashf al Mahjub)

The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism By

Ali B. Uthman Al-Jullabi Al-Hujwiri



Translated

By

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Translator's Note

Cognitional gnosis is the foundation of all blessings in this world and in the next, for the most important thing for a man at all times and under all circumstances is knowledge of Allah, Blessed He in Whose hands is Dominion, and He hath power over all things. He Who created Death and Life that He may try mankind that who is the best in deeds. He is the Creator of Heavens and invites to ponder on His signs and see if they are able to find any flaw in His creation. Allah Almighty hath said, "I have only created Jinee and men, that they may serve Me," and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "If you knew Allah as He ought to be known, you would walk on the seas, and the mountains would move at your supplication." Allah has promised rewards for the pious that follows His commands and punishment for the transgressors. His reward is everlasting and so His punishment. The reality of his reward really cannot be ascertained by the intellect. It is eternal life in the next world in His proximity where one won't find any anguish or grief. This life is a momentary, rather a testing and trial phase, as He said, who is in doubt concerning it: (Q 34:21), and do you think that you shall enter the Garden without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? (Q 2:154).

In the prevailing era majority of the mankind has been led astray from the righteous path and have become captivated of their sensual desires. They have not only forgotten that for what purpose they were created but have lowered themselves worse than the level of beasts. This world is a heap of rubbish and a place of dogs and one who lingers there is worse than a dog, for a dog takes what he wants from it and goes, but the lover of the world never gets satisfied and neither he likes leaving it at any time. They always remain in the process of accumulating worldly gains and keep on sitting over them like a snake and remain dipped in its love. Their whole activities are more in resemblance to heedlessness and have forgotten their exalted highest state among the creation. Allah gave him the status of His Deputy on earth and commanded that they should worship Him only. *Kashf al-Mahjub* is in circulation for the last over ten centuries and its reading has caused millions of hearts to find their way to the Truth. It provides ample opportunity to the seeker of the Truth and guides him to his goal even without any inter mediatory. Its teaching is simple and heart throbbing.

The original book is in Persian and is dominated by Persian spoken in Afghanistan and Central Asia. The old hand written scripts of the book are preserved in many European and Asian libraries. For this translation help has been taken from the scripts as mentioned in the note below¹. Though no translation can match the original text, particularly when the use of technical terms encompass the meanings and feelings of the trade holder, it becomes more difficult to translate the expressions in their true sense. However, earnest efforts have been made to produce the work as near to the original as possible. The verses of Quran and sayings of the eminent Sufis has been added in Arabic and their closest possible vocabulary in English has been used in translation. The translation of verses of Quran has been selected from the work of Abdullah Yusuf Ali. Since in Islamic culture the Arabic vocabulary is much in use and understood by all the folks, therefore, such phrases and words which are in common use among Muslim community are made part of the translation along with their English translation. For the benefit of common readers I have tried the keep the language as simple as possible. It is hoped that all those hearts who are desirous of acquiring the knowledge of the Truth and eager of following the righteous path would overcome their thirst by studying this book and Allah willing would achieve their goal of attaining His proximity. As the author says that he has composed this book to polish the hearts of those who are subject to temporary veiling but in whom the substance of light of the Truth is existent, in order that the veil may be lifted from them by the blessing of reading it, and that they may find their way to spiritual reality. May Allah Almighty bless all of us with His Mercies and Bounties both in this world as well as Hereafter.

Lt Col (R)

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¹ *Kashf al-Mahjub* in Persian (Nuskha Tehran), Printed by Tasawwuf Foundation, Lahore, *Kashf al-Mahjub* English Translation by Reynold A. Nicholson, *Kashf al-Mahjub* Urdu Translation by Sayd Muhammad Farooq al-Qadri, and *Kashf al-Mahjub* Urdu translation and commentary by Captain Wajid Baksh Syal Chishti Sabri.

Preface

Kashf al-Mahjub is one of the oldest Persian treatises on Mysticism. It was written around mid of eleventh century. The original work is in Persian and it has been translated into many Oriental and European languages. The Manuscripts of the *Kashf al-Mahjub* are preserved in several Asian and European libraries which includes 900 years old manuscripts also. The author composed many titles to which he has occasion to refer in the *Kashf al-Mahjub* but none of his works except *Kashf al-Mahjub* have been preserved.

Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Uthman b. Abi Ali al-Jullabi al-Ghaznavi al-Hujwiri (*may Allah be pleased with him*) was born in a noble family of Ghazna which was renowned for their piety and countenance. His lineage reaches to Ali through Hasan (*may Allah be pleased with them*). He was a Sunni Hanafite and in mystic way followed Junaid and was the disciple of Abu al-Fadl Muhammad b. al Hasan al-Khuttali. In his novitiate days he widely traveled in most parts of the Islamic Empire and graced himself with the knowledge of mystic path. He met many highly reputed Sheikhs of his time and benefited from their experiences. For some time he had a settled life in Iraq, where he ran deeply into debt. Finally, around 431 A.H. in the reign of Mahmud Ghaznavi he along with Abu Said Hujwiri and Hammad Sarkhasi came to Lahore and ended his days in that city. He died in 465 A.H. and buried there. His tomb at Lahore is visited by the multitudes that go there to seek their desires. The prayers are granted there. He is popularly remembered as *Data Gang Baksh* (the generous).

The *Kashf al-Mahjub*, belongs to the later years of the author's life, and was written on the request of a fellow-townsmen, Abu Said al-Hujwiri. Its object seems to set forth a complete system of Sufism, and the author's attitude throughout remains that of a teacher instructing a student. Even the biographical section of the work is largely expository. Before stating his own view the author examines the current opinions on the same topic and refutes them if necessary. The discussion of mystical problems and controversies is enlivened by many illustrations drawn from his personal experiences. The author keeping in mind the ordinary seeker has avoided any philosophical and intellectual discussion and in a very simple and Quranic way has desired seekers to follow Quran and Sunnah in their true spirit and totally denies any act falling out of the bounds of Quran and Sunnah. It maintains equilibrium in *Shariat* and Mysticism. He very often warns his readers that none follower of the path including those who have attained the highest degree of holiness, are exempt from the obligation of obeying the *Shariat*. The centre point of *Kashf al-Mahjub* is that the man should annihilate himself in the essence of the Truth to such an extent that none of his act should take place through his own thoughts or efforts, rather it should emerge as acts of the Divine and his own condition should be mere of a puppet which only works through the movements of string controlled by its owner.

It will not be a boasting opinion to mention *Kashf al-Mahjub* as the primary source on the laws of mysticism. It elaborates all the stages of the Path of Sufism in such a manner that in the words of the author the seeker studying and following the book would not need the auspicious guidance of a Sheikh (spiritual guide). He has touched upon the doctrines held by the different sects of Sufis, in which he enumerates special doctrine of each. The work has always been applauded by majority of the theologians and Sheikhs representing different schools of thought and it has been always a source of excellent guidance to the seekers of the Path. It leads one to straight path and mind of the seeker is enlightened with the purity of *Shariat* and reality of the Truth and he feels independent of any doubt or uncertainty.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Compassionate

All Praises be to Allah, who hath revealed the secrets of His kingdom to His Auliya (Saints), and hath manifested the mysteries of His Almighty to His intimates, and hath shed the blood of Lovers with the sword of His Glory, and hath let the hearts of Gnostics taste the joy of His union! He is Who bringeth dead hearts to life by the splendor of the perception of His Eternity and Majesty, and breathes them with the comforting spirit of Marifat معرفت (knowledge of Allah) by divulging His Names. And peace be upon His Prophet Muhammad, and his family and his companions and his wives!

Introduction

Sheikh Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Uthman b. Abi Ali al-Jullabi al-Ghaznavi al-Hujwiri (may Allah be pleased with him) says that I performed *istikhara* استخاره (seek for Allah's blessing) and after turning away all self worldly motives from my heart, and O Abu Said Hujwiri may Allah bless you, I have decided to write this book in accordance to your request. I have titled this book as "*Kashf al-Mahjub* كشف المحجوب" (The Revelation of Mystery). The beneficence of this book is evident from its title and having known your desire, I have arranged the book in different chapters suitable for the purpose. I pray Allah Almighty to help and prosper me in completion of this book, and I divest myself of my own strength and ability, as I have trust only on Him and He is the only Helper.

There are following two reasons to mention my name at the beginning of the book, one particular, and the other general. As regards to the general reason, the ignorant of Sufism, not finding the author's name at different places in the book try to attribute his work to themselves and thus the author's aim is defeated, since it is the desire of each author that his name be kept alive and the readers may reward him with their blessings. I have already been cheated on this account twice.

Once an individual took *Diwan* of my poetical works, of which I had no other copy and he omitted my name from it and publicized it as his own work, and caused all my efforts to go in vain. May Allah forgive him! The second incidence took place when I composed a book on manners of Sufism titled *Minhaj al-Din* منهاج الدين. An indecent pretender of Sufism, after omitting my name from the book, introduced it to the people with his own name. Although, the connoisseurs knowing his capabilities laughed at his claim, until, Allah withdrew His grace from him and erased his name from the register of those who seek to enter the Divine Court.

As regards to the particular reason, the people after seeing author's name on a book, know that how skilled and versed is he on the subject. They try to protect his rights and attempt to read and understand it more seriously. This leads to better satisfaction and desire of both readers and the author is fulfilled.

As regards to the words "I performed *istikhara* استخاره", I wished to observe the respect due to Allah, who said to His Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers:

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

"When thou does read the Quran, seek Allah's protection from Satan the Rejected One,"
(Q 16:98)

The meanings of *istaadat* استعادت, *istikharat* استخارت, and *istaanat* استعانت, are to ask for, committing all one's affairs to Allah and seeking His protection from all worldly contamination and mischief. The companions relate that Prophet (peace be upon him) used to educate them to seek Allah's blessing as it has been commanded in the Quran.

When one recognizes that goodness and improvement of each act does not depend on his own efforts and foresight, but all good and evil that happens to him is decreed by Allah, Who knows best what is beneficial for him, then he having no alternative but to surrender himself to the Destiny and pray Allah to deliver him from wickedness of his own soul and bless him with His mercy in all his acts. It is mandatory to perform *istikhara* before committing to any act, so that Allah may save one from all the evils and misfortunes, as He is the Only to grace favors.

As regards to "turning away all self worldly motives from my heart", it means that any act which evolves around self interest is devoid of Divine's Grace and diverts one's heart from straight path. The result of every act is either success or failure. If the desire of the self motivated person is fulfilled, it brings him perdition, for any achievement of the *nafs* نفس (lower soul) is the key to Hell. And if he fails, he would still remain under constant inward pressure. Nevertheless, the key to Paradise is to restrain one's *nafs* from its desires. Allah has said:

وَهَيَّ النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ - فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

"And had restrained (their) souls from lower Desires, their abode will be the Garden."

(Q 79:40-41)

The desires of the *nafs* نفس (lower soul) mean, is neither to desire blessedness and acquiescence of Allah in one's act nor to aim at saving *nafs* from Divine punishment. Similarly, the misdeeds and follies of *nafs* have neither any limit nor it feels disgusted. Allah willing, a chapter on this will be found at appropriate place in this book.

Now as to the words "I have decided to write this book in accordance to your request," since you considered me worthy enough for the answer of your question and asked to write this book, and you had a righteous aim before you, therefore, it was incumbent on me to write a comprehensive answer to your question. It may be possible that I might not fully justify your request; however, I have wholeheartedly made an intention to complete this work.

One must have right intention before committing to any act, so that if during completion if some flaws develop in his work, he may be excused. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

نِيَّتُهُ الْوَأَمْرُ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ

the intention of believer is better than his deed.

It is better to start something with intention than doing without it. In committing to any act intention is a vital force and a reality through which one instantly moves from one command to another, though apparently no signs are manifested. For example, if one remains hungry throughout the day without having intended to fast, he gets no recompense for it but if he does the same with an intention to fast and bears hunger, he would be counted among the favorites of Allah, although apparently there is no difference between both. Similarly, if a traveler without any intention stays at one place for a longer duration he will remain a traveler but if he makes an intention to stay there, he will be considered resident. Many such examples can be given in this regard. Therefore, it is always must to make an earnest intention before any assignment is taken in hand.

When I said that I had named this book "*Kashf al-Mahjub* كشف المحجوب (The Revelation of Mystery)", my object was that the name of the book should proclaim its contents to readers of insight. Beware that save Allah's saints and His chosen friends, the rest of the mankind is veiled from the subtlety of the spiritual truth. Since this book is an elucidation of the Way of Truth, a clarification of mystical sayings, and an uplifting of the veil of mortality, therefore this title is much suitable to it.

As *Kashf* كشف (unveiling) destroys the *hajib* حجاب (veil), similarly veil is the cause of the destruction of *Kashf*. As there is no concept of remoteness in proximity and nearness or there is no existence of proximity in distance and remoteness or as an insect which germinates from vinegar dies when it is exposed to any other matter, while those animals which are the creation from other substances perish if they are put in vinegar, it is difficult to divert the meanings to others than they were meant for. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

كل مسير لما خلق

there is an ease in everything for what it has been created.

There are two types of veils which exist between Allah and the mankind:

- one is the *hajib rayni* حجاب ريني (veil of covering), these can never be removed, and
- the other is the *hajib ghayni* حجاب غيني (veil of clouding), these can easily be removed.

There are people whose own self is a veil between them and the Truth, so for them the truth and falsehood are the same. There are others who are veiled from the Truth because of their own attributes. The nature and heart of such people persistently seek the Truth and evade falsehood.

The veil of essence "*hajib rayni*" is never removed and *rayn* رين, *Khatim* ختم, and *Tabaa* طبع have the same meaning, i.e. sealing and imprinting. Thus Allah has said,

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

by no means! But on their hearts is the stain of the (ill) which they do! (Q 83:14);

then they are like those about whom Allah has said,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَسْوَءَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

as to those who reject Faith, it is the same to them whether thou warn them or do not warn them: they will not believe." (Q 2:6);

and He explained the cause thereof, saying,

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ

Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing," (Q 2:7)

طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ

Allah hath sealed their hearts," (Q 9:93).

The veil of attributes (*hajib ghayni*), may be removed at times, though change of essence is not achievable but the alteration of attributes is possible.

The Sheikhs have contributed many subtle hints on the subject of *rayn* رين and *ghayn* غين, as Junaid has said:

الرين من جملة الوطنات والغين من جملة الخطرات

“*Rayn* belongs to the class of permanent things and *ghayn* to the class of transitory things.”

Therefore, *watan* وطن (the permanent thing) is perpetual, and *khatar* خطر (hazards) are momentary. It is impossible to make a mirror out of a stone, even if thousand experts may apply their skill together, but a rusty mirror can easily be made bright by polishing, for darkness is innate in the stone, and brightness is innate in the mirror. The essence is permanent and accepts no alteration but the temporary attribute is changeable and does not last.

I have composed this book to polish the hearts of those who are subject to *hajib ghayni* (veil of clouding), but in whom the substance of light of the Truth is existent, in order that the veil may be lifted from them by the blessing of reading it, and that they may find their way to spiritual reality. But those who are habitual defiant of the Truth and follower of falsehood, and they may be presented with ample proofs, will never find their way thither, and this book will be of no use to them.

Now with reference to my saying that having known your desire, I have arranged the book in different chapters suitable for the purpose, I mean that until and unless one fully gets aware of the quest of the questioner, suitable reply cannot be furnished. A question presupposes a difficulty, and it is insoluble until its nature is ascertained. General reply is only possible when the questioner has full knowledge of the subject but with a novice one needs to go into detail, and offer diverse explanations and definitions. In this case especially, you desired me to answer your questions in detail and write a book on the matter.

And with reference to my saying, “I pray Allah Almighty to help and prosper me,” means that without Allah’s help man cannot achieve any good; and *taufiq* توفيق means that when Allah blesses one to perform acts deserving reward, this is truly success given by Him. The Quran and *Sunnah* (Tradition of Prophet, peace be upon him) also affirm to seek *taufiq* from the Lord Almighty. The whole *Ummah* is unanimous in this regard, except *Mutazilites* and some who have a belief on *qadar* قدر (predetermination). They assert that the expression *taufiq* is void of meaning. *Sufi* Sheikhs have said,

التوفيق هو القدر الذي علي الطاعته عند الاستعمال

“Allah increases the working strength of a man who shows obedience to Him.”

When a man renders obedience and submits himself to Allah’s command, he is graced with more strength and courage from Allah and he step by step advances to higher rank. Allah is the creator of all human actions and movements. In short the strength which forces a man to obedience to Allah is *taufiq*.

This very discussion is out of place here, as the aim of this book is different. I now return to the actual subject which is your desire and start this book by repeating your question.

The Questions Proposed

The questioner, Abu Said al-Hujwiri, has asked the answers of the following questions:

- Explain the true meanings of the Path of Sufism.

- Explain mystical allegories and hints and different *maqamat* (stations) of *Sufis*.
- How the love of Allah and ecstasy overwhelm the hearts, elucidate it.
- Why the intellect is incapable to perceive the reality of the Truth, explain it.
- Why the *nafs* (lower soul) is reluctant to attain the proximity of the Truth and how the spirit gets enrichment and life thereof.
- Explain the doctrine, sayings and the practical aspects of Sufism which are connected with these theories.

Ali b. Uthman al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri to whom question has been made, says:

Sufism is obsolete in our age and particularly in this country (India) where majority of the people is captivated with worldly lust. They have turned away their faces from being satisfied with the decree of the Truth. The divines and those who pretend to have knowledge of the path have formed a conception of Sufism which is conflicting to its basics. Therefore, wake up and gather your strength to attain that where the worldlings have no access. Who other than the chosen one can have access to this rare jewel? The prevailing conditions are such that leaving aside the elects rest all have lost their hearts and lack desire to acquire the knowledge of the path. The common people and the elite both derive delight from mere expressions and feel satisfied in veiled conditions. Their blind conformity has taken the place of spiritual enthusiasm. Search does not exist in their dictionary. The common people like these conditions and say that they recognize the Truth. The elects are happy and contented on that their hearts have desire and their *nafs* (lower soul) throb to seek the Truth. They feel in their hearts a desire for the next world and claim it to be a vision and ardent love. The claimants because of their pretensions are far away from attaining the reality. The seekers while neglecting their ascetic practices indulge in idle thoughts, and claim that to be contemplation.

I have already written few books on this subject, but all these efforts of mine went in vain as some pretenders picked out selected passages from them to impress their followers as it was their work and they destroyed rest of the works. This sort of people considers such sadism and denial as Allah's blessing. Some did occupy themselves willingly but failed to gain anything from it. Some gained the knowledge of works, but did not comprehend the meaning. Such people only like the expressions thereof and think that the memorization and copying of such expression is the Sufism. This is their misfortune.

This all has been said because the state of the knowledge of Sufism is like alchemy which is very rare and when it is obtained very little of it converts brass into gold. One only desires that medication which may heal his ache. As a venerable man has said:

فكل من في فواده وجع يطلب شيءا يوافق الوجعاً

"One seeks only that medicine which fits to his disease."

That means nobody wants to mix pearls and coral with common remedies like *shalitha* and *dawa al-musk*. This is a very subtle hint and everyone cannot really apprehend it. Earlier also, when the works of eminent *Sufis*, fell into the hands of those who could not appreciate them, sold these works in the hands of binders who used them making lining for caps or binding for the poetry and made these works at par with that of Abu Nuwas and the pleasantries of Jahiz. The other example is that of the king's falcon who when resting on an old woman's cottage suffered in the hands of such illiterates who clipped away his wings.

We are born in the era when our contemporaries have given the name of:

- *Shariat* (religious law) to their lusts; pride and desire "honor and knowledge"; hypocrisy "fear of Allah"; concealment of anger "clemency"; and disputation is called discussion;
- For them wrangling and foolishness is dignity; insincerity is renunciation; and cupidity is "devotion to Allah"

- Their senseless fancies are called divine knowledge and the motions of the heart and affection of the *nafs* (lower soul) they call divine love”;
- For them heresy is poverty and skepticism is purity;
- Deviation and disbelief in religion is “self-annihilation”.
- The neglect of the *Shariat* is the mystic path and evil communication with time servers is exercise of piety.

They have really subdued the true *Sufis* and have created the similar situation for them as it existed for *Ahl-i Bayt* (family of the Prophet) during the rule of the family of Marwan. As Abu Bakr al-Wasti said:

ابتيلنا بزمان ليس فيه اداب ولا اخلاق الجاهلية ولا الحكماء ذي المروءة

“We are afflicted with a time in which there are neither the religious tenants of Islam nor the morals of Paganism nor the virtues of Chivalry.”

Shibli adds to the same:

لخا الله ذي الدنيا منا خالراكب فكل يعيد الهم فيها معذب

“Allah has provided refuge to the humankind at the halts which fall on their way, and who has to go afar, he remains agitated at these halts.”

I have found this universe an abode of Divine mysteries, which are deposited in created things. The whole creation is a trustee of His Grace and everything possess subtleties and marvels for His friends. Substances, accidents, elements, bodies, forms, and properties all are veils of Divine mysteries. From the standpoint of *tawhid* توحيد (Unification) it is polytheism to affirm them. Allah has kept this universe in a state of veil, so that every identity according to its nature and being remained within the bounds find satisfaction from His decree and their own selves develop veil between them and the Truth. Their spirits become captive because of their association with the phenomenal being and go afar from the *maqam* مقام (station) of intimacy, so much so that their intellect and thoughts fail to apprehend the Divine mysteries and the spirit can but dimly perceives the marvels of proximity to the Truth. They get entangled into their own selves because of the darkness of their heedlessness and in concern to higher objectives they are lost behind self created veils. Therefore, Allah describing the condition says,

وَالْعَصْرِ - إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ

“By (the token of) time (through the ages), verily Man is in loss,” (Q 103:1-2),

i.e. the way universe has been created and designed because of that man is in loss (he has been veiled from the Truth).

Further it is said,

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds,” (Q 103:3),

and

إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا

he was indeed unjust and foolish,” (Q 33:72).²

² The translation of the full verse is: “We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: But man undertook it-- He was indeed unjust and foolish.”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has also said,

خلق الله الخلق في ظلمته ثم القى عليه نورا

“Allah created the universe in dark and then enlightened it with His *Tajalli* (Nur).”

Thus, these veils are part of the human nature, and intervene in proportion to the use of nature and intellect, until one becomes ignorant. One whole heartedly accepts the veil and prefers life over these. He remains unaware of the beauty of the revelation and by renouncing the mysteries of the Truth, he down grades him to the level of beasts. Such an individual enamored of his gross environment, remains sunken in ignorance and apathy, making no attempt to cast off the veil that has fallen upon him. Blind to the beauty of Oneness, he turns away from Allah to seek the vanities of this world and allows his appetite to oppress his reason.

Hence, his nature, all his acts and deeds get committed to satisfy his animal desire, so that he is left with no activity but eat, sleep and follow the *nafs* (lower soul). But Allah saves His friends from these miseries. He says,

ذَرَّهُمْ يَا كَلْبُوا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوا وَيُلْهِهِمُ الْأَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

leave them alone, to enjoy (the good things of this life) and to please themselves: Let (false) Hope amuse them: soon will knowledge (undeceive them),” (Q 15:3).

The inclination of their nature has hidden the mysteries of the Truth so as they are engulfed with misfortunes and deprivation. They are subdued by the *nafs* (lower soul) which is a great veil and root of all evils. The Quran describes it as

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ الْأَمَّارَةَ بِالسُّوءِ

the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil.” (Q 12:53).

Now I begin and explain to you, fully and lucidly, what you wish to know concerning the *maqamat* (stations) and the veils. I will interpret the expressions of the learned and add thereto some sayings of the Sheikhs and anecdotes about them, in order that your object may be accomplished. Even if the learned *Ulama* or others look into this work may recognize that the Path of Sufism has a firm root and fruitful branches. All the *Sufi* Sheikhs possessed this knowledge and encouraged their disciples to acquire it. They preserved it in doing so. They have never been addicted to frivolity and levity. Many of them have composed treatises on the method of Sufism. They elucidated excellent expressions of what were manifested on them by the Divine.

Chapter I

Knowledge

Allah describing the savants (*Ulama*) has said:

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

“Those truly fear Allah, among his servants, who have knowledge.” (Q 35:28).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم

“To seek knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim;”

اطلبوا العلم ولو كان بالصين

“Get knowledge, may it be from China.”

Knowledge is immense and life is short, therefore, it is not obligatory for the human beings to learn every aspect of knowledge, such as Astronomy, Medicine, and Arithmetic etc, but only so much of each as desirous upon by *Shariat* (religious law), i.e., enough astronomy to know the time (of prayer) at night; sufficient knowledge of medicine to abstain oneself from what is injurious; enough arithmetic to understand the division of inheritances and to calculate the duration of the *iddat*³, etc. Knowledge is obligatory only to that extent which helps one to act rightly. Allah condemns those who learn useless knowledge,

وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ

and they learned what harmed them, not what profited them.” (Q 2:102).

Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray daily,

اعوذ بك من علم لا ينفع

I take refuge with Thee from knowledge that profits naught.

The practice must be more even with little knowledge and knowledge should be adorned with practice. Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

المتعبد بلا فقه كالحمارة في الطاحونة

“the devotee without divinity is like a donkey turning a mill,”

because the donkey goes round over its own track and never makes any advance. The same falls true on ignorant pius.

A group of people regards knowledge as superior to action, while another group prefers action first. In my opinion they both are wrong, because action cannot be called action without knowledge. It cannot become action until it has the backing of knowledge. Knowledge leads action to recompense. For

³ Probationary period (incumbent upon a woman in consequence of dissolution of marriage either by divorce or by the death of her husband).

instance, prayer is not really a prayer, unless performed with knowledge of the principles of purification and those which concern with the direction of *Qibla* (the direction of Kaba) and with knowledge of the nature of intention. Similarly, without the knowledge of the pre-requisites of prayer its performance will not be right. Thus, when all actions are based on knowledge, then how one can separate knowledge from action.

Those who prefer knowledge over action are also wrong, because knowledge without action really cannot be called knowledge. To gain knowledge, memorizing and repeating it are also acts for which a man is rewarded, but if knowledge is without action, its acquisition will not be rewarded.

Allah has said,

تَبَدَّلَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“A party of the People of the Book threw away the Book of Allah behind their backs. As if (it had been something) they did not know!” (Q: 2:101).

These are the claims of the two groups. One of them gains knowledge to earn worldly honor and repute and by so is devoid of paying its due. Since they are unaware of beneficence of knowledge therefore they separate knowledge from action.

Some others say that they only require knowledge and need not to act. Such lot neither can be named as savants nor practitioners. Ibrahim b. Adham narrated that once on his way he saw a stone on which was written, “turn me over and read!” When he turned it, he found this inscription,

انت لا تعمل بما تعلم فكيف تطلب ما لا تعلم

you do not practice what you know; why, then do you seek what you do not know?”

It means that when you act upon what you know so that by its blessing you might be rewarded with the knowledge of that which you do not know.

Uns b. Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said,

همته العلماء انذرايه وهمته السفهاء الروايته

“*Ulama* spend their strength in meditation and ignorant waste their strength in relating the anecdotes.”

Since *Ulama* are far above from ignorance, therefore, he who uses his knowledge as a means of winning power and honor and wealth is not a savant, rather an ignorant because desire for wealth and power is ignorance. There is no better degree than knowledge because without knowledge one cannot apprehend the essence and attributes of Allah. It is only knowledge which leads a man to the higher stages of *maqamat* (stations), and he is blessed with *Kashf* (revelation).

Knowledge is of two kinds:

- Divine knowledge and
- Human knowledge.

The human knowledge is worthless in comparison with the Divine knowledge, because knowledge of Allah is an attribute of Himself, subsisting in Him, and His attributes are infinite. Our knowledge is an attribute of ourselves, subsisting in us, and our attributes are limited. As Allah has said,

وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

“of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you (O men!)” (Q 17:85).

In short, knowledge is among the praiseworthy manners and it has been defined as comprehension and investigation of the object known, but the best attribute of knowledge is,

knowledge is such an attribute which makes an ignorant wise.

Allah said,

وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ

but Allah is ever round the rejecters of faith!" (Q 2:19),

وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

and Allah doth know all things." (Q 24:35).

Allah has absolute knowledge through which He knows all things existent and non-existent. None of His creature has any partnership in His knowledge. Allah's knowledge is neither capable of division nor separable from Himself. The layout of the universe is a proof of His knowledge, for each good act speaks of the knowledge of the causer. Therefore, His knowledge comprehends what all is hidden and encompasses all which is manifest. It behooves on seeker to contemplate Allah in every act, knowing that He sees him and all that he does.

Once, a rich man of Basra went to his orchard and there he saw beautiful wife of his gardener. He sent the fellow away on some business and in his absence to fulfill his evil desire asked the woman to shut the door. She complied but said that she was unable to shut one door. On inquiry she replied that it was the door which was between us and Allah. On receiving that answer the man repented and begged to be forgiven.

Hatim al-Asam said that by adopting four things he had got rid of rest of the knowledge:

- I know that my daily food is apportioned to me, and my greed can not increase it, so I saved myself from desire of its increase.
- I know that Allah has rights on me which no one other than me can pay.
- I know that death is pursuing me, from whom I cannot escape and I am ready for it.
- I know that my Lord is fully aware of my state, and I feeling ashamed of Him have been saved from evils.

When man fully realizes that Allah is watchful over his every act, then he does not commit himself to any act which may become cause of his humiliation on the Day of Resurrection.

The man's knowledge should be of *Marifat* (knowledge) of Allah and His Commandments and the mandatory knowledge is that which is according to the time and fulfills the demands of the time. Knowledge of "time" i.e. spiritual state is recognized that one is able to apprehend the outward and inward affects of all circumstances. This is of two types, i.e. the root and the branch

The outward division of the root class is Faith, i.e. affirmation of Oneness of Allah and Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His Prophet. The inward division consists in the attainment of cognition of the Truth. The external division of the branch class consists in earnest practice of *Shariat* (religious law), and the inward division consists in rendering one's intention sincere. The outward and inward aspects cannot be divorced. The exoteric aspect of Truth without the esoteric is hypocrisy, and the esoteric without the exoteric is heresy. So, if one is formally following the *Shariat*, it is a defect and while mere spirituality is also ineffective.

The knowledge of the Truth (*Haqiqat*) has three pillars:

- Knowledge of the Essence and Unity of Allah and denial of likening of anything with Him.
- Knowledge of the Attributes, and Commandments of Allah.
- Knowledge of the Actions and Wisdom of Allah.

Similarly, the *Shariat* (Religious Law) also has three pillars:

- The Quran
- The *Sunnah*
- The Consensus of the Muslim *Ummah* (community).

The three pillars of knowledge of Truth are evident from these verses:

فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

“Known therefore, that there in no god but Allah,” (Q 47:19),

فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ

“Be sure, Allah is your protector –“ (Q 8:40),

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ

“Hast thou not turned thy vision to thy Lord?—how He prolong the Shadow!” (Q 25:45),

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ

“Do they not look at the Camels, how they are made?” (Q 88:17).

There are many such verses in the Quran which assert on meditating on Allah’s attributes, so that one may be able to recognize His attributes of Creation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

من علم ان الله تعالى ربه واني نبيه حرم الله تعالى لحمه ودمه علي النار

“One who has recognized that Allah is his Lord and I am His Prophet, Allah will forbid the fire of Hell on his meat and blood.”

Knowledge of the Divine Essence involves recognition, on the part of one who is sensible and has reached puberty,

that:

- Allah exists externally by His essence,
- He is infinite and not bounded by space,
- that His essence is beyond any change,
- that none of His creatures is like unto Him,
- that His essence is not the cause of evil and calamity,
- that he has neither wife nor child, and
- that He is the Creator and Sustainer of all that one’s imagination and intellect can conceive.

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

“There is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the One that hears and sees (all things).” (Q 42:11).

Knowledge of the Divine Attributes, asserts to sincerely know that Allah has attributes existing in Himself, which are not He nor a part of Him, but exists in Him and subsist by Him, e.g. Knowledge, Power, Life, Will, Hearing, Sight, Speech, etc. It is revealed in the Quran that,

إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

verily He has full knowledge of all that is in (men's) hearts." (Q 35:38),

وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

and Allah has power over all things." (Q 3:29),

and

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

He is the Living (One): There is no god but He." (Q 40:65),

وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

and He is the One that hears and sees (all things)." (Q 42:11)

and

فَعَالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ

is the (sure) Accomplisher of what He planneth." (Q 11:107)

and

قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ

His word is the Truth. His will be the dominion-" (Q 6:73).

The knowledge of the Divine Actions is that one has complete faith that Allah is the Creator of all things and their actions, as He says

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

but Allah has created you and your handiwork!" (Q 37:96).

That he brought the non-existent universe into being, that He predestines good and evil and creates all that is beneficial and injurious, as He says,

اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

Allah is the Creator of all things, (Q 39:62).

The knowledge of the *Shariat* (Religious Law) involves knowing that:

- Allah has sent us Prophets with miracles and
- that our Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a true Messenger, who performed many miracles, and
- that whatever he told us concerning the Unseen and the Visible is entirely true.

The first pillar of *Shariat* is Quran. Allah said,

مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

in it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning): They are the foundation of the Books:" (Q 3:7).

The second pillar is *Sunnah* (tradition) of Prophet (peace be upon him). Allah said,

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

so take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourself which he withholds from you.” (Q 59:7).

The third pillar of *Shariat* is consensus of the Muslim *Ummah* (community). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

لا تجتمع امتي علي الضلالة عليكم بالسواد الاعظم

my *Ummah* will never be united on aberrance, so it is mandatory on you to join *Sawad-i Azam* (i.e. *Ahl-i Sunnah*).

There is a sect of heretics called Sophists, who believes that it is difficult to attain right knowledge of anything and that knowledge itself also does not exist. We ask from them that to know “knowledge is not attainable”, is it knowledge or not? If their answer is positive, that would mean they affirm the reality of knowledge and if their reply is “no” then to argue against an avowedly incorrect claim is absurd.

Some say that since we cannot attain any knowledge therefore negation of knowledge is more perfect than its affirmation. This is ridiculous and foolishness on their part. The negation of knowledge must be the result either of knowledge or of ignorance because negation of knowledge is either possible through knowledge or through ignorance. It is impossible for knowledge to deny knowledge. Such people, who deny it through ignorance, are ignorant and blameworthy. Ignorance leads one to infidelity and falsehood, for there is no connection between ignorance and truth. All the *Sufi* Sheikhs oppose such people and their doctrine. Had Sheikhs not objected it, people inclined to this doctrine might have ruined their faith and would have been difficult for them to differentiate between truth and evil. We commit them to Allah, with Whom it rests whether they shall continue in their error. When Sheikhs got hold of them, they behave discreetly and subdue their evil acts towards Friends of Allah. Although some heretics claims to be mystics in order to conceal their own foulness under the beauty of others, why should it be supposed that all *Sufis* are like these pretenders, and that it is right to treat them all with disdain and contumely?

Once I happened to discuss with an individual who claimed to be well learned. Actually he was devoid of religious knowledge and slave of selfish motives whom he gave the name of following *Shariat*. During a course of debate he said to me that there were twelve heretical sects and one of them was of Sufism. I replied him that if one sect belonged to us, eleven belongs to him and the *Sufis* could protect themselves from one better than you could from eleven. All this heresy springs from the corruption and degeneracy of the present time, but Allah always keeps His friends (Saints) safe from it. Well said by the eminent spiritual guide, Ali b. Bundar al-Sayrafi,

فساد القلوب علي حسب فساد الزمان واهله

the depravity of men’s hearts is in proportion to the depravity of the age.”

Now I will cite some sayings of the *Sufis* for the benefits of those with whom Allah is kind, so that they may remain safe from the misdeeds of skeptics.

Muhammad b. Fadl al-Balkhi says that knowledge is of three kinds:

- knowledge from Allah,
- knowledge with Allah,
- knowledge of Allah.

Knowledge of Allah is the *Marifat* of the Truth (cognition), through which all the Prophets and saints got familiar with Divine. It is impossible to acquire it through one's own efforts. It is bestowed upon by Divine through His blessing and guidance.

Knowledge from Allah is the *Shariat* (Religious Law), which He has commanded and made obligatory upon human being.

Knowledge with Allah is that discipline which leads one to the Divine and helps determining *maqamat* (stations), the Paths and the Degrees of the saints. Gnosis is unsound without *Shariat*, and the *Shariat* is not practiced rightly unless the *maqamat* (stations) are manifested.

Abu Ali Thaqfi says:

العلم حياة القلب من الجهل ونور العين من الظلمته

"Knowledge is the life of the heart, which delivers it from the death of ignorance: it is the *Nur* (light) of the eye of faith, which saves from the darkness of infidelity."

It means that knowledge saves from death of ignorance and provides light of faith by saving one from infidelity. One who is not blessed with *marifat*, his heart is dead because of ignorance and one, who is ignorant of the knowledge of *Shariat*, he is affected by the disease of ignorance. That's why the hearts of the infidels are dead because they don't have *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) and the hearts of the heedless are sick, because they are ignorant of His Commandments.

Abu Bakr Warraq says:

من اكتفى بالكلام من العلم دون الزهد تذندق ومن اكتفى بالفقته دون الورع فقد تفسق

"One who is satisfied with disputation about knowledge of Allah and does not practice asceticism becomes heretic; and one who is satisfied with jurisprudence and do not practice abstinence become impious."

This means that *Tawhid* (Unification), without following *Shariat*, is predestination, whereas the assertor of Unification ought to hold the doctrine of predestination but to act as though he believed in free will, taking a middle course between free will and predestination. Such is the true sense of another saying uttered by the same Sheikh:

التوحيد دون الجبر وفوق القدر

"*Tawhid* (Unification) is below predestination and above free will." So one who is satisfied with disputation of *Tawhid* and does not practice *Shariat* and asceticism, become heretic. Similarly one who restricts himself to jurisprudence and *Shariat* (Religious Law) and does not practice abstinence gets into doubts and involves himself in sinful acts. This arises from heedlessness.

Yahya b. Maud al-Razi said:

اجتنب صحبته ثلاثه اصناف من الناس العلماء الغافلين والفقراء المداهنين والمتصوفته الجاهلين

"Avoid the society of three classes of men - heedless savants, greedy beggars, and ignorant pretenders to Sufism."

The heedless savants are those who have set their hearts on worldly gains. They remain in search of ease in following the religious obligations but are active in paying court to governors and tyrants. Achieving an honor in the public eyes is their biggest rank and they feel proud in their deceitful and artificial conducts. They are dishonest in their talk, criticize the leading *Ulama* and religiously learned celebrities and talk very low of them. Greed and sadistic attitude have become their nature. This all is not part of knowledge, rather it is ignorance. Knowledge repels ignorance and does not nourish it.

The greedy beggars praise those who act according to their wishes, may the act be wrong. When someone opposes or talks against their wishes, may he be truthful in his acts, they become his enemy. They seek honor with the people of their deeds and act hypocritically even for the wrongs.

The ignorant pretenders to Sufism are they who never got associated with *Sufi* Sheikhs (spiritual guide), neither learnt discipline from them, nor got the rigging of the Path. So without any experience, clad in green dress they animate *Sufis* and feel pleasure while people dishonor them and because of their foolishness they consider everyone like themselves. They cannot even distinguish between truth and falsehood.

These are the groups about whom the Sheikh has mentioned and stressed on the seekers to avoid their company, as they are liar in their claims and their acts are faulty.

Abu Yazid Bastami says:

“For thirty years I strived in the spiritual combat, and I found nothing harder to me than knowledge and its pursuits.”

It is easier for human nature to walk on fire than to act on knowledge. An ignorant will more readily cross the Bridge (*Sirat*) a thousand times than learn a single piece of knowledge. It is easier for a wicked man to pitch his tent in Hell than for a learned to learn one lesson of knowledge. Therefore, you must acquire knowledge and seek perfection therein. The perfection of human knowledge is ignorance of Divine knowledge. You must know enough to know that you do not know. That is to say, human knowledge is alone possible to man, and humanity is the greatest barrier that separates him from Divinity.

Some poet says:

العجز عن درك الادراك ادراك والوقوف في طريق الاخيار اشراك

“True perception is hopelessness of attaining perception, But not to advance on the paths of the virtuous is polytheism.”

He who stops in the way commits infidelity and who does not learn and perseveres in his ignorance is a polytheist, but who learns and excels and his knowledge becomes perfect, the reality is revealed to him and he perceives that his knowledge is no more than inability to know what his end shall be, since realities are not affected by the names bestowed upon them. The helplessness of such person about the reality of knowledge is actually knowledge for him.

Chapter II

Poverty (Faqr فقر)

Poverty (*Faqr* فقر) occupies an exalted position in the Way of the Truth, and that the *dervishes* are generally honored. Allah has said:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَحْبَبُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ صَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَعْيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ

“(Charity is) for those in need, who, in Allah’s cause are restricted (from travel), and cannot move about in the land, seeking (for trade or work): the ignorant man thinks, because of their modesty, that they are free from want.” (Q 2:273).

صَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا لَمَلُوكًا لَأَيُّدٍ عَلَى شَيْءٍ

“Allah sets forth the Parable (of two men: one) a slave under the dominion of another. He has no power of any sort;” (Q 16:75).

تَتَجَاوَى جُنُوبَهُمْ عَنِ الْمُضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا

“Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in Fear and Hope:” (Q 32:16).

Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) chose poverty and said,

اللهم احيني مسكيناً وامتنى مسكيناً واحشري في زمرة المساكين

“O Allah, make me live lowly and die lowly and rise from the dead amongst the lowly on Resurrection Day!”

And Prophet (peace be upon him) also said that on the day of Resurrection Allah will say, “Bring ye My loved ones nigh unto me;” then the angels will say, “Who are Thy loved ones?” and Allah will answer them, saying, “The poor and destitute.”

There are many verses of the Quran and *Hadith* (Traditions of Prophet) to the same effect, which being commonly known, need not be mentioned here.

In the Prophet’s time, a group of poor refugees existed who to get benefited of the company of Prophet (peace be upon him) used to live in the mosque of the Prophet and had fully devoted themselves to the worship of Allah. They were free of all worldly activities and had firmly put their trust in the Real Provider and believed that He would give them their daily sustenance. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was enjoined by Allah to keep their company and take due care of them. For Allah said,

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعَصَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ

send not away those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His face.” (Q 6:52),

and

وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تَطْعَمَنْ أَغْفَلًا قَابِلَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا

and let not thine eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this Life; nor obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us,” (Q 18:28).

Hence, whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw any one of them, he would say; “May my parents be your sacrifice! Since it was for your sake Allah admonished me.”

Allah, therefore, has exalted the Poverty of the Dervishes and has made a special distinction of them. This is because they by renouncing all the apparent inward and outward causes and turning entirely to the Causer of the causes. The poverty becomes pride for them, so they grieve on its going and rejoice at its coming. They have adopted poverty in such a way that everything else has become worthless before their eyes.

Poverty has an outward form and a reality. Outward form is destitution, indigence and distress but its reality is fortune, success and satisfaction. He who contented and rested in the outward form, when fails to achieve his desire turns away from its reality also. And who has attained the reality of *Faqr* (poverty), averts his gaze from all created things, and in complete annihilation, seeing only the All-One, achieves fullness of eternal life. He who has adopted the outward of *Faqr* only he gains nothing, as the wise elder has said,

من لم يعرف سوي اسمه لم يسمع سوي اسمه

one who got stranded in the outward form of *Faqr*, he does not know any thing beyond its name.”

The *faqir* فقير (poor man) is, who does not have anything and nor ownership of things brings any change in him. He does not feel becoming rich by having anything, nor indigent by having nothing. The presence or absence of things is equal in his eyes, rather feels more joyful when he has nothing. The Sheikhs have said, “the more a dervish is poverty stricken, the more extensive is he in his (spiritual) state,” because it is harmful for a dervish to own material goods. He should not even have a thought of anything, so that he might not get captivated in love of that. The friends of Allah lives by means of His secret bounties. Worldly wealth holds them back from the path of quietism. Once a king met a dervish and said that he might ask him for some favor. The dervish replied that he would not ask a benefit from one of his slaves. On king’s inquiry he explained him that his two slaves i.e. covetousness and expectation, were king’s masters.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الفقر عز لاهله

poverty is glorious to those who are worthy of it.

That which is glorious for the worthy is an embarrassment for the undeserving. It is glorious for the worthy because his body is divinely preserved from base and sinful acts, and his heart from evil and contaminating thoughts. His outward becomes trustee of manifested grace and inward of luminous visions, so that his body is spiritual and his heart divine. The mankind has no relations with him and neither people have any kinship with him, so much so, that he feels empty handed as regards to creation. He does not feel wealthy even if he is rewarded with the whole worldly assets. For him the wealth of the whole universe weigh less than a gnat’s wing in the scales of his poverty and both worlds may not be able to contain even his one breath.

The *Sufi* Sheikhs differ in opinion as to whether *faqr* فقر (poverty) or *ghina* غني (wealth) is superior, for true *ghina* belongs to Allah, who is exalted in all His attributes. Yahya b. Maud al-Razi, Ahmad b. Abi al-Hawari, Harith al-Muhasibi, Abu al-Abbas b. Ata, Abu al-Hasan b. Simun, and among the moderns Abu Said Fadalallah b. Muhammad al-Mahani, all hold the view that *ghina* (wealth) is superior to *faqr* (poverty). They argue that *Ghana* غناء (wealth) is an attribute of Allah, whereas *faqr* (poverty) cannot be ascribed to Him, therefore, an attribute common to Allah and Man is superior to one that is not applicable to Allah. I say this kinship is merely nominal, and has no existence in reality. As real kinship involves mutual resemblance and equality, but the Divine attributes are Eternal and the human attributes are created, hence their argument is incorrect.

I, Ali b. Uthman al-Jullabi, declare that *Ghana* (wealth) is a term that may only be applied to Allah. The created are not worthy of this attribute. While term *faqr* (poverty), is an attribute of Man and it cannot be applied to Allah. Metaphorically when we call a man *ghani* (rich), but in reality he is not so, because effectiveness of man's *Ghana* (wealth) depends on various causes, and we are rich only after accepting the causes, whereas the wealth of Allah, who Himself is the Author of all causes, is not due to any cause. Therefore, the partnership of Man with Allah in regard to this attribute is wrong and false. When nothing can be part of Allah, then how one can share His attributes, therefore, when it is impossible to be associated with His attributes, similarly, there cannot be any association with His names as well. As regard to call a man *ghani*, it is just phenomenal for reference purpose only and is used in a very limited sense.

The meaning of Allah's being *Ghani* (rich) is that He is independent of and from everything. He does whatsoever He wills, as nothing in the universe can disobey, deny or divert His will. He is competent to bring together opposites in the creature, such He has always been and such He shall be for ever. The *ghina* (wealth) of Man on the other hand, is for example, a means of livelihood, the presence of joy and delight, being saved from miseries, and the consolation of comfort. All these things are of phenomenal nature and subject to change. There end is helplessness and baseness. Therefore, *ghina* when used for Man is with its outward form, but when used for Allah, it is with its real inward essence. As Allah has said,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ

O ye men! It is ye that have need of Allah:" (Q 35:15)

وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ

but Allah is free of all wants, and it is ye that are needy." (Q 47:38).

Some prefer the rich man to the poor, on the ground that Allah has blessed the former in both worlds and has bestowed the benefit of richness on him. They mean by *ghana* (wealth) abundance of worldly goods, attainment of desires and enjoyment of pleasures and pursuit of lusts. They argue that Allah has commanded us to be thankful for *ghana* (prosperity) and patient in *faqr* (adversity). Since patience is commanded on adversity, and thankfulness on prosperity which is better than the former, therefore *ghana* is preferred over *faqr*. But I say that, when Allah commanded us to be thankful for prosperity, He also commanded that thankfulness increases the prosperity, but when He commanded us to be patient in adversity He made patience the means of drawing nigh unto Himself. He said,

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ

if ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you;" (Q 14:7)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

for Allah is with those who patiently persevere," (Q 2:153).

This means that one who thanks for which has its origin in heedlessness, Allah will increase his heedlessness, whereas, one who shows patience on *faqr* (adversity) which has its origin in distress will be graced with proximity.

The Sheikhs who prefer *ghana* (wealth) to *faqr* (poverty) do not use the term *ghana* in its popular sense i.e. acquisition of worldly benefits but what they intend is "acquisition of the Benefactor". Thus, the grace of union (with Allah) is different from gaining forgetfulness (of Allah). Sheikh Abu Said says,

الفقير هو الغني بالله

the one who's *ghana* is with Allah, is a poor,

i.e. everlasting revelation which is based on contemplation of the Truth.

But I say that revelation is a temporary phase and it implies the possibility of a veil. Therefore, if the person who enjoys revelation is veiled from revelation by the attribute of wealth, he either becomes in need of revelation or he does not. If he does not, the conclusion is absurd, and if he does need, then necessity arises which is contrary to *ghana* (wealth). The *ghana* as attribute of Allah is everlasting, eternal and real in its meanings. But being eternal *ghana* cannot coincide with the attributes of human nature, because the essential characteristics of mortality and phenomenal being are need and intelligence. Thus, one who is eternal with his attributes and remain eternal, only he is the *Ghani* and who loses his attributes is not worth to be called *Ghani*. Therefore “الغني من الغناء الله” the rich man is he who is enriched by Allah” because the term *من الغناء الله* refers to the agent whereas the term *الغني بالله* denotes the person acted upon. The former is self-subsistent, but the latter subsists through the agent. Accordingly self-subsistence is an attribute of human nature, while subsistence through Allah involves the annihilation of attributes. I assert that *ghana* has no relation with the existence of attributes, as it has already been said that human attributes are blameworthy and decaying. Similarly this term cannot be used when these attributes are non existent; because *Fani* (mortal) possess no name and when attributes are mortal they cannot be called either *ghani* or *faqir*. All the Sheikhs and majority of the people prefer *faqir* over *ghana* because Quran and *Sunnah* expressly declare it to be superior and majority of *Ummah* has consensus on it.

Once the matter was discussed by Junaid and Ibn Ata, and the later maintained the superiority of the rich. He argued that according to *Hadiith* (traditions), at the Resurrection they would be called to account for their wealth, and that such an account entails the hearing of the Divine Word, without any mediation, may it be in the form of reproach: and reproach addressed by the Beloved is also endearing to the lover. Junaid replied that wealthy will be accounted for but poor will be asked for excuse and asking for an excuse is better than calling to account. There is a unique observation in it, for in true love to ask for excuse or to be excused is a sign of strangeness and reproach is contrary to companionship. Lovers regard both as blemish, because excuse is made for some disobedience to the command of the Beloved and reproach is also made on the same score. Therefore, both are out of the question in true love, because, under all circumstances patience is expected from the poor and thanks from the rich. In real friendship one neither demands anything from a friend nor disobeys his command. So

ظلم من سمي ابن ادم امير وقد سماه ربه فقيرا

“whoever called a man rich, he acted wrongly, because Allah has called him *faqir* (poor),”

i.e. Allah has called Man *Faqir* (poor), may he be rich worldly but he would be called poor (*faqir*). Wrong is the one who calls a person rich, may the person be a king, because, before Allah Almighty he is *faqir* (poor). Reason for this is that rich is *Sahib-i Sadqa* (capable to dish out alms) and poor (*faqir*) is *Sahib-i Sidq* (Friend to the Truth), therefore, former cannot be placed equal to the later. Thus the *Ghana* (wealth) of Suleman (may blessings of Allah be on him) and the poverty of Salman Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him) are one. Allah said to Ayub (may blessings of Allah be on him) in extremity of his patience, and likewise to Suleman (may blessings of Allah be on him) in the plentitude of his dominion: “يَوْمَ الْعَيْدِ” how excellent in Our service! (Q 38:30,44). It means when Allah’s blessings are bestowed upon, it makes no difference between the poverty of Salman Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him) and the wealth of Suleman (may blessings of Allah be on him). I heard Abu al-Qasim Qushayri saying:

“People have spoken much concerning *faqir* (poverty) and *ghana* (wealth), and have chosen one or the other for themselves, but I choose whichever Allah chooses for me and protects me in. If He keeps me *ghani* (rich) I pray, He may not make me forgetful, and if He wishes me to be a *faqir* (poor) I pray not to be a covetous and rebellious.”

Ghana (wealth) is a gift but forgetfulness is its evil, similarly *faqir* (poverty) is also a gift but covetousness is its evil. Both conceptions are excellent, but their practice creates different results. Poverty is the separation of heart from all but Allah, and wealth is the preoccupation of the heart with that which does not admit of being qualified. When the heart is cleansed from all save Allah then

neither *faqr* is superior to *ghana*, nor is *ghana* superior to *faqr*. *Ghana* is the name of abundance of worldly goods and *faqr* (poverty) is the name of scarcity of them. Since all belongs to Allah, therefore, when the seeker acknowledges it and forgoes its ownership the problem of partnership vanishes and he gets free from both the names.

Sheikhs have described the inward and outward meanings of *ghana* and *faqr*, some mention of which is included here. One of the modern Sheikhs says:

ليس الفقير من خلا من الزاد إنما الفقير من خلا من المراد

“The poor is not he who is free of provisions, but he who is free of *Murad* (desire).” That is to say, if Allah gives him wealth and he cares for it, then he will be called *ghani* (rich) and if he renounces it, still he is *ghani*, because under both the circumstances he is interfering in other’s ownership. But *faqr* (poverty) consists in ceasing to act on one’s own prerogative.

Yahya b. Maud al-Razi says:

علامته الفقر خوف زوال الفقر

“The sign of *faqr* is that one remains scared of losing it.”

The sign of the rightness of *faqr* is that one in spite of the excellence of *Walayat* (saintship), steadfastness of contemplation and attributes of annihilation, remains fearful of loss or decline of *faqr*. The sign of the excellence in *faqr* is that one gets independent from the fear of the loss or decline of *faqr*.

Khawaja Muhammad Ruwaym says:

من نعت الفقير حفظ سره وصيائته نفسه وإداء فرائضه

“The characteristic of *faqir* (poor) is that he safeguards his inward secrets and guards his *nafs* (lower soul) from contamination, and is regular in performance of the obligatory duties of religion:”

The dignity of *faqir* (poor) is that he remains free from worldly gains, his outward is clean of evils and he is regular in performance of the obligatory duties of religion. He must not speak out his inward meditation and whatever turns up on his tongue the heart must not be committed to that. He should be so overwhelmed by his state at this *maqam* (station) that nothing should affect him and this is the sign of the annihilation of the human wants and one is totally subdued to the obedience of the Truth.

Bashr Hafi says:

أفضل المقامات اعتقاد الصبر علي الفقر الي القبر

“The best *maqam* (station) of this Path is to remain steadfast to endure poverty with patience till death.”

The patience and its belief are the *maqamat* (stations) of seekers. Since *faqr* (poverty) negates all *maqamat*, therefore, the resolution to be patient while enduring poverty demands negation of works and deeds and aspire to annihilate human attributes. This saying pronounces poverty to be superior to wealth, and expresses a resolve never to abandon it.

Shibli says:

الفقير لا يستغني بشيء دون الله

“The *faqir* (poor) is he who does not rest content with anything except Allah,” because he has no other object of desire.

The apparent meaning of this saying is that no one can get rich without Allah. His attainment is actual *ghana* and richness. Our existence is separate from Allah and when *ghana* and richness cannot be obtained without attaining Him that means our existence is a veil for *ghana* and if one abandons this Path (of attaining Allah) then how can *ghana* be obtained? This saying is very subtle and obscure. The spiritualists have some different meanings of this and they say, “الفقير لا يستغني عنه” *Faqir* (poor) never gets satisfied with the proximity of the Truth (Allah).” i.e. he keeps on striving for further proximity and does not desire end to it. This has been elaborated by Sheikh Abdullah Ansari Harwi who said:

“Our sorrow is everlasting. Neither can we see our aspirations meet their goal (Truth) nor our existence can become non-existence may it be this world or the next, because for the fruition of anything homogeneity is necessary, but Allah is above to be a genus. Though turning away from Allah takes place because of forgetfulness of Him, but the dervish can not be forgetful. This is a permanent obedience and a difficult path. Our lover is that Whose presence is unattainable through effort and union with him is not Man’s destiny. Nothing is averted both in the state of *Fana* (dead) and in *Baqa* (living), the *fani* (dead) never becomes living (*baqi*) so as to be united with Him and the living never becomes dead, so as to attain His presence. So the work of their lovers is very difficult and ever demanding, therefore, to console themselves they have invented a fine-sounding phraseology and have formed *maqamat* (stations), stages, and paths. These symbolic expressions are limited to themselves and their stations, stages, and paths are only related to their own states. Allah is exempted from every human attribute and relationship.”

Abu al-Hasan Nuri says:

نعت الفقير السكوت عند العدم والبذل عند الوجود

“The characteristic of *faqir* (poor) is that when he has nothing he is calm and when he has something he spends it on others.”

And he also says,

الاضطراب عند الوجود

He feels perturbed, when he gets something.

The practice pronounced in this saying is of great importance. It has two meanings, his calmness when he gets nothing is *rida* (satisfaction), and his liberality when he gets something is a proof of his love with Allah. One, who is satisfied with the will of Allah, is prized with a robe of honor, which is the sign of proximity (with Allah) but lover of the Truth is never desirous of robe of honor because the robe of honor indicates strangeness. His quiescence when he gets nothing is expectation of getting something, and when he has got it, that something is other than Allah; and he does not feel satisfied with other than Allah, rather gets disturbed and finds the liberality as way out to quickly get rid of something.

On the same subject Junaid says,

الفقر خلو القلب عن الاشكال

when his heart is empty of phenomena he is poor.

That’s why he is always quick to reject all other than Allah. Shibli says:

الفقر بحر البلاء و بلاء كل عز

Poverty is an ocean of trials, and all trials for His sake are glorious.

The honor is part of other because one who is right in the centre of trouble knows nothing of glory, until he forgets his trouble and regard the Author thereof. Then his trouble is changed into glory, which leads him to the nearness of Allah. His state of glory, changes into state of love and love changes into contemplation, so that the brain of the aspirant becomes wholly a centre of vision and he sees without

the eyes, similarly, he hears the Divine voice without ears. Thus, among the human the real and truthful is that man who bears all affliction with patience, for affliction is honor and grace is blameworthy. The honorable thing is that which graces one with the proximity of the Truth and blameworthy is that thing which leads one away from His Court. The pain of the *faqir* is the sign of presence (before Allah), whereas, the comfort of *ghana* is the sign of remoteness and absence (from Allah). The one who is gainer of proximity and presence (with Allah) is honorable and he who is devoid of it is deprived and wretched. The affliction and trial which result into proximity of the Truth and vision of the Lover is in any case better and praiseworthy. Junaid says,

يا معشر الفقراء انكم انما تحرفون بالله وتكرمون الله فانظروا كيف تكونوا مع الله اذا خلوت به

“O *fuqara* (poor), you are known through Allah, and are honored for the sake of Allah, see that how you behave when you are alone with Him,” i.e. when people honor you because of your being *faqir* (poor) and dervish, you also ensure that how you meet the obligations of the path of poverty. If people against your will call you by other names, do not show resentment because you are not justifying with your claim, for the basest of men is he who is thought to be devoted to Allah, but really is not. Glory to one whom people consider the Man of the Path and which he is actually. And still the noblest is the one to whom people do not consider a dervish but he is actually a dervish.

The former is like a physician who claims perfection in his trade and is busy in prescribing to patients, but since, he is a pretender to the profession, therefore, he makes their condition worse. And when he himself is sick, he needs another physician to prescribe for him. And one who is really a dervish and people also consider him to be such, he is like a physician who knows his profession and people recognize him be so, such person when get sick, can do look after himself. And the example of that person who is a pious devotee, but people thinks him not to be such, is that of a physician about whom people do not know, such person do not prescribes others, but himself enjoys with all the good feast and remedies and never get sick, and people remain unaware of his condition.

One of the moderns has said,

الفقر عدم بلا وجود

faqir (Poverty) is nothingness and it has no existence.

This expression is incomplete because what is non-existent does not admit of being explained. The only explanation possible is that *faqir* (poverty) is nothingness. How this can be possible that all the saints agree on such a reality which is non-existent and transient in itself. It is also not correct to say that non-existent of *faqir* does not mean non-existent of *faqir* but it denotes the non-existent of affliction. All the human attributes are subject to affliction, so when afflictions are denied it would result into annihilation of attributes, therefore, human attributes are subject to affliction and the same attributes are the source of attainment. When these are made extinct, it would close the way to the Reality and it would be nothing but wretchedness. I happened to meet with a group of scholastic philosophers who, failing to understand the drift of this saying, laughed at it and declared it to be wrong. There is another group of pretenders who although acknowledged this saying but was unable to follow its root. Both the parties are wrong. First group ignorantly denies the truth, and the second was following it because of ignorance.

Among the *Sufis* the meanings of such expressions “non-existence” and “annihilation” are the disappearance of a disapproved attribute in the course of seeking a praiseworthy attribute and not to get annihilated in the existence of the desired thing. Thus the word dervishhood is used here metaphorically and it apparently refers to poverty, but this is the route of the transcendent Divine of mysteries. So till the time he attribute his affairs and actions to himself, *faqir* (poorness) is ascribed to him, but when his affairs are freed from the bonds of acquisition, his actions are no more attributed to him. Then he is the Way, not the wayfarer, i.e. the dervish is a place over which something is passing, not a wayfarer following his own will. Accordingly, he neither draws anything to himself nor puts away anything from himself. All that leaves any trace upon him belongs to the Essence.

I saw another group of chatty people. They being ignorant of the reality of this matter, negated its attributes altogether. It is a big deviation as negation of *faqr* leads them to contradiction of its attributes. They are utterly failure in their search of the reality of the *faqr* and that which denies the search of the Truth and reality they consider that as *faqr* (poverty) and purity. It looked as though they affirmed their own fancies but denied all else. None of them was in any knowledge of *faqr*, whereas the knowledge of *faqr* causes the perfection of saintship, i.e. to know its reality and its adoption is the cause of excellent *maqam* (station). Therefore, the seeker of this path has no choice but to journey in their path and to traverse their stations and to know their symbolic expressions, in order that he may not be an illiterate among the elect.

Those who are ignorant of general principles cannot advance and those who are occupied with the derivative branches would remain entangled therein; and the one who is entangled there remains ignorant of its principles and loses his relations with others. I have said all this to encourage you to undertake this spiritual journey and occupy yourself with the due fulfillment of its obligations.

Now I will explain some of the principles and allegories and mystic sayings of Sufism. Then I will mention brief biographies of these holy men, and afterwards elucidate the different doctrines of Sufism. In the next place, I will treat the Verities, Sciences, and Laws of Sufism. Lastly, I will set forth their rules of discipline and the significance of their "stations", in order that the truth of this matter may become clear to you and to all my readers.

Chapter III

Sufism (*Tasawwuf* تصوف)

Allah Almighty has said:

وَعِبَادَ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

“And the servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, “peace!” (Q 25:63).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said:

من سمع صوت اهل التصوف فلا يومن علي دعاءهم كتب عند الله من الغافلين

“He who hears the voice of the *Sufis* and does not say *Amen* to their prayer is inscribed before Allah among the heedless.”

The true meaning of *Tasawwuf* تصوف (Sufism) has been much discussed and many books have been written on the subject. Some assert that *Sufi* is so called because he wears a woolen (*suf* صوف) garment, while others say that he is in the first row (*saf* صف). Some because of their attachment with to *Ashab-i Suffa*⁴, call them *Sufi* and still some are of the opinion that the name is derived from *safa* (purity). These explanations are far from satisfying the requirements of etymology.

The word *Safa* صفا (purity) is praiseworthy under all circumstances and its opposite is *kadar* كدر (impurity). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

ذهب صفو الدنيا وبقي كدرها

the pure part (the best) of this world is gone, and its impurity remains.”

The fine and the delicate part of something is called *safwa* صفو (purity), whereas its impure and dirty part is called *kadar* (impurity). Since the seekers of the path of *tasawwuf* keep their morals and conduct pleasing and pure their inwards from the evils and worldly desires, on that account they are called *Sufis*. So, this name has become a sign of recognition whereas the nobility of the *Sufis* is too great for their dealings to be unknown, so that name should need a derivation.

In the present age, Allah has kept the majority of the people away from the path of *tasawwuf* and *Sufis* and has veiled them from the mysteries and realities of *tasawwuf*. Accordingly some imagine that it consists merely in practice of outward piety and does not have any inward contemplation. Some others suppose that it is a meaningless form which has no essence and root. They by adopting the views of scoffers and worldly *Ulama* have denied Sufism altogether and because of ignorance feel delighted on their search. The people in general, conforming to this opinion, have expunged from their hearts the quest for inward purity and have discarded the tenets of the virtuous ancestors and the companions of the Prophet.

ان الصفا صفت الصديق ان اردت صوفياً علي التحقيق

“Verily, purity of heart is the characteristic of *Siddiq*, if you desire to be a true *Sufi* see him”.

⁴ See Chapter IX

The *Safa* صفا (purity) has a root and a branch, its root being separation of the heart from others (other than Allah), and its branch is that the heart should be empty of this deceitful world. Both these are the characteristics of the *Siddiq* (the Caliph) Abu Bakr Abdullah b. Abi Quhafa, (may Allah be pleased with him). He is the *Imam* (leader) of all the people of this Path. He was free of others so much that when Prophet (peace be upon him) died and the companions got saddened and heart broken, that Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) drew his sword and threatened to decapitate anyone who asserted that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was dead, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) stepped forth cried with loud voice,

الامن عبد محمد افان محمد اقدمات ومن عبد رب محمد فانه حي لا يموت

“whoever worshiped Muhammad let him know that Muhammad is dead, but whoever worships Lord of Muhammad, let him know that He is living and dieth not.”

Then he recited the following verse of Quran:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ

“Muhammad is no more than a Messenger: many were the messengers that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will you then turn back on your heels,” (Q 3:144).

It means that who is acquainted with the mortal, he is annihilated and afflicted when the mortal is annihilated, but one who acquaints himself with the Truth (Allah) becomes immortal, even though his physical body is annihilated. Those who regarded Muhammad (peace be upon him) with the eye of mortality ceased to venerate him as soon as he departed from this world, but to those who regarded him with the eye of reality his presence and absence were alike, because they saw both his existence in this world and his departure from here as truth and from the Truth. One at the *maqam* of *بقا بالله*, saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) living (*baqi*) with the Truth (Allah), and one who at the *maqam* of *فاني* saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) *fani* (dead) with the Truth (فاني بالله). That is to say, he looked not at the particular change which came to pass, but at the Author of all changes, and venerated Muhammad (peace be upon him) only in proportion as Allah honored him. He did not attach his heart to anyone (except Allah), and did not open his eyes to gaze upon mankind, inasmuch as:

من نظرا لي الخلق هلك ومن نظرا لي الحق ملك

“One who beholds mankind waned but that who returned unto Truth (Allah) attained the place of angel.”

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) showed that his heart was empty of this deceitful world, for he gave away all his wealth and dressed in a rough garment when he came to the Prophet (peace be upon him), who asked him what he had left for his family. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) replied, “Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him).” When the heart of Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was cleansed from the worldly love, automatically impurities got washed out and he sacrificed everything to please His Lord. All this is the characteristic of sincere *Sufi* and to deny them is the denial of the Truth and obstinacy.

As I have mentioned that *safa* (purity) is the opposite of *kadar* (impurity), and *kadar* is one of the qualities of man, therefore, the true *Sufi* is he who is clean from worldly impurities. When the human nature existed with the Egyptian women, they felt jealousy with Zulaikha. But when they looked upon amazing beauty of Yusuf (may blessings of Allah be on him), got fascinated and enraptured. Their human nature got annihilated and they cried

مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ

no mortal is this! This is none other than a noble angel.” (Q 12:31).

Here their human nature annihilated and they made Yusuf (may blessings of Allah be on him) their object but gave expression of their own state. Hence the Sheikhs of the Path have said:

ليس الصفاء من صفات البشر لان البشر ممدرا لا يخلو من الكدر

“Purity is not the quality of man, for man is created with clay, and clay involves impurity, and man cannot escape from impurity.”

Therefore, neither heart can be purified through acts and deeds, nor impurities of human *nafs* (lower soul) can be destroyed by means of efforts. The attribute of purity is isolated to acts and states, and its name is also unrelated with outward names and titles.

الصفاء صفة الاحباب وهم شمس بلا سحب

“Purity is in the nature of the lovers (of Allah), who are suns without clouds,” because purity is the attribute of those who love, and the lover is he that is *fani* (dead) in his own attributes and living in the attributes of his Beloved, and their “states” resembles the clear sun in the opinion of mystics. When Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked concerning the state of Haritha⁵ (may Allah be pleased with him), he answered,

عبد نور الله قلبه بالايمان

he is a man whose heart is illuminated by Allah with the *Nur* (light) of faith, so that his face shines like the moon from its effect.”

An eminent *Sufi* says:

ضياء الشمس والقمر اذا اشتراكا امزوج من صفاء الحب والتوحيد اذا اشتبكا

“When the *Nur* (light) of the sun and the moon is mingled together, it illustrates like the combination of purity of Love and Unification.”

Surely the light of the sun and the moon is worthless beside the *Nur* (light) of Love and Unification of Allah Almighty. Although, there is no comparison between them but no light is more evident than these two luminaries in this world. Through their light eyes are enabled to see the sky, whereas the heart through the light of *Marifat* (knowledge), *Tawhid* (unification) and love sees the *Arsh* (Empyrean), and while being still in this world explores the next world. All the Sheikhs of the Path are unanimous on that when a man has escaped from the captivity of *maqamat* (stations), got rid of impurity of states, and freed from the worldly changes and decay he is endowed with all praiseworthy qualities under all circumstances. Then he is separated from his own praiseworthy qualities, i.e. no thought of any of his praiseworthy quality comes to his mind. He neither sees it nor makes any self conceit thereby. He achieves the state where his intelligence is overcome and he is free from doubtless thoughts. He finds neither any danger in their presence nor does his existence depend on any cause, for purity is the name given to everlasting presence and such existence which is free of any cause and such presence which has no absence and such attainment which is free of causes. Because such presence which is annihilated by absence is really not a presence and that existent which is due to some cause is not existent. The elders have said:

لان الصفاء حضور بلا ذهاب ووجود بلا اسباب

“Inward purity is such a presence (with Allah) which never disappears, and is such a wealth which is bestowed upon by the grace of Almighty Allah, and not achievable through acquisition.”

Therefore, there is no absence from His presence and it is granted without acquisition and endeavor. And when the aspirant arrives at this *maqam* (stage), he becomes annihilated both in this and the next world, and he is attached with divine attributes while still existing in human body. The gold and mud

⁵ Abu Abdullah Haritha b. al-Nauman al-Ansari, companion of Prophet (peace be upon him).

becomes same in his eyes, and observance of the *Shariat* ordinances becomes easy to him. As when Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Haritha:

كيف أصبحت يا حارثه

“O Haritha what was your state in the morning?”

He replied that he started his morning with full faith on Allah.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “See O Haritha, think what are you saying, everything has some reality, what is the reality of your faith?”

He replied: “I have cut myself away from the world, my heart no more seeks it and its gold, silver and clay are all equal in my sight. I have passed my nights in wakefulness (praising Allah) and my days in fasting until I manifest to have vision of the Throne of the Lord, and the people of Paradise visiting one another, and the people of Hell cursing each other.”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said thrice,

عرفت فلزم

you have been blessed with *Marifat* (knowledge of Allah), therefore persevere.”

Sufi is an honorable name by which the most perfect saints and spiritual adepts are being remembered. One of the Sheikhs has said:

من صافاة الحب فهو صاف ومن صافاة الحبيب فهو صوفي

“He that is purified by love is pure, and he that is absorbed in the Beloved and has abandoned all else is a *Sufi*.”

The word *Sufi* has no derivation answering to etymological requirements, for the derivation of one thing from another demands homogeneity but *Sufi* is such an exalted noun that there exists no homogeneous to it from which it might be derived. All that exists is the opposite of it, and things can not be derived from their opposites. The meaning of *Sufi* is clear to Saints like the sun and does not need any explanation, as it cannot be described through expressions and signs. It has been said,

لان الصوفي ممنوع من العبارة والاشارة

Sufi cannot be encompassed with words or signs (indications).

So, when words and expressions are incapable to really define the word *Sufi*, and even if the whole world may try to explain it irrespective that whether they are successful or not in their effort, would not affect its dignity.

The perfect among them are called *Sufi*, and the aspirants among them are called *Mutasawif* متصوف (sufistic), for *tasawwuf* belongs to form *tafaul* تفعل , which implies “taking trouble,” and is a branch of the original root. The difference both in meaning and in etymology is evident. As it is said:

الصفاء ولايته ولها اياته ورواياته والتصوف حكايته للصفاء بلا شكايته

“Purity is saintship which has signs and marks, so Sufism is that anecdote of obtaining purity which holds no objection.”

The meaning of purity is clear and manifest and *tasawwuf* تصوف is the description of the same meaning and reality. Its followers in this degree are of three kinds, the *Sufi* صوفي, the *Mutasawuf* متصوف and the *Mustaswif* مستصوف.

The *Sufi* صوفي is one who is *fani* (annihilated) to self and *baqi* (existent) by the Truth. He has escaped from the human faculties and their usage and has attained the Truth (Allah).

The *Mutasawuf* متصوف is one who is seeking to reach this rank by means of self-mortification and in his search, is following the footsteps of accomplished *Sufis*.

The *Mustaswif* مستصوف is one who pretends like *Sufis* for the lust of wealth, power and worldly gains. He has neither any acquaintance with the *Sufis* and *Mutasawuf* nor he possesses any knowledge of the Path. It has been said about such a person:

المستصوف عند الصوفية كالذباب وعند غيرهم كالذئاب

“In the opinion of *Sufis* the *Mustaswif* is as despicable as flies, and for others he is like a wolf.”

The *Sufis* call the *Mustaswif* like flies because they animate *Sufis* for the sake of lust and they are like wolves for people because wolves are habitual of tearing, rending and eating carrion. Therefore the *Sufi* is called a man of attainment, the *Mutasawuf* a man of principles, and the *Mustaswif* a man of superfluities.

He who after attaining his object and desire has achieved the *maqam* (station) of union, he gets free from all other desires and objectives. And he, who achieves the state of mystic path, becomes firm in the “states” and steadfastly devotes himself for higher states. And that who achieves separation is left devoid of all, and satisfies himself with mere forms of Sufism, and because of this reality is never manifested on him and he remains devoid of union and righteous path.

The Sheikhs have many subtle definitions of Sufism which cannot all be enumerated, but we shall mention some of them in this book, if Allah wills, Who is the Author of success.

Dhu al-Nun says:

الصوفي إذا نطق بيان نطقه من الحقائق وان سكت نطقته عنه الجوارح يقطع العلائق

“The *Sufi* is one who when speaks, his words are the reality, and in his silence the conduct of his body parts explains his state of *faqr* (that he has cut all worldly ties).”

It means that when *Sufi* speaks, it is all truth and reality of his state and he says nothing which he does not possess. When he is silent, his conduct be an evidence of his *maqam* and *state* and he is evidently free from the worldly evils i.e. all that he says is based on sound principles and all that he does is pure detachment from the world. When he speaks his speech is entirely the truth, and his actions are wholly *faqr* (poverty). Junaid says:

التصوف نعت أقيم العبد فيه

“Sufism is an attribute wherein is Man’s subsistence.”

When he was asked whether it was an attribute of Allah or mankind, he replied,

نعت الحق حقيقته ونعت العبد رسمًا

its essence is an attribute of Allah and ceremonially is an attribute of mankind;” i.e. the reality of Sufism demands annihilation of man’s attributes which takes place with the existent of attributes of the Truth, for it is the attributes of Allah. The attributes being ceremonial involves that it demands self-mortification which is an attribute of Man. In other words we can say that it is incorrect to attach Man with any attribute in the Real Unification, for the attributes of mankind are not everlasting and these are just ceremonial which in themselves are nothing. Therefore, one need to accept principally the emergence of these attributes in man are in fact the acts of Allah. For example, Allah commands His servants to fast and on obedience he is named as *Saim* (one who is fasting). Apparently the *Saim* is the man and fasting is the work or attribute of him, but in reality it is the command of Allah i.e. it

belongs to Him. Allah revealed to Prophet (peace be upon him), “ الصوم لي وانا اجزي به” fasting is for Me, and I will give its reward.” He is the real owner of whole creature and relationship of anything with mankind is just ceremonial.

Abu al-Hasan Nuri says:

التصوف ترك كل حظ النفس

“Sufism is the renunciation of all selfish pleasures.”

And it is of two kinds i.e. formal and essential. When one is rejecting pleasure of the selfish desires, it is formal renunciation but if the pleasure itself is rejecting the man, it is the annihilation of pleasure and delight and a real contemplation. Therefore renunciation of pleasure is the act of Man, but annihilation of pleasure is the act of Allah. The act of Man is formal and metaphorical, while the act of Allah is real. This saying clarifies the saying of Junaid which is quoted above.

Abu al-Hasan Nuri also says:

الصوفية هم الذين صفت ارواحهم فصاً روائي الصف الاول بين يدي الحق

“*Sufis* are those people whose spirits have been purified, hence they attaining the front place have found rest with the proximity of Truth (Allah).” It means that those whose spirits through self-mortification have been purified from the contamination of humanity and self desires, and having fled all save Him and after achieving the highest degree of attainment, have found rest with proximity of Allah among the first ranks.

Abu al-Hasan Nuri further says:

الصوفي الذي لا يملك ولا يملك

“The *Sufi* is not he who possesses anything nor is he possessed by anything.”

Sufi should not claim ownership of anything nor should he himself be slave of anyone save Allah. This is the true *Maqam-i Fana* (annihilation), since one whose qualities are annihilated he neither owns anything nor is possessed by anyone. It is because ownership can only be applied to existent things. The *Sufi* does not own any worldly asset or any glory of the next world, for he is lost to himself. He does not desire authority over others, nor can he be subjugated by others. This saying is very subtle and refers to the sayings of those who are convinced of complete annihilation. If Allah wills, we shall mention in this work the points wherein they have fallen into error.

Ibn al-Jalla says:

التصوف حقيقته لا رسم له

“Sufism is an essence without form,”

The form belongs to mankind in respect to their conduct while the essence thereof is peculiar to Allah. Since Sufism consists in turning away from mankind, therefore it cannot be expressed and defined.

Abu Umru Damashqi says:

التصوف روئيته الكون بعين النقص بل غرض الطرف عن الكون

“Sufism is to see the universe with imperfect eye, rather to shut the eyes from it.”

To see the universe with imperfect eye is the attribute of those who are at state of *fanafillah* (annihilated to the Truth), because the objects of sight are phenomena, and when phenomena disappears, sight also disappears. And to close eyes to the universe is the attribute of those who are at state of *baqibillah* (living with the Truth), because shutting the eye to the phenomenal world leaves the spiritual vision subsistent, i.e. whoever becomes blind to self sees by means of the Truth. In that

state the aspirant has no self vision, rather it's the Truth through which he sees. The seeker of the world only sees the world and finds no way to come out of it. One who sees the world with imperfect eye i.e. with abhorrence, and does not desire it, is better than the former, and still the best is one who totally ignores it. One who sees the world with imperfection is veiled, for seeing of other is a veil. He who does not see is not veiled by his blindness, because he sees through the Truth.

This is the *maqam* (station) which aspirants consider an important foundation of the path, but to explain it here is unsuitable.

Sheikh Abu Bakr Shibli says:

التصوف شرك لأنه صيأنته القلب عن رويته الغير ولا غير

“*Tasawwuf* in one sense is also polytheism, because it implies to guard one's heart from the vision of other, but other does not exist.”

This means that in *Tawhid* (Unity of Allah) vision of other (than Allah) is polytheism, and when other has no existence and value in one's heart then from whom one need to guard his heart.

Sheikh Husri says:

التصوف صفاء السر من كدورة المخالفة

“Sufism is to purify the heart from impurity of the discord.”

It means that one should refrain from discord with Allah, because love is the name of concord, which is the opposite of discord. The lover has no other duty in this world but to keep the commandment of the beloved and if the object of desire is one, how discord can arise?

Muhammad b. Ali b. Hussein b. Ali b. Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with them) says:

التصوف خلق فمن زاد عليك في الخلق زاد عليك في التصوف

“Sufism implies morality. He that has the better disposition is a better *Sufi*.”

Good morality is of two kinds, goodness towards the Truth (Allah) and goodness towards humanity. The former is acquiescence in the Divine decrees, i.e. goodness to Allah is to remain contented on all matters. In later case the goodness to humanity is that one accepts all their evils and humiliations for Allah's sake. Both these aspects are beneficial for the seeker of the Path as Allah is independent of the seeker's acquiescence or resistance, and these two qualities depend on the *marifat* (knowledge) of His *Tawhid* (Unity). And Abu Muhammad Murtaish says:

الصوفي لا يسبق همته خطوته البتة

“The Sufi is one whose inward thoughts should also not take lead to his foot steps.” i.e. he is whole heartedly present: his soul is where his body is, and his body where his soul is, and has uniformity in his acts and deeds; his deed where his foot is, and his foot where his deed is.

This is the sign of presence without absence. This is contrary to the doctrine of those who say that one is absent from himself and present with Allah. Nay, it is not so. Rather the reality is that he is present with himself as well as with Allah. This is the sign of perfect union, because there can be no absence from self so long as one regards one's self. And when seeker ceases to regard self presence, he is absent from self and present with the Truth (Allah). The saying of Shibli closely resembles to it,

الصوفي لا يرى في الدارين مع الله غير الله

the *Sufi* sees nothing except Allah in both the worlds.” The self existence of man is other (than Allah), and when a man does not see other, he does not see himself also and becomes totally void of self, whether he is at *Maqam* of *fana* (annihilation) or *baqa* (subsistence).

Junaid says that Sufism is founded on eight qualities, generosity, acquiescence, patience, symbolism, traveling (strange hood), woolen dress, pilgrimage hood and *faqr* (poverty).

- the generosity of Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him), who offered his son for sacrifice;
- the acquiescence of Ishaq (may blessings of Allah be on him), who submitted to the command of Allah to give up his life;
- the patience of Ayub (may blessings of Allah be on him), who patiently endured the affliction of worms and the jealousy of the Merciful;
- the symbolism of Zakarriya (may blessings of Allah be on him), to whom Allah said,

أَلَمْ نَكَلِّمَكَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا زَمَرًا

thou shalt speak to no man for three days but with signal.” (Q 3:41)

and again to the same effect,

إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ نِدًا خَفِيًّا

Behold! He cried to his Lord in secret.” (Q 19:3):

- the traveling (strange hood) of Yahya (may blessings of Allah be on him), who was a stranger in his own country and an alien to his own kin;
- the wearing of wool by Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him), who wore woolen garment throughout;
- the pilgrimage hood of Jesus (may blessings of Allah be on him), who was so detached therein from worldly things that he kept only a cup and a comb. He threw away his cup when he saw a man drinking water through use of palms of his hands, and the comb likewise when he saw another man using his fingers to dress his hair;
- the poverty of Muhammad (peace be upon him), to whom Allah Almighty had given the keys of all the worldly treasures saying: “Lay no trouble on you, but procure every luxury by means of these treasures;” and he answered: “Lord, I desire them not, keep me one day full-fed and one day hunger.”

In the way of Path this is an excellent principle.

Abu Husri says:

الصوفي لا يوجد بعل عدمه ولا يعده بعل وجوده

“The Sufi is he whose existence is without non-existence and his non-existence without existence,”

i.e. he never loses that which he gets, and he never follows that which he loses.

Other meaning of this is, that his finding has no gain, and neither his no gain has any finding at any time, so that there is either an affirmation without negation or a negation without affirmation.

The object of all these expressions is that the Sufi’s state of mortality should entirely lapse, and that his bodily feeling should disappear and his link with everything is cut off, in order that the mystery of his mortality may be revealed and his various parts united in his essential self, and that he may subsist through and in himself. The effects of this can be seen in two Apostles. The one was Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him), in whose existence there was no non-existence, so that he made a plea to Allah,

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي -- وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي

O my Lord! expand me my breast; ease my task for me.” (Q 20:26-27).

Secondly, the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), in whose non-existence there was no existence, so that Allah said,

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ

have We not expanded thee thy breast? (Q 94:1).

One pleaded for adornment and the other was adorned without any demand.

Ali b. Bandar al-Sarafi Nishapuri says:

التصوف اسقاط الرويه للحق ظاهراً وباطناً

“Sufism is that the *Sufi* should not regard his own outward and inward, but should regard as all belonging to Almighty Allah.”

Thus, if he looks he sees only Almighty Allah because if he sees self outward, he visions an outward sign of Allah's blessing, and as he sees outward actions will not have the weight even of a gnat's wing besides the blessing of Allah. Therefore, he will immediately refrain from seeing self outward. And if he looks at the inward of the self, he should consider these achievements also blessing of Allah, and consider his personal efforts weighing less than a grain in comparison to blessing of Allah. So he sees nothing save Allah in both inward and outward states through His blessing and considers own efforts worthless.

Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Muqri says:

التصوف استقامة الاحوال مع الحق

“Sufism is maintaining state of steadiness with Allah,” i.e. the conditions cannot change the inward state of *Sufi* and neither can he be diverted from path of the Truth. It is because whose heart is devoted to the Author of states is not cast down from the rank of rectitude nor hindered from attaining to the Truth.

Maxims of Conduct

Abu Hafs Haddad of Nishapur says:

التصوف كله اداب لكل وقت ادب ولكل مقام ادب ولكل حال ادب فمن لزم اداب الاوقات

بلغ مبلغ الرجال ومن ضيع الاداب فهو بعيد من حيث يظن القرب ومردود من حيث يظن القبول

“Sufism consists entirely of etiquettes; every time, place, and circumstance have their own etiquettes; he who observes them religiously attains the high rank of holy men; and he who neglects them is far removed from the nearness (to Allah) and is cast off from the accepted *maqam* (station) of the Truth.”

The meaning of this is akin to the saying of Abu al-Hasan Nuri:

ليس التصوف رسوماً ولا علوماً ولكنه اخلاق

“Sufism is not composed of practices and knowledge (of religion), but it is morals (etiquettes),” i.e. if Sufism is consisted of practices, it could be gained by self-mortification and if it is consisted of knowledge, it could be gained by instruction. It is etiquettes, and it can not be acquired until one demands it from self and act on its principles. The distinction between practice (of social conduct) and etiquette (good moral conduct) is that practices are ceremonial actions devoid of sincerity and proceeds from certain motives, and are at variance with spirit. The morals are praiseworthy actions without ceremony or motive; it is in harmony with the spirit and clear of boastfulness.

Murta'ish says,

التصوف حسن الخلق

Sufism is the name of good manners.

This is of three kinds:

- To follow the commands of Allah with regularity and sincerity.
- To extend respect to one's elders and superiors; be kind to younger and inferior; and show justice to his equals by seeking no recompense.
- Avoid selfish desires and devilish acts.

Whoever adorns him with these traits, he is counted amongst the good natured men.

Whatever I have narrated is according to the following Hadith that once when mother of the believers Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) was asked about the *Khulq* (manners) of the Prophet (peace be upon him), she replied to read the following verse of Quran:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

“Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant.” (Q7:199).

Khawaja Muhammad Murtaish says:

هذا مذهب كله جد فلا تخلطوه بشيء من الهذيل

“The Sufism is wholly earnest, keep it clear from facetious acts.” It means, avoid the fake *Sufis* and do not follow them.

When the people of our time see these formalists among the aspirants to Sufism, and become aware of their *raqs* (whirling), see them deeply involved in enjoying singing, visiting the courts of sultans for the sake of meager benefits, they consider all *Sufis* to be alike. They also consider that the principles of Sufism and tenets of the ancient *Sufis* were just the same. They do not recognize that this is an era of affliction where *Sultans* are acting with tyranny and people are mostly committed to evils. Ostentation incites the ascetic to hypocrisy, and vanity incites the *Sufis* to dance and singing. You must know that the seekers who hold the doctrine can vanish but principles on which these are based cannot become extinct. The evil lies in the practitioners, not in the principles on which these are based. If some scoffers disguise their follies in the earnestness of true mystics, the earnestness of the later is not thereby turned to folly.

And Abu Ali Qarmisini says:

التصوف الخلاق الرضية

“Sufism is good morals and approved actions.” The good moral is that man's conduct under all circumstances should be praiseworthy and to Allah's approval. He should be content and satisfied.

Abu al-Hasan Nuri says:

التصوف هو الحرية والفتوة وترك التكلف والسخاء وبذل الدنيا

“Sufism implies to liberty, courage, generosity and abandonment of ineffective trouble.” It is that liberty and courage through which one gets free from the prison of selfish desires and overcomes evil lust. He is purged from the conceit of his guts, and does not strive after worldly appurtenances and rewards. It is that generosity through which he leaves this world to the people of this world.

And Abu al-Hasan Fushanji⁶ says:

التصوف اليوم اسم بلا حقيقة وقد كان حقيقة بلا اسم

“Nowadays Sufism is a name without a reality, but formerly it was a reality without a name.” In the time of the companions (may Allah be pleased with them) of Prophet (peace be upon him) this name did not exist, but the reality thereof was in everyone’s heart. Now only the name exists, but the reality is vanished. That is to say, formerly the practice was known but no one used to claim, but nowadays the pretense is known and the practice is unknown.

I have brought together and examined the sayings of the Sheikhs on Sufism, in order that Path may become clear to you (May Allah grant you felicity!) and that you may get hold skeptics and be able to say them that what do they talk about it? If they deny only the name it is no matter, but if they deny the essential ideas, this amounts to denial of the whole *Shariat* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his praised qualities. And I enjoin you may Allah grants you the felicity to hold these ideas in due regard and satisfy their just claims, so that you may refrain from idle pretensions and have an excellent belief in the *Sufis* themselves.

⁶ An eminent Imam of Khurasan, Died 348 A.H.

Chapter IV

The Dress of Sufis

Know that mostly the dress of *Sufis* has been patched frock and wearing of this dress is *Sunnah* (custom of Prophet), for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

عليكم بلباس الصوف تجدون حلاوة الايمان في قلوبكم

wear woolen raiment, so that you may feel the sweetness of faith.”

It is narrated by a companion of Prophet (peace be upon him) who says that

كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يلبس الصوف وبركب الحمار

the Prophet wore a woolen garment and rode on ass”

Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her),

لا تضيعي الثوب حتي ترقعيه

do not waste the garment, when torn patch it.”

It is related about Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), that he used to wear *muraqqa* (patched frock) which had thirty patches i.e. he repaired the garment for thirty times. Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the best garment is that which is cheaper and give the least trouble.

It is related that Commander of the Faithful, Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), had a shirt of which the sleeves were leveled with his fingers, and if at any time he wore a longer shirt he used to tear off the ends of its sleeves (probably there was a fashion of longer sleeves at that time).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was also commanded by Allah to shorten his garments, for Allah said:

وَيَا أَيُّهَا فَطْمَرُ

and thy garments keep free from stain!” (Q 74:4),

i.e. shorten them.

Hasan Basri says that he saw seventy companions of Prophet (they all had participated in the battle of Badr), all of them used to wear woolen garments, and the Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) used to wear woolen garment while in his detachment from the world. Hasan Basri further says that he saw Salman Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him) wearing a woolen frock which had many patches.

It is related through Umar b. Khattab, Ali b. Talib and Harim b. Hayyan (may Allah be pleased with them) that they saw Awais Qarni clad in a woolen garment on which there were many patches. Hasan Basri, Malik b. Dinar and Sufyan Thawri used to wear such patched woolen garments.

It is stated in the book “History of the Sheikhs” composed by Muhammad b. Ali Hakim Tirmidhi that Imam Abu Hanifa at first clothed himself in wool. When he retired to seclusion and adopted solitude, he in his dream saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) who commanded him to live amidst the people, because through him his *Sunnah* would be revived. Then Abu Hanifa refrained from solitude, but he

never put on a costly garment. He enjoined Dawud Tai, who was one of the most accomplished adepts in the path of Sufism, to wear woolen garment.

Once Ibrahim b. Adham clad in woolen garment came to visit Imam Abu Hanifa. The latter's disciples looked at him with contempt and belittling eyes, until Abu Hanifa spoke that our leader Ibrahim b Adham had come. The disciples pointed out to these remarks that the Imam never utters jests, how Ibrahim Adham had gained that leadership? Abu Hanifa replied that by continual devotion. He had been occupied in serving Allah while we remain engaged in serving our own bodies; hence, he became our leader.

Nowadays, if some persons for the sake of public honor and reputation have started wearing patched frocks to pose *Sufis'* habits or their hearts belie their external appearance, it might be that all people are not of similar nature. Know, there is only one General in the army, similarly there are very few genuine adepts in every sect. However, all who might be just possessing one odd characteristic, are referred to Sufism. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

من تشبه بقوم فهو منهم

one who adopts similarity of some people, he is amongst them,

i.e. one who makes himself akin to a group either in conduct or in belief, is one of that group.

Some see only outward condition of the *Sufis*, and others direct attention to their inward purity. Those who aspire to join the Path of Sufism remain bound to following four conditions:

- Those who get aspiration from such *Sufis* who are accomplished in their inward state, purity of heart, the subtlety, enlightenment, moderate in their outlook, and possess soundness of character. Such aspirant perceiving loftiness of these eminent occupying high states, develops liking for them and he joins to them in hope of attaining the same degree, and the beginning of his novitiate is marked by state of *kashf* (unveiling), purgation from desire, and renunciation of self.
- The second class of aspirants is attracted by those, who perform decent deeds, pure at heart and God fearing, and their adherence to of *Shariat* (religious law), knowledge of the different sorts of discipline, and excellence of conduct. The aspirants try to follow them and consequently they seek their association and follow the practice of piety. The beginning of their novitiate is marked by *mujahida* (self-mortification) and good conduct.
- The persons of third group like saints because of their humility, goodness of disposition and good deeds. Seeing their respectable conduct with superiors and kindness to inferior, and their contended way of life, they by denouncing the world and freeing themselves from its laborious activities join the pious with peace.
- The fourth group who themselves are lazy, proud, and lusty of power, because of their ignorance, considering just the outward actions of the *Sufis*, join them. When such persons join the company of *Sufis*, they knowing their weaknesses of the Path, treat them kindly and indulgently. But since they lack in their desire to seek the Truth, therefore, they are not much concerned to devote themselves to self-mortification and cleansing. They only desire that people should respect and be scared of them as they respect the saints and scared of them. They try to veil their ills in saints' piety. Although, they dress like the saints, but that cladding speaks out itself about their pretended deeds. Such people are referred in Quran as, “

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ مَحَلُّوا التَّوْرَةَ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَا بُدِيَ لَهَا يُحْمَلُ أَثْقَالًا يَنْسُ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ

“The similitude of those who are charged with the (obligations of the) Mosaic Law, but who subsequently failed in those (obligations), is that of a donkey which carries huge tomes (but understands not). Evil is the similitude of people who falsify the signs of Allah.” (Q 62:5).

Know that the last class is in majority in the prevailing era. It is imperative upon you not to even think of that which you cannot do. Your efforts of thousands of years to be in the folds of the Path can not be similar to that moment in which Truth Itself may takes you in Its folds. This does not happen by

adopting religious habits but through righteous deeds. When a person follows the Path of Sufism, his royal dress also becomes *muraqqa* and if he is reluctant to follow the Path, even wearing of *muraqqa* will not save him from the torments of Hell.

An eminent Sheikh when was asked why he did not wear a patched frock, he replied that it was hypocrisy to wear the garb of the *Sufis*. Is it not hypocrisy to dress up like a brave without possessing attributes of chivalry? So, if you wear this garb with a wish to be known by Allah as one of His elects, He knows that already. And if you wish to show to the people that you are an elect of Allah, should your claim be true, you are guilty of ostentation; and should it be false, of hypocrisy. Hence, this Path is very laborious. The *Sufis* are far high to need a special garment for this purpose. Someone very rightly has said,

الصفاء من الله تعالى انعام واكرام الصوف من لباس الانعام

purity of inward is a gift from Allah, whereas wool is the clothing of animals.

Dress up like *Sufis* is a pretension on part of those who clad like *Sufis*, so people might consider them also *Sufis*. Although the Sheikhs of this Path enjoined their disciples to wear patched frocks, and also did the same themselves, so that they are known by the people and they be watchmen on them, so that if they find them committing transgression, they might rebuke them; and also while clad in this garment, if they wishes to sin, they would be held back by shame.

In short, the wearing of *muraqqa* is the beauty and elegance of Allah's saints. The common people are honored by wearing it while the elite feels debased. When a common person wear such dress he is respected and honored by the people and debased for the elite is that they are looked upon very commonly when so dressed up. Hence it is said,

لباس النعم للعوام وجوشن البلاء للخواص

the *muraqqa* is a garb of happiness for the common, but a shield of affliction for the elects."

Mostly the commons are already afflicted and they possess no way to accumulate wealth and honor, whereas if the elite adopt this Path they have to forego their wealth and honor. So which is affliction for the elite that is blessing for the commons? Therefore, the elders have said,

المرقعة تميز الوفاء لاهل الصفاء وسريال السرور لاهل الغرور

muraqqa is enduring attire for the Pious and enjoying dress for the arrogant." The pious after wearing it refrains from worldly desires, and the arrogant are veiled from the Truth and denied blessings.

In short, wearing of *Muraqqa* is a cause of attaining something by all. If the Pious gets purity of the heart, the other is rewarded with bounty. It is a veil for some and conformity for other. I hope all they would be saved from the torments because of their love for each other. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

من احب قومًا فهو معهم

one will be with them whom he loves.

It is mandatory to desire the Truth wholeheartedly and to refrain from forms because who stick to outward he never achieves the reality. The self existence of human is a veil between him and the Truth and it is annihilated only by passing through the "states" and "stages" of mystic path. Purity is the name given to such annihilation. How can he who has gained it choose one garment rather than another, or take pains to adorn himself at all? And one who has attained the state of *fana* (annihilation) from humanity, how should he care whether people call him a *Sufi* or by some other name?

The condition of wearing a *Muraqqa* is that it should be worn informally with simplicity. The original *Muraqqa* should be mended whenever need arises. The Sheikhs have two opinions in this regard.

Some hold that it is not must to do patchwork neatly, rather only torn part of cloth which needs repair should be mended. The others have opposite view and they prefer that patchwork should be done neatly and with symmetry because it is part of the practice of the dervishes to do each act with accuracy and neatness.

I while in Tus asked Sheikh, Abu al-Qasim Gurgani that what was the least thing necessary for a dervish in order that he might become worthy of poverty. He replied that a dervish at least must act for the following:

- He must know how to do the patch work rightly on his *muraqqa*;
- He must have the capability to know the truth;
- He must know how to set his foot rightly.

A number of dervishes were present with me when he said this. As soon as we came out each one began to apply this saying to his ease. Some of them because of ignorance took it as that *faqr* (poverty) is only that one should be able to mend his *muraqqa* rightly and know how to step on ground. Every one of them thought that he had understood the Sheikh rightly. Since my heart was devoted to the Sheikh, and I was unwilling that his words should fall so lowly, therefore, I invited them to share our opinion on this subject. So everyone stated his view, and when my turn came I said:

- A right patch is one that is stitched for poverty, not for show. If it is stitched for poverty, it is right, even though it be stitched wrongly.
- And a right word is one that is heard in relation to the occasion not willfully, and is applied earnestly not frivolously, and is apprehended through spirituality not by reason.
- And a right foot is one that is put on the ground with true rapture, not playfully and formally.

Some of my remarks were reported to the Sheikh, who said that Ali had spoken the reality, may Allah reward him! Hence, the intention behind wearing patched frocks is to alleviate the burden of this world and to be sincere in poverty towards Allah.

It is related that when Jesus was raised to heaven he was wearing a *muraqqa*. Some Sheikh saw him in his dream clad in a *muraqqa*, and each patch of that was emitting splendor of light (*Nur*). On his quest to know Jesus told him that it was reward of that labor and tribulation which he used to exert and bear while mending his *muraqqa*. Allah Almighty had turned into *Nur* every tribulation which He inflicted on his heart.

In Transoxania I saw an old man who belonged to the sect of *Malamatis* (who is blamed). He had restrained himself to eat and wear all that which human beings had the habit. His food consisted of things thrown away by them, such as wasted vegetables, sour gourds, rotten carrots, and the like. His clothes were made of rags collected from rubbish and sewed into a *muraqqa*. And among the mystics of recent times, I have heard of an elder of Merv Alrud, who had flourishing condition and of an excellent character, that he had sewn so many patches on his seating rug and cap that scorpions brought forth their young in them. My Sheikh wore a single cloak for fifty six years, on which he used to sew pieces of cloth without taking any pain.

There were two dervishes from Iraq, one a votary of the contemplative life and the other a votary of purgative life. The former clothed himself from the pieces of cloth which were torn off by dervishes in a state of ecstasy from their own garments, while the other used for the same purpose only the pieces torn off by dervishes who were asking forgiveness. Thus the outward garb of each was in harmony with his inward disposition. This is the observance and watchfulness of the state.

Sheikh Muhammad b. Khafif wore a coarse frock for twenty years, and every year he used to undergo four *chilla* (seclusion for mystic commune) of forty days duration of each, and during every *chilla* he would compose a book on the mysteries of Sciences of Divine Verities. One of his contemporary, namely Muhammad b. Zakarriya, resident of Faris, who was well learned in the mystic way of life, never wore *muraqqa*. Someone asked Sheikh Khafif what was involved in wearing a *muraqqa*, and

who was permitted to do so?" He replied that it involved those obligations which were fulfilled by Muhammad b. Zakariya in his white clothing, and the wearing of *muraqqa* fits on him.

It is not must in the Mystic Path to follow each and every act of *Sufis* because due to two reasons some Sheikhs have abandoned *muraqqa*. The procurement of wool from authenticated sources has become doubtful because of regular theft and plundering of wool producing animals and that a sect of heretics has also adopted the *muraqqa* (patched frock) as an insignia and it is praiseworthy to depart from such heretics, may it be departures from *Sunnah*. *Sufis* have started taking pain while sewing patches. It has increased their respect and honor in the eyes of people and everyone now try to copy them. Apparently they clad themselves in *muraqqa* but their acts are blameworthy. Their acts annoyed *Sufis* so much that they have adopted unique methods to sew their garments and have made them as mark of mutual identification. They observe it so religiously that once a dervish came to one of the Sheikhs wearing a *muraqqa*, on which the improper patch work was done, the Sheikh expelled him from his presence. The reality of purity of heart lies in the delicacy of nature and temperament. In the purity of heart, no relaxation is tolerable. It is but natural to disapprove incorrect actions, just as it is natural to derive no pleasure from improper poetry.

Some saints do not trouble themselves about clothes at all. They wear what ever Allah provides to them, may it be a costly attire or normal religious habit and if Allah keeps them unclothed, they remain in that state. I approve this habit and practice it in my journeys.

It is related that Ahmad b. Khadruya when he visited Abu Yazid was wearing a *quba* (costly attire), and Shah b. Shuja also wore a *quba* when he visited Abu Hafs. This was not their usual dress, for sometimes they wore a *muraqqa* and sometimes a woolen garment or white dress to ensure that they did not adopt some regular habit. The human soul is habituated to things and fond of customs, and when anything becomes habitual to the soul it soon grows natural, and when it has grown natural it becomes a veil. Hence the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

خير الصيام صوم اخي داود عليه السلام

the best of the fasts is that of my brother David (may blessings of Allah be on him).

David used to keep his fast on alternate days. He used to fast on one day and have break on the following day in order that his soul should not become accustomed either to keeping the fast or to leaving it, for fear of that he might be veiled thereby. The most pleasing act in this regard was of Abu Hamid Dustan Mervasi. He would happily accept the garment which his disciples used to put on him, but when some desired its need and he unclothed him when he was at leisure and alone, he would not refuse to that person also. Nowadays, there is a dervish Mavid in Ghazna who has no choice or discrimination with respect to his clothes and he follows is religiously.

Mostly Sheikhs have liked to wear blue garments. One of the reasons is that the foundation of their mystic path is based on wandering and traveling and white dress is prone to get dirty quickly in such environments and is liable to frequent washing. Besides white dress is commonly worn and liked. The blue dress symbolizes the bereaved and afflicted, and is the apparel of mourners. Since this world is the abode of trouble, the pavilion of affliction, the den of sorrow, the house of parting and the cradle of tribulation, therefore, aspirants of Truth remain in mourn condition and clad themselves in blue garments. The aspirants who realizing imperfection in their acts and failing in achieving their desired aims clad themselves in blue garments. One wears blue dress for the death of a dear friend, another for the loss of a cherished hope.

A dervish was asked why he wore blue dress. He replied that the Prophet (peace be upon him) left three things, poverty, knowledge, and the sword. The sword was taken by monarch, who misused it, knowledge was chosen by savants who were satisfied merely teaching it and poverty was chosen by dervishes who made it a means of enriching themselves. I wear blue as a sign of mourning for the calamity of these three classes of men.

Once, Murtaish was walking through some habitat of Baghdad. Being thirsty, he went to a door and asked for water. The daughter of the householder brought some water in a jug. Murtaish was obsessed by her beauty and would not leave the spot until the master of the house came. Murtaish cried before him that the girl gave him a drink of water and robbed him of his heart. The householder replied that the girl was his daughter and offered her daughter's hand to Murtaish and solemnized their wedding immediately. The bride's father, who was a wealthy man, sent Murtaish to the bath house, where they took off his patched frock and clothed him in a fine dress. At night when he got engaged in his prayer and solitary devotion, suddenly he called for his *muraqqa* to be brought back. On asking he answered, that he had heard a voice within, whispering:

"On account of one disobedient look We have removed your *muraqqa*, the garb of piety, from thy body, if you look again We shall remove the raiment of intimacy from your heart."

The dress which is worn to gain proximity of the Truth and following in obedience of the friends of Allah is always blessed. It should only be worn if one is confident to fulfill its due rights; otherwise it is better to remain contented with the normal ordinances of the religion. It is unlawful to play dishonestly with the dress of the saints because it is better to remain a true Muslim than falsely pretending like *Sufis*.

Only two kinds of men qualify to wear the *muraqqa*:

- those who are cut off from the world, and
- those who feel a longing for the Lord.

It is the tradition of the *Sufi* Sheikhs that when a novice joins them, with the purpose of renouncing the world, they subject him to spiritual discipline for three continuous years. If he fulfills the requirements of this discipline, well and good, otherwise they declare him unfit for the Path. The discipline requires to be followed is as:

- The first year is devoted to the service of the people.
- The novice should spend second year in obedience to Allah.
- In the third year should watch over and guard his heart.

It is possible to serve the people only when he places himself in the rank of servants and all other people in the rank of masters, i.e. he must regard all, without any discrimination, as being better than himself and must consider it his duty to serve all alike. He should never demand any credit for this service and neither should he ever possess such thought that because of this act he has become superior to them, for this is manifest perdition, an evident fraud, and is one of the infectious cankers of the age.

And he can serve Allah Almighty only when he cuts off all his selfish interests relating either to this world or to the next, and worships Allah purely for Him and not for anything else even for the fear of Hell or desire of Heaven, because one who worships for the lust of Heaven, then Heaven is his lord not Allah.

And he can guard his heart only when his thoughts are collected and worries are dismissed from his heart, so that in the state of intimacy (with Allah) he preserves his heart from the ambushes of heedlessness.

When novice achieves these qualifications, he is entitled to wear the *muraqqa* as a true mystic, not merely as an imitator of others. And the person who invests the novice with the *muraqqa*, must be a man of rectitude, who has traversed ups and downs of the Path and have tasted the rapture of states of the Path, perceived the nature of actions and experienced the severity of the Divine Majesty and the clemency of the Divine Beauty. Furthermore, he must be capable to examine the state of his disciple and judge what *maqam* (station) he will ultimately reach, and whether he is among the retiring one or who habitates at one *maqam*, or attain their destination. If he considers that someday he will abandon the Path, he must forbid him to enter upon it. If the novice is of the type who may abandon the path halfway, he must be looked upon and treated according to the rules of the Path, and who is capable of

achieving the goal, he must be spiritually nourished. The *Sufi* Sheikhs are physicians of men's souls. When the physician is ignorant of the patient's malady he kills him by his art, because neither he knows how to treat him nor capable to recognize the symptoms of danger, and is unable to prescribe suitable doze. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الشيخ في قومه كالنبي في امته

the Sheikh in his community is like the Prophet in his *Ummah*.

The prophets showed insight in their call to the people, and used to entertain everyone according to the requirements of the call. They kept each individual at his proper place and degree. So the Sheikh likewise should show insight in his call, and should give to everyone his proper spiritual nourishment, in order that the object of his call may be secured. So, when the accomplished Sheikh after three years training of the novice, perceiving his state through spiritual eye, and on finding perfection in novice, his act to invest the novice with the *muraqqa* will be a right step.

Investing *muraqqa* is, comparable to dressing one in a coffin (winding-sheet). The wearer must resign all his hopes of the pleasures of life, and purges his heart from all sensual delights, devote his life entirely to the service of Allah and completely renounces self-centered desires. The disciple then fulfills all the obligations invested on him through this honor, and strives with all his might to perform them, as deems it unlawful to satisfy his own wishes.

Sheikhs have uttered many allegories concerning the dress of the *Sufis*. Sheikh Abu Maumar Isfahani has written a book on the subject, which contains extravagance uttering of general natured aspirants to Sufism. My aim, however, in this work is not to repeat the book, but to elucidate the difficulties of the Path.

The one of the allegories concerning *muraqqa* is that:

- its upper indicates patience,
- its two sleeves points to fear and hope,
- its two gussets point to contraction and dilation,
- its waist refers to self-denial,
- its collar indicates soundness in faith, and
- its fringe points to sincerity.

Better still is the following:

- Its upper is annihilation of intercourse with creation,
- its two sleeves are poverty and purity,
- its two gussets are observance and continence,
- its waist is persistence in contemplation,
- its collar is tranquility in (Allah's) presence, and
- its fringe is settlement in the abode of union.

When you have worn a *muraqqa* like this for your exterior, it behooves you to adopt such practices for your spiritual self also. I have composed a book on this subject, entitled “اسرار الخرق والجرعونات” (The mysteries of Patched Frocks and Means of Livelihood),” of which the novice should keep a copy.

If the novice, having put on the *muraqqa*, should be forced to tear it under compulsion of the temporal authority or being in the state of rapture, this is permissible and excusable. But if he tears it of his free will and deliberately then he has no right to wear it again. If he still wears it, he stands on the same footing as those who are content to wear *muraqqa* for outward show, with no achievable spiritual gain.

The real sense in tearing or rending of dress is that aspirant has to move from one *maqam* (station) to another higher *maqam*. When *Sufis* pass from one stage to another, they immediately change their dress in thankfulness for having gained a higher stage. Whereas every other garment is the dress of a single stage, the *muraqqa* is a dress which comprises all the stages of the Path, therefore to discard it is equivalent to renouncing the whole Path. I have made a slight reference to this question, although this is not the proper place for it. I will give a detailed explanation of the principle in the chapter on rending *muraqqa* and revelation of the mystery of audition.

Furthermore, it has been said that one who invests a novice with the *muraqqa* should possess such sovereign mystical powers that any stranger on whom he looks kindly should become a friend, and any sinner whom he clothes in this garment should become a saint.

Once I was traveling with my Sheikh in Azerbaijan, we saw some persons wearing *muraqqa*, who were standing beside a wheat barn and holding up their skirts in the hope that the farmer would oblige them with some wheat. Observing their ill state Sheikh exclaimed:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ

“These are they, who have bartered guidance for error, but their traffic is profitless, and they have lost true direction.” (Q 2:16).

I asked him that how had they fallen into that calamity and disgrace. He said that their Sheikhs were greedy to gather disciples, and they are greedy to collect worldly goods. No greed is better than other and pretended claim is also a greed.

It is related of Junaid that he saw a beautiful Christian youth and prayed to Allah, “O Lord, pardon him for my sake, for Thou hast created him exceptionally fair.” After a while the youth came to Junaid and made profession of Islam and was enrolled among the saints.

Abu Ali Siyah was asked that who were permitted to invest *muraqqa* on novices. He replied that one who oversees the whole kingdom of Allah, so that nothing happens in the world without his knowledge.

So *muraqqa* is the symbol of saints and badge of Sheikhs and dress of poor and *Sufis*. If someone deviate and use it for earning worldly benefits, for that *Sufis* may not be criticized.

Chapter V

Poverty (الفقر) and Purity (الصفوة)

The practitioners of the Mystic Path differ on the merits of *faqr* فقر (poverty) and *safwat* صفوت (purity). Some opine that poverty is better accomplished in each respect as compare to purity, whereas some prefer purity over poverty. Those who prefer poverty, say that poverty is complete annihilation in which every thing (save Allah) extinct, and purity is one of the *maqam* (stations) of poverty. When aspirant gains annihilation, all stations fade away, as has been discussed in the preceding chapter on Poverty and Wealth. Those who set purity above poverty say that poverty is an existing thing and is capable of being named; whereas purity is getting bare hand from all existing things. Purity is complete annihilation and poverty is the essence of subsistence, therefore, poverty is one of the names of *maqamat* (stations), but purity is the name of perfection.

The matter has been disputed at great length in the present age and people have resorted to fanciful and surprising verbal subtleties. There is a lot of difference among poverty and purity on excellence and superiority. They all agree that display of beautiful expressions is neither poverty nor purity. The people have established their own sects just by following outward expressions and have not taken pain to go into their roots and lost the reality. It is just a war of words between them which denies them the Truth. Self denial they call negation of essence, and affirmation of self desire they regard as affirmation of essence. They in the presence of the evils of their *nafs* (lower soul) and wishful desires, existent and non-existent, have and have not, are all themselves. The path of Sufism is free and clean of their nonsense.

The flight of the Saints of Allah is so high where *maqamat* and degrees become extinct and where outward expressions fall from the underlying realities, so that neither spiritual delight is left nor taste, and neither sobriety nor effacement. After acquiring such a state when they try to seek names to express the reality, they do not find words because the Truth is far above to be given names. At this stage, in dealing with the ideas themselves, the question of superiority does not arise, and no one can claim the superiority of either. So after realizing it there is no need of further lucidity that it is useless to discuss superiority of either because to call either of the two superior effects on the priority of other. So to some people poverty seem to be superior and they prefer it because it speaks of renunciation and humility. And some prefer purity, and hold it the more honorable because it is related to denying and annihilating all the worldly and soul's contaminations. They try to explain their own ideas through adopting these two names. Since it is difficult to get proper words to fully explain the reality, therefore they talk to each other in symbolism. So, when name is non-existent, from where the question of superiority arises. But when people through efforts produce names and words i.e. poverty and purity, then they start giving preference one to other. Amongst the *Sufis* it is the meanings which are discussed, whereas the ignorant linguistics is trapped in the gimmick of words and prefer one over the other. But who is manifested with the Truth, he makes it *Qibla* of his heart and then you may call him *Faqir* (poor) or *Sufi*, it is immaterial for him because reality is far above than the words.

This controversy dates back from the time of Abu al-Hasan Sumnun. He when in a state of revelation akin to subsistence, used to set poverty above purity and when in a state akin to annihilation, used to set purity above poverty. When the spiritualists of that time inquired why he did so, he replied:

“As my nature has attained the magnificence in the *maqamat* (stations) of annihilation and abasement, it has similar position at the *maqam* of subsistence, therefore, I prefer purity to poverty when I am in a state akin to annihilation, and I prefer poverty to purity when I am in a state akin to subsistence, for poverty is the name of subsistence and purity that of annihilation. In the later state I annihilate from myself the sight (consciousness) of subsistence, and in the former state I annihilate from myself the sight of annihilation, so that my nature becomes dead both to annihilation and to subsistence.”

These are just good explanations but in reality neither annihilation has subsistence nor subsistence can be annihilated because one who attains state of annihilation, is annihilated to himself and from here when he achieves the *maqam-i billah* (state of subsistent with the Truth), he is subsistent to himself i.e. he is back to his normal self. Annihilation is a term of which it is impossible to speak hyperbolically. For example it is wrong to say that annihilation will annihilate, because so long as any vestige of existence remains, annihilation is not complete and when it has been attained, the “annihilation” thereof is nothing but self-conceit flattered by meaningless phrases. In the vanity and rashness of youth I composed a discourse of this kind, entitled the “Book of Annihilation and Subsistence,” but in the present work I will set forth the whole matter with caution.

In spiritual sense this was the difference between Purity and Poverty, but when these terms are considered in their practical aspect, they denote removing one’s self from worldly things and casting away of all one’s possessions, and then the discussion matter falls in the category of poverty (*faqir*) and lowliness.

Some Sheikhs assert that the *faqir* (poor) are superior to the *miskin* (lowly), because Allah has said:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَحْصُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

(Charity is) for those in need, who, in Allah’s cause are restricted (from travel), (Q 2:273).

The Lowly is that who possesses means of livelihood, but *faqir* (poor) is he who has nothing. Therefore, poverty is honor and Lowliness abasement, hence, on the Mystic Path, he who possesses the means of livelihood is considered worthless. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

تعس عبد الدارهم وتعس عبد الدينار وتعس عبد الخميصة والقطيعة

“Woe befall those who worship the *dinar* and the *dirham*, woe befall those who worship bag and purse!”

He who renounces the means of livelihood is honored and is better than who possesses worldly means, because, who has means depends on them whereas who has nothing depend on Allah.

But some declare *miskin* (lowly) as superior to *faqir* (poor), because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

اللهم احيني مسكينا امتني مسكينا واحشري في زمرة المساكين

“Let me live lowly, and let me die lowly, and raise me from the dead among the lowly!”

Whereas, speaking of Poverty, he said,

كأد الفقران يكون كفرًا

“Poverty is near to being unbelief.”

According to this Hadith the poor are dependent on a means, but the lowly are independent.

Some Religious Scholars hold that the poor are those who have sufficiency whereas lowly are free from worldly cares. But some others hold the converse of this view.

The accomplishers of the *maqamat* have given name of *Sufi* to the *miskin* (lowly), and they are in agreement with the formers. And those consider the later view, for them purity is more honored than poverty.

Chapter VI

Blame (*malamat* ملامت)

Some of the *Sufi* Sheikhs have trodden the path of *malamat* ملامت (blame). Blame creates great effect in making love sincere. The followers of the Truth and especially eminent scholars of religious law have always been targeted by the people. Even the Prophet (peace be upon him), who is the exemplar and *Imam* (leader) of the adherents of the Truth, and head of the lovers of Allah, was honored and held in good repute by all until Divine inspiration was revealed to him and then the people loosened their tongues to blame him. Some called him soothsayer, some named him a poet, and others crossing limits called him a madman and a liar. And Allah describing the true believers says:

وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“And never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault, that is the Grace of Allah, which he will bestow on whom he pleaseth. And Allah encompasseth all, and He knoweth all things. (Q 5:54).

Such is the ordinance of Allah, that He causes those who talk of Him to be blamed by the whole world, but preserves them from misdeeds of people. This He does in His jealousy. He guards His lovers by keeping them away from the eyes of people, lest the eye of any stranger should behold the beauty of their state, and He guards their own beauty also, so they may not fall into self-conceit and arrogance. Therefore, He sets vulgar over them so they loose their tongue against them, and He activates lovers' *nafs lawama* (inner soul) also to keep a check on them for any misdeeds. So when they do some blameworthy act, they are checked through their own inner soul, which even on their good deeds also blame them for doing less while they could do more.

There is no other veil or taint more serious in the Path than that one through his good deeds is preoccupied by self-conceit, and it is caused due to either on securing public honor and appreciation from the people, i.e. when they like some of his acts, they appreciate him which creates self vanity in his heart, or when one does not like the acts of others and feels pleased and pride with his own acts. Allah with His kindness to save His friends, make public against them, so that if their actions are bad, they do not spare them and even if their deeds are good, these are not approved by people because of their ignorance to reality, and they reproach them. Though the aspirants do a lot of self-mortification and abstinence but they do not regard them as proceeding from their own strength and power. Consequently they do not feel pleased with themselves and remain protected from self-conceit. In short people do not approve elects of Allah and similarly one who is slave of his self is not approved by Allah.

As *Iblis* (Satan) was approved by Genii and angels, but he was pleased with himself, therefore, he got disapproval of Allah. Their approval only brought a curse upon him. Adam, on the other hand, was disapproved by the angels, who said,

أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ

wilt Thou place therein one who will make Mischief therein and shed blood?” (Q 2:30).

Adam was not pleased with himself, therefore, he said,

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا

our Lord! We have wronged our own souls” (Q 7:23),

therefore, he was approved by Allah Who further said,

but he forgot: and We found on his part no firm resolve.” (Q 20:115).

So, disapproval of the creation and Adam’s self displeasure bore the fruit of mercy from Lord and He made it evident to all that His approved one is not approved by the creation and His disapproved is approved of creation. Hence the blame of mankind is the feed of the friends of Allah, because it is a token of Divine approval. It is the delight of the saints of Allah, because it is a sign of nearness to Him, and they rejoice in it even as other men rejoice in popularity. There is in the Hadith *Qudsi* (tradition of Prophet which revealed to him through Gabriel, may blessings of Allah be on him) that Allah said,

اوليائي تحت قباي لا يعرفهم غيري الا اوليائي

My friends (saints) are under My cloak: save Me and My friends, none knows them.”

The blame (*malamat*) is of three kinds:

- it may result from following the right way, or
- from an intentional act, or
- from abandonment of the *Shariat* (Religious Law).

In the first case, one performs his acts and devotion according to *Shariat* and is not worried on people’s reaction, but still people continue blaming him.

In the second case a man who is greatly honored by the people which causes vanity in his heart, he cures it through doing some act although which is not against the *Shariat*, but people might consider so. People seeing such acts develop hatred against him and openly blame him, but this gives satisfaction to his heart and he gets the proximity of Allah.

In the third case, a man is driven by his natural infidelity and erroneous belief to abandon the *Shariat* and abjure its observances, and claim that he has chosen path of blame.

The first type of people who maintains the right way and they do not need the hypocrisy of the second type of people. They pay no heed to the blame of the vulgar but invariably take their own course, and it is all the same to them by what name they are called.

One day Sheikh Abu Tahir Iraqi riding a donkey which was being managed by one of his disciples was passing through a bazaar. Some person cried out on him and shouted see here goes the nonbeliever Sheikh? This annoyed the disciple and he tried to rush at the speaker. The people around them also could not hide their resentment. The Sheikh calmed them down. When they returned home, he asked the disciple to bring a certain box which contained letters. The Sheikh showed him letters addressed to him by various people who had honored him with titles such like “the Sheikh of Islam”, “the pure Sheikh”, “the ascetic Sheikh”, “the Sheikh of the two sanctuaries”, and so on. The Sheikh said that these were all titles but there was no mention of his name. He was not worthy of any of those, but each had honored him with the title in accords with his belief concerning him. If that poor fellow did the same, why should you quarrel with him?

The second type of people who incurs blame intentionally and resigns honor and withdraws from authority is like the Caliph Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) who, although had four hundred slaves, one day came forth from his date plantation carrying a bundle of firewood on his head. On being asked why he did so, he answered that he wished to make trial of his *nafs* to know whether dignity which he enjoyed hinder him from any work. This clearly establishes the reality of blame. A similar tale related of the Imam Abu Hanifa will be found elsewhere in this book.

Another story is told about Abu Yazid, that when people of Rayy came to know about his arrival from the *Hijaz*, they rushed out of the city to honor him. Sheikh knew that they would welcome him and their attention would distract him from *dikr* (remembrance of Allah). When he entered the bazaar, he took a

loaf from his sleeve and began to eat. Seeing that people deserted him for it was the month of Ramadan. Although being traveler, fasting was not mandatory for him. He said to a disciple who was traveling with him, "You saw how I got rid of them just by parting from a single rule of the *Shariat*."

I, Ali b. Uthman al-Jullabi says that during those days it was necessary to do some incorrect act for incurring blame, but in our time, if anyone desires blame, he need only to lengthen his voluntary prayers or fully adhere to prescribed religious practices, at once everybody will call him a hypocrite and imposter.

And now the third group who abandons the *Shariat* and says that he is doing it for *malamat* (blame), is guilty of manifest wrong and wickedness and self-indulgence. There are many in these days who seclude themselves from public to seek popularity and their acceptance. To occupy isolation suits to him who is already popular but one who is not popular his act of secluding himself is a mere pretext for winning popularity.

Once, I was in the company of one of these vain pretenders. He committed a wicked act and excused himself by saying that he did it for the sake of blame. One person present there, reproached him for that act which he did not like and got annoyed. I said to him why he was showing annoyance to that person. If he had blamed you, it was confirmation of your doctrine. You should have felt happy instead of getting angry with him. And since you are committed to the propagation of religion which demands proof and most valid argument in this case is the respect for the *Shariat* (religious law). When your act is in contradiction to *Shariat*, it is anti religion.

The doctrine of Blame was introduced by the Sheikh Hamdun Qassar. He has many subtle sayings on the subject. He said,

الملامة ترك السلامة

blame is the abandonment of wellbeing.

If anyone purposely abandons his own welfare and invites misfortunes, he has to lose his comfort, prosperity and honor, and abandon expectations from creature of Allah. The more one is alienated from mankind the more he is united to Allah. Accordingly, the votaries of Blame turn their backs on their welfare activities, to which the people have the greed. They have different kind of abject desires than the rest of the creature, for their aspirations is Unitarian. Hussein b. Mansur, in reply to the question that who was the *Sufi*, said,

واحداني في الذات

he who is single in essence.

When Sheikh Hamdun was asked that what *malamat* (Blame) was, he said that it was a hard way to follow but tell you one part of it: He said,

رجاء المرجية وخوف القدرية

it is hope of the *Murjites* and the fear of the *Qadarites*.

This saying has a hidden meaning which demands explanation. The followers of the Path do not hate anything more than to have even a little honor in the eyes of people. When someone admires him he may whole heartedly inclined to that praise and that may causes him farness from Allah. The aspirant who fears this danger is always striving to avoid it, and in his effort he is confronted with perils, that is to say, veil from Allah and fear of *blame* from creature. Accordingly, *one* who is blamed must, in the first instance, takes care to have no quarrel with the people for what they say of him and then for the sake of his own salvation he must commit some act which, legally, neither a great sin nor a trivial offence, in order that the people may reject him. Hence his fear in matters of conduct is like the fear of the *Qadarites*, and his hope in dealing with those who blame him is like the hope of the *Murjites*. There is no love surpasses the love of Blame, because blame of the Beloved makes no impression on the lover's heart. He heeds not what the strangers say, for his heart is ever faithful to the beloved.

How highly someone has spoken:

اجد ملامته في هوالذي يذوق لآن الملامته روضته العاشقين ونزهته المحبين وراحته المشتاقين وسرور المريرين

“O lover, in your love I have not seen anything more delicious than *malamat* (blame), because it is the garden of lovers, aroma of beloved, delight of the aspirants and merriment of the seekers heart.”

This is the only sect of lovers distinguished above all creatures in the universe by choosing to be blamed in the body on account of the cleansing of their souls. No other creation such like angels, Genii and the saints have attained this high degree, nor has it been reached by the ascetics, devotees, and seekers of Allah of the olden age, but it is reserved for those of this *Ummah* (Muslim Nation) who journey on the path of entire severance from the things of the world.

But to me blame is ostentation, and ostentation is hypocrisy because the effort of a pretender is always that to gain popularity and *malamati* (who is blamed) tries for people's rejection. Both have their thoughts fixed on mankind and do not see beyond that. The dervish, on the contrary, never even thinks of mankind, and when his heart has no desire for them, their presence as well as their absence is meaningless for him and he feels no restrictions of anything on him.

I once asked from a *malamati* (who is blamed) of Transoxania with whom I had long association that what was his object in those perverse actions? His reply was that to make the people non-existent in regard to himself. I said to him that people were many, and during your life time you would not be able to make them non-existent in regard to yourself rather in this struggle you would make yourself non-existent in regard to the people, therefore, the best option for you would be not to give them any importance and make your thoughts free of them, so that you may be saved from all this trouble.

And the reality is also this that those who are occupied with the people imagine that the people are occupied with them. So, if you do not see yourself, no one will see you. This whole trouble is self created, as you have no business with others? If a sick whose remedy lies in abstinence seeks to indulge his appetite, he is fool. Some practice the method of Blame from an ascetic motive. They wish to be despised by the people in order to achieve higher degree of spirituality, therefore, they feel delighted by making their soul wretched and abased.

Ibrahim b, Adham was asked about that when he had attained his goal. He answered, twice his heart achieved its desire. Once I was aboard a ship, clad in common clothes and my hair was long and my appearance was such that all the people in the ship mocked and laughed at me. Among them was a clown also, who on his frequent appearance to me, teased me a lot through pulling my hair and such other mockeries towards me. At that time I felt entirely satisfied, and I rejoiced in my garb. My joy touched its highest pitch when one day the clown rose from his place and urinated on me.

On another occasion, during winter night I was traveling in heavy rain due to which my *muraqqa* (patched frock) was soaked with rain water and I was shivering with cold. Under such condition I approached a mosque to avail shelter there but was refused admittance. The same thing happened at two other mosques where I tried to seek shelter. In despair, as the cold had overpowered me, I ran towards a bathhouse and threw myself near the stove. The smoke enveloped me and blackened my face and clothes. On that occasion also I felt entirely satisfied.

Once I found myself in a difficulty. I tried to solve it but all my efforts went in vain. I spent three months at the tomb of Abu Yazid as a devotee of the tomb. There, I daily used to take three baths and thirty ablutions in the hope that I might get the solution of my difficulty but failed to achieve any desire. Then I left that place for Khurasan. On my way, one night I arrived at a village where there was a monastery inhabited by a number of aspirants to Sufism. Although I was clad in *Muraqqa* but had nothing with me of the *Sufi's* regular equipment except a staff and a leathern water carrier. I appeared very contemptible in the eyes of those *Sufis*, as I had no previous acquaintance with them. They regarded only my external habit and pointed out to one another, that I was not one of them, and so was the truth. I was not one of them, but I had to pass the night at that place. They asked me to stay on a floor, while they themselves went up to a roof above that. They gave me dry bread which had turned green,

while I could smell the savor of the delicious food with which they were entertaining themselves. All the time they were mocking at me. After the food, when they were enjoying with sweet melon, they began to throw skins of the melons on me, posing how low they thought of me. I said in my heart:

“O Lord, it might not have happened with me, if I was not clad in dress of Thy friends.”

And the more they scoffed at me the gladder became my heart. Through endurance of this insult, my problem got solved and I perceived why the Sheikhs have always given fools leave to remain associated with them and for what reason they submit to their follies.

Chapter VII

Imams amongst the Companions

Now we will talk about those who after Prophet (peace be upon him) are the Imams of *Sufis* on Sufism, Spiritual States and *Maqamat* (Stations), so that proof may be provided from the life sketches of the companions (may Allah be pleased with them) on Sufism and its methods.

1. Abu Baker Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him)

The first amongst the companions is the successor of Prophet (peace be upon him), guide and Imam of the followers of celibacy and solitude, free of calamities of *nafs* (lower soul) Abu Bakr b. Abdullah b. Uthman al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him). His *Karamat* (miracles) are well known and signs and proofs about realities and dealings are manifest. A little has also been mentioned about him under Sufism. On account of the fewness of traditions which he related he is placed by the *Sufi* Sheikhs as the *Imam* (head) of those who have adopted the contemplative life while Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) is placed as the Imam of those who have adopted the purgative life, because of his rigor and assiduity in devotion.

Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) during his night prayers used to recite the Quran in a low voice, whereas Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) used to recite Quran in a loud voice. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Abu Bakr Siddiq why did he recite Quran in a low voice? Abu Bakr replied: "He to whom I call, hear." The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Umar b. Khattab why did he recite Quran in a high voice? He replied: "To wake the drowsy and drive away the Devil."

It is evident that reply of Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was based on contemplation, and of Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) on purgation. Purgation, compared with contemplation, is like a drop of water in a sea, and for this reason the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that,

هل انت الاحسن منه من حسنات ابوبكر

the good deeds of Umar was only (equivalent to) a single one of the good deeds of Abu Bakr.

The glory of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) is so high that the repute of Islam is existing because of him, and from this one can imagine the state of others.

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

دارنا فانية واحوالنا عارية وانفاسنا معدودة وكسلنا موجود

"Our abode is transitory, our life therein is but a loan, our breaths are numbered, and our indolence is manifest."

This world is a mortal place and it is worthless to occupy ourselves with it; and to depend upon loaned life is useless and to trust upon few counted breaths is heedlessness. Because, what has been lend to us is soon will be retrieved and that which is mortal, lose its existence. And what is countable finishes and heedlessness has no remedy. By this Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) suggested that the world is too worthless to engage our thoughts with it, for whenever one occupies himself with what is perishable, he is veiled from the Truth. Since this world and *nafs* (lower soul) are veils for the aspirant, therefore, the friends of Allah turn their backs from both. When they understand that whatever one gets as a loan, is the property of others, they abandon to intervene in other's property.

In his prayers he used to say:

اللهم ابسط لي الدنيا وزهدي فيها

“O Allah, give me plenty of the world and save me from its calamities!”

First he prayed for the abundance of worldly goods and then asked for shield from its calamities. There is a hidden sense in it. First he asked for to bestow on him worldly goods that he might thanks for them, and then sought His help to abstain from them for His sake, so that he might have the treble merit of thanks giving and liberality and abstinence, and that his poverty may be voluntary, not compulsory.

This refutes the saying of a Sheikh of Mystical Path, who preferred compulsory poverty over voluntary poverty, for forced poverty comes at its own whereas voluntary poverty is created and better poverty is that which is achieved without any effort. But to my thinking, *faqr* (poverty) would be preferable when while in possession of wealth one desires for poverty and renounces the love of world from his heart, not that when one is already in the state of poverty and lust of wealth forces him to visit to the houses of rich and the courts of governors. Therefore, better *faqr* (poverty) is that which is attained by denying *ghana* (wealth) and not seeking *ghana* while in poverty. Since Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) is the foremost of all mankind after the prophets, and it is not permissible that anyone should take precedence over him, for he set voluntary poverty above compulsory poverty. This doctrine is held by all the *Sufi* Sheikhs except the one whom we have mentioned.

Imam Zuhri relates that, Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) after taking oath of allegiance as Caliph, mounted the pulpit and pronounced an oration, in the course of which he said:

“By God, I never coveted for to be a Caliph nor did I desire it even for a day or a night, neither had I any liking for it, nor I ever asked Allah for it openly or in secret, nor do I take any pleasure in having it.”

Now, when Allah causes anyone to attain perfect sincerity and exalt him to the rank of steadfastness, he waits for Divine inspiration that commands him for poverty or prosperity. He acts whatever way he is commanded, without exercising his own choice and will. Thus Abu Bakr, the Veracious, resigned himself to the will of Allah from beginning to the end.

Hence the whole sect of *Sufis* has made him their Imam and pattern in stripping off themselves of worldly things, in fixity, in eager desire for poverty, and in longing to renounce authority. He is the *Imam* of the Muslims in general and of the *Sufis* in particular.

2. Umar b. al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him)

The commander of the faithful, leader of the *beneficent*, Imam of the *Scholastics*, ocean of the adorable love, Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) is famous for his *karamat* (miracles), *intellect*, and sagacity. He was specially distinguished by sagacity and resolution, and is the author of many subtle sayings on Sufism. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الحق ينطق علي لسان عمر

“the Truth speaks by the tongue of Umar;”

and he also said,

قد كان في الائمة محدثون فان يك منهم في امتي فعمر

“There have been inspired relaters in the *Ummah* of antiquity, and if there be any such in my *Ummah*, it is Umar.”

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“Seclusion is better than to be part of a bad company.”

Seclusion is of two kinds, firstly turning back on mankind, and secondly, entire severance from them.

Turning one’s back on mankind means choosing a solitary retreat, and in renouncing the society of one’s fellow creatures externally. And instead of observing others faults, should contemplate of the faults in one’s own conduct, so he is saved from the evils of others and they from his. But severance from mankind is related to heart and attribute of the heart has no relationship with the outward. Hence, when one cuts off his heart from mankind and worldly affairs, then nothing worldly attracts him and he is always attached to the thoughts of the Truth, i.e. it is a spiritual state, which is not connected with anything external. When a person is under such a state, he knows nothing of created beings. Such a person, although he is living among the people, but his heart is actually isolated from them. This is very exalted *maqam* (station) and difficult to attain. This was the *maqam* of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), for externally he lived among the people and performed his duties as their Commander and Caliph and internally he was completely attached to Allah. It is the specialties of the spiritualists who may outwardly are mixed with mankind, but their hearts always adhere to Allah and return to Him in all circumstances. They regard any intercourse they may have with mankind as an affliction, and pray to Allah for their safety from such afflictions because the world is never pure in the eyes of those whom Allah loves. So, this intercourse with fellows does not divert them from Allah. Thus Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said,

دار اسست علي البلوي بلا بلوي بحال

“the house which is founded on affliction, can never be free of afflictions.”

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was amongst the closest associates of Prophet (peace be upon him) and his all acts were admitted in the Court of Allah. At the time of his conversion to Islam, Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and told him that creature of the Heaven was celebrating on Umar’s conversion. He is the *Imam* of all creature of Allah and a model of *Sufis* in wearing *muraqqa* (patched frock) and rigorously performing the duties of religion.

3. Uthman b. Affan (may Allah be pleased with him)

Amongst the companion, the jewel of the treasury of modesty, the guide of pious, established on *maqam* (station) of *rida* (resignation), follower of the Prophet (peace be upon him), is Abu Umru Uthman b. Affan (may Allah be pleased with him). His virtues and wisdom on all matters is manifest.

Abdullah b. Rabah and Abu Qatada (may Allah be pleased with them) have related that we were with the Commander of the Faithful, Uthman on the day when his house was cordoned by the rebels. When the rebels reached at the door, his slaves also took up their arms but Uthman said to them that whoever of them did not take up arms on that day would be a free man. We went forth from the house in fear of our lives. On the way Hasan b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) met us, and we returned with him to Uthman, that we might know on what business he was going to Uthman. After he had saluted Uthman and condoled with him he said: “O Commander of the Faithful, I dare not to draw sword against Muslims without your command. You are the *Emir* of the Muslims, give me the order so I repulse the rebels from you. In reply Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “O my nephew, go back and rest at your house until Allah shall bring His decree to pass because I do not wish to shed blood of Muslims.” And this is the sign of total resignation in the hour of calamity, and this is degree of *khullat* (rank of friendship with Allah).

Similarly, when Nimrod lit fire and put Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him) in the sling of catapult, Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) came to Abraham and asked if he wanted anything?

Abraham answered, "From you, no,"

Gabriel said then you may ask Allah.

Abraham answered,

حسبي من سوالي علمه بجالي

since He knows in what plight I am, I need not ask Him."

Here Uthman also acted similarly as Abraham acted before the fire of Nimrod. He was in the position of *Khalil* (Friend) in the catapult, and the seditious mob was in the place of the fire, and Hasan was in the place of Gabriel; but Abraham was saved, while Uthman got martyred. Salvation is connected with subsistence and destruction with annihilation. Some subtle sayings on this topic we have already mentioned. The *Sufis* take Uthman as their *Imam* in sacrificing life and property, in resigning their affairs to Allah, and in sincere devotion. He was the true Imam of *Shariat* and his rank of friendship with Allah is manifest.

4. Ali al-Murtada (may Allah be pleased with him)

The cousin of the Prophet (peace be upon him), drowned in the ocean of calamity, Imam of *Aulya* (saints), is Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him). His prominence and rank in the Path (of Sufism) is very high. He explained the principles of Divine Truth with exceeding subtlety, so that Junaid said:

شيخنا في الاصول والبلاء علي المرتضي كره الله وجهه

"Ali is our Sheikh as regards to the principles (of Sufism) and endurance of affliction,"

Sufis call the theory of this Path Principles, and its practice is entirely self-mortification and endurance of affliction.

Some one requested Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) for guidance on which he replied:

"Do not much care of your wife and children, for if they are the friends of Allah, He does not waste His friends, and if they are His enemies, why should you take care of Allah's enemies?"

This refers to severance of the heart from all, save Allah, because Allah keeps His servants in whatever state He wills. As Moses left his wife in a most miserable plight and committed her to Allah, and as Abraham took Hagar and Ismail and brought them to a barren valley and committed them to Allah. Both did not make their families as their chief care instead fixed their hearts on Allah. Their trust on Allah in their afflictions caused them to gain His mercy both in this as well next world.

Someone asked Ali that what was the most praiseworthy act?

Ali replied: "Prosperity of heart with Allah."

The heart that is so enriched is not made poor by having no worldly goods nor glad by having them. This saying is relevant to the theory of poverty and purity, which has already been discussed.

Hence, *Sufis* are follower of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) in respect to the truths of outward expressions and the subtleties of inward meanings, the stripping one's self of all property either of this world or of the next, and consideration of the Divine providence. He has subtle sayings and signs in abundance and it is not possible to make them part of this work.

Chapter VIII

Imams from the House of the Prophet

(Ahl-i Bayt اهل بيت)

Ahl-i-Bayt (family of Prophet) are those sacred souls who are eternally pious. Every one of them is the Imam of the Path. This whole family common or elite is the leader and Imam of the *Sufis*. I take honor to mention here few amongst them.

1. Imam Hasan (may Allah be pleased with him)

Abu Muhammad al-Hasan b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was the heart of Prophet (peace be upon him), odor of the heart of Murtada, *Nur* (light) of the eyes of Fatima (may Allah be pleased with them). He was profoundly versed in Sufism and he has many subtle sayings. He by way of precept said:

عليكم بحفظ السرائر فان الله مطلع علي الضمائر

“See that you guard your hearts, for Allah knows your secret thoughts.”

This means that as man is entrusted to watch over his heart, similarly he is duty bound to preserve its exhibition. “Guarding the heart” refers not turning to others (than Allah) and in keeping one's secret thoughts from disobedience to the Almighty.

When the *Qadarites* got the upper hand, and *Mutazilites* doctrine became widely spread, Hasan Basri wrote to Hasan b. Ali seeking his guidance, and asked him to state his opinion on the perplexing subject of predestination and on the dispute whether men have any power to act.

Imam Hasan replied that in his opinion he who did not believe in the determination of men's good and evil action by Allah was infidel, and that those who imputed his sins to Allah was wrongdoer. Allah does not force any one for good or evil deeds, but nothing happens in His kingdom without His will. Where He has made the mankind owner of something that something belongs to Him and He is the actual owner. Similarly, where He has given free hand to mankind to act freely, there too He is the actual Causer. Therefore, He does not stop anyone from performing good or evil, but by His grace He can stop someone from his evil actions and if He does not stop him, it won't mean that He forced him to perform wrong. Allah has kept the argument by extending the force to mankind to act good or wrong and made him responsible for his act and it is not on Allah and His argument stands firm.

A Bedouin came to Imam Hasan while he was sitting at the door of his house in Kufa, and started abusing him and his parents. Hasan rose up and said:

“O Bedouin, what ails you, perhaps you are hungry or thirsty?”

The Bedouin took no heed, but continued to abuse him and his family. Hasan ordered his slave to bring a purse of silver, and gave it to the fellow, saying:

“O brother excuse me, for there is nothing else in the house, had there been more, I should not have grudged it to you.”

On hearing this, the Bedouin exclaimed: “I bear witness that you are the grandson of the Prophet of Allah. I came here to make trial of your mildness.”

Such is the characteristics of true saints and Sheikhs who care not whether they are praised or blamed, and listen calmly to abuse.

2. Imam Hussein (may Allah be pleased with him)

The candle of *Ahl-i-Bayt* (family of the Prophet), and Imam of the world is Abu Abdullah al-Hussein b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). He is the martyr of Karbala and *Qibla* for the afflictors. All *Sufis* are agreed that he was in the right. So long as the Truth was apparent, he followed it, but when it was denied, he drew the sword and never rested until he sacrificed his dear life for Allah's sake. The Prophet (peace be upon him) distinguished him by many tokens of favors.

Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) relates that one day he saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) crawling on his knees, while Hussein rode on his back holding a string, of which the other end was in the Prophet mouth. Seeing all this I said: "What an excellent ride you have, O Abu Abdullah!"

The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: "What an excellent rider is he, O Umar!"

Imam Hussein (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

اشفق الاخوان عليك دينك

"Your kindest brother is your religion,"

The salvation of man is in following the religion and his perdition in disobeying it, therefore wise person only follow the commands of loving brother and does not do any act without his consent. The real brother is that who advises you and does not deny his affection.

Once, a man came to him and told that he was a poor family man and asked for the food. Hussein told him that his food was coming, so he should wait a little. After a short while the Messenger of Caliph Amir Muawiya (may Allah be pleased with him) came and placed five purses before Hussein. Each purse contained thousand Dinars. The messenger told Hussein that the Amir was apologetic and had said that for the time being spent this money, and he would send more soon. Hussein gave that money to the poor man and made an apology to him that he kept him awaiting for such a meager favor. We are men of affliction and we have forsaken the world and prefer others needs over ours. His sayings and wisdom is well known by whole *Ummah*.

3. Imam Zain ul-Abidin (may Allah have mercy on him)

From *Ahl-i-Bayt*, successor of Prophethood, candle of the *Ummah* and *Autad*, the afflicted, Imam of the deprived is Abu al-Hasan Ali b. al-Hussein b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with them). He was the most honored and ascetic personality of his time and is famous for unveiling and narrating the truth and subtleties. In reply to a question about who was the most blessed, he said:

من اذا رضي لم يحمله رضاء علي اللبائل و اذا سخط لم يخرج منه سخطه من الحق

"The man when he is pleased, it is not on wrong, and when he is angry, is not carried by his anger beyond the bounds of right."

This is the character of those who have attained perfect rectitude, because to get satisfied with fictitious is also wrong and to quit the truth in anger is also immoral and pious does not like incorrect.

Hussein (may Allah be pleased with him) used to call him Ali *Asghar* (the younger). When Hussein and his children were martyred at Karbala, there were none left alive except Ali who was sick. The women were brought unveiled on camels to Yazid (may Allah curse him), at Damascus. Someone asked Ali that how was he and members of the house? Ali replied:

"We have been treated in the same way as Pharaoh did with people of Moses who slaughtered their sons and took their women alive. We are under so many afflictions that we do not know when day has arisen and when night has fallen. We are still thankful to Allah for His bounties and praise Him for the trial in which He has put us."

Once, Caliph Hisham b. Abd al-Malik during Hajj while performing circumambulation of Kaba tried to kiss the Black Stone (*Hajr-i Aswad*) but due to rush of pilgrims was unable to reach to it. At that time Ali was also circumambulating. When he approached *Hajr-i Aswad* to kiss it, all pilgrims withdrew from his way and he peacefully kissed it. One of the Syrian courtiers tauntingly pointed out to Hisham that he was not offered the chance to reach to **the sacred stone**, are you the King or that beautiful youth, for whom everybody made the way. Hisham said that he did not know the youth. At that time famous poet Farzoaq was also present there. He got up and said in a loud voice that he knew the youth. People asked him to tell them who was he? The poet Farzoaq stepped forward and recited the splendid encomium:

This is he whose footprint is known to the valley of Mecca,
Whom the Kaba knows, the unhallowed territory, the holy ground.
He is the son of the best of the entire creature,
He is the pious, the elect, the pure, and the eminent.
Know that he is the darling child of Fatima,
He is on whose ancestor Prophethood is sealed.
Whenever Quraish have a look on him, everyone exclaim,
No one can surpass him in commendable qualities.
He occupies such an exalted position that
Arabs and non Arabs are incapable to reach there.
His ancestor was the possessor of qualities of all the prophets,
And whose *Ummah* possesses the virtues of all the *Ummah*
The Nur (light) of their forehead lightened the hearts,
As with the rise of sun darkness perishes.
Hajr-i Aswad recognizes him from his odor, so that, when
he comes to touch *Hajr-i Aswad*, it kisses his hands.
Modesty keeps his gaze low, but people low their gaze because of his awe,
No one dare to talk with him except when he has a smiley face.
His hands hold stick of musk willow which spreads pleasant odor,
His palm is emitting fragrance; he is a leader of high repute.
His qualities are blessed from the qualities of the Prophet,
His conscious, habits and virtues are all praiseworthy
The heavy shower of his graciousness is common to all,
He is ever generous, material paucity never stops him.
His beneficence is open to the creature, who because of him,
Got deliverance from immorality, poverty and tyranny.
No one can match him in generosity, and neither
Any nation can show equality, may their men be very generous.
He is like rain of mercy in famine, and
Lion of the jungle at the time of fear and calamity.
It is that family whose love is faith, and enmity is infidelity, and
Nearness to them is the shelter for peace and deliverance.

When Farzoaq read these lyrics, Hisham got enraged and ordered for him to be imprisoned.

When Ali came to know about it, he sent to him 12,000 dirham with a message that we only possessed that much which was too less to your affliction. Farzoaq returned it, with the message that he had uttered many lies in the panegyrics on princes and governors which he was accustomed to compose for money, and that he had addressed verses to Ali as a partial expiation for his sins in that respect, and as a proof of his affection towards *Ahl-i-Bayt*. Ali, once again sent the money back with the message that if Farzoaq loved him, he must retained the money however, he begged to be excused from taking back what he had already given away; Farzoaq at last consented to receive the money.

There are so many virtues and merits of this eminent Imam that these cannot be encompassed in writing.

4. Abu Jafar Muhammad b. Ali b. Hussein (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was known both as Abu Abdullah and Baqir. He was distinguished for his knowledge of the abstruse sciences and for his subtle indications as to the meanings of Quran. There are many *Karamat* (miracles) associated to him.

It is related that on one occasion the king with the aim to kill him, summoned him to his presence. When Baqir came to him, the king begged his pardon, bestowed gifts upon him, and allowed him to leave courteously. When courtiers asked why he had acted in that manner. The king replied that when he entered he saw two lions, one on his right side and one on his left, who threatened to kill him if he had attempted to do him any harm.

In his commentary of the Quran verse,

فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ

whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah, (Q 2:256),

Baqir said: "Anything that diverts one from contemplation of Allah is his *taghut* طَّاغُوت (idol), so one has to see what veils him from contemplation of Allah and needs to get rid of it to make union with the Truth and get free from the veil. And one who is veiled has no right to be claimant of the proximity of the Truth.

Baqir after completing his litanies at night used to have loud *Manajat* (secret talk with Allah):

"O my Allah and my Lord! night has fallen, and the power of monarch has ceased, and the stars are shining in the sky, and mankind are asleep and silent, there is no crowd at the doors of the rich and the Umayyad have shut their doors and are being guarded by the watchmen, and all the needy have left for their homes.

But Thou, O Allah, art the Living, the Lasting, the Seeing, the Knowing. Sleep and slumber cannot overtake Thee. He who does not acknowledge Thy Essence is unworthy of Thy bounty.

O Allah nothing can withhold Thy Essence, neither eternity is impaired by Day and Night, Thy doors of Mercy are open to all who call upon Thee, and Thy is the owner of all; Thou dost never turn away the beggar, and no creature in earth or heaven can prevent the true believer who implores Thee gaining access to Thy Court.

O Lord, when I remember death and the grave and the reckoning, how can I take joy in this world? Therefore, since I acknowledge Thee to be One, I love Thee; I beseech Thee to give me peace in the hour of death, without torment, and pleasure in the hour of reckoning, without punishment."

He used to do this *Manajat* weeping. On asking that why did he cry so much, he replied:

Jacob lost only one son for whom he wept so much that he lost his eye sight. I have lost my eighteen family members, is it not sufficient argument for me to cry.

5. Abu Muhammad Jafar (may Allah be pleased with him)

Imam Abu Muhammad Jafar b. Muhammad al-Sadiq b. Ali b. Hussein b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) is the most celebrated among the *Sufi* Sheikhs for the subtlety of his discourse and his acquaintance with spiritual truths. He has written famous books in explanation of Sufism. He said:

من عرف الله اعرض عما سواه

“Whoever attains *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) turns his face from all other”.

The Gnostic (*arif*) does not see other worldly things because his *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) is total denial of others. The denial of all other than Allah is *marifat* and *marifat* of others is the denial of the Truth (Allah). Therefore, the Gnostic is free from the creature and in union with the Truth. He does not have that much heed for others that it might keep him away from the Truth nor it is of so extreme value that it might attract him toward itself.

He said:

لا تصح العبادة الا بالتوبة فقدم التوبة علي العبادة

“There is no right worship without repentance, because Allah hath put repentance before worship, and hath said,

التَّائِبُونَ الْعَابِدُونَ

those that turn (to Allah) in repentance” (Q 9:112).

I put repentance before divine service, because repentance is the start point in way of Path and worship is the last. When Allah mentioned of the evildoers He made repentance mandatory and said:

وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

“And O ye Believers! Turn ye all together towards Allah,” (Q 24:31);

But when Allah mentioned the Prophet (peace be upon him) He referred him to His “servant ship” and said,

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ

“So did (Allah) convey the inspiration to His Servant - (Conveyed) what He (meant) to convey.” (Q 53:10).

Once Dawud Tai came to Jafar Sadiq and said, “O son of the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah, advise me, for my heart is blackened.”

Jafar replied: “O Abu Suleman, you are the accomplished ascetic of your time, what for you need advise from me?”

Tai pleaded: “O son of the Prophet (peace be upon him), thy family is superior to all mankind, and it is incumbent on thee to give counsel to all.”

Jafar said: “O Abu Suleman, I am afraid that tomorrow on Resurrection Day my grandsire will lay hold on me, saying, ‘Why did not you fulfill the obligation to follow in my steps?’ because before Allah the best is ones conduct not his ancestry.”

Dawud Tai began to weep and exclaimed:

“O Lord Allah, if one whose lineage is of Prophetic family, whose grandsire is the Prophet, and whose mother is Fatima (may Allah be pleased with her) – if such as one is distracted by doubts about his end, who am I that I should be pleased with my dealings (towards Allah)?”

One day Jafar talked to his associates, let us take a pledge that whoever amongst us should gain deliverance on the Day of Resurrection would intercede for the rest. They said, O son of the prophet, how could you have need of our intercession since your grandsire intercedes for all mankind? Jafar replied: "My actions are such that I shall be ashamed to face him on the Last Day."

All of his sayings are the result of self account which is a quality of perfection, and is a characteristic of Prophets and Saints. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

إذا اراد الله بعيد خيرا بصره يعيوب نفسه

"When Allah wishes a man well, He gives him insight into his faults."

Whoever bows his head with humility, like a servant, Allah exalt his state in both worlds.

Now I shall mention briefly *Ahl-i Suffa* (the People of Veranda). In a book entitled "The Highway of Religion" (*Minhaj al-Din*), which I composed before the present work, I have given detailed account of each of them, but here it will suffice to mention their names and "names of honor" so it may meet your need.

Chapter IX

The People of the Veranda

(Ahl-i Suffa أهل الصفه)

Know that whole *Ummah* is agreed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had a number of companions, who abode in his Mosque and engaged in devotion, renouncing the world and refusing to seek a livelihood. Allah reproached the Prophet (peace be upon him) on their account and said,

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعَدَاوَةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ

“send not away those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His face,” (Q 6:52).

Their merits and virtues are proclaimed by the Quran, and in many traditions.

It is related by Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by the people of Veranda, and seeing their poverty and self mortification, he said:

ابشرو يا اصحاب الصفه فمن ابقي من امتي علي التعت الذي انتم عليه راضياً بما فيه فأنهم من رفقاءي في الجنة

“Rejoice! for whoever of my *Ummah* preserves in the state in which you are, and is satisfied with his condition, he shall be one of my comrades in Paradise.”

Among the *Ahl-i Suffa* (may Allah be pleased with them) were:

- The Muadhhdhin (caller for the prayer) Bilal b. Rabah,
- Abu Abdullah Salman al-Farisi,
- Abu Obadiah Amar b. Abdullah al-Jarrah,
- Abu al-Yaqtan, Umaar b. Yasir,
- Abu Masud Abdullah b. Masud al-Hudhali,
- Utba b. Masud
- Al-Miqdad b. al-Aswad,
- Khubab b. al-Alarath,
- Suhaib b. Sinan Rumi,
- Utbah b Gazwan,
- Zaid b. al-Khattab, brother of the Caliph Umar,
- Abu Kabisha,
- Abu l-Marthad Kinas b. al-Hussein al-Aganwi,
- Ukkasha b. al-Musin,
- Masud b. Rabi al-Qari,
- Abdullah b. Umar,
- Abu Dhar Jundab b. Junada al-Ghaffari,
- Safwan b. Bayda,

- Abu Darda Uwaymr b. Aamar,
- Abdullah b. Zaid al-Juhni,
- Abu Lubabah b. Abd al-Mundhir.

Abu Abdul Rehman Muhammad b. Hussein al-Sulmi has written a separate history of *Ahl-i Suffa*, in which he has recorded their virtues and merits and names. He has included among them Mistah b. Thabit b. Ebad, whom I do not love from my heart because he began the slanders about Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), the mother of the believers. Besides, the following also belonged to *Ahl-i Suffa*, but now and then they had recourse to some means of livelihood. May Allah be pleased with them.

- Abu Huraira,
- Thawban,
- Maud b. al-Harith,
- Sa'ib b. al-Khallad,
- Thabit b. Wadiat,
- Abu Ibees Uwaym b. Saaid,
- Salim b. Umair b. Thabit,
- Abu Alsar Ka`b b. Umar,
- Wahb b. Maghfal,
- Abdullah b. Unis,
- Hajjaj b. Umaru al-Aslami

All *Ahl-i Suffa* were in one and the same degree (of dignity). Verily, the generation of the Companions was the best of all generations; and they were the best and most excellent of mankind, since Allah bestowed on them companionship with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and preserved their hearts from blemish. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that his era was the best and then next to it and then which was next to it. Allah said,

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ الْأُولُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ

the vanguard (of Islam) – the first of those who forsook (their homes) and those who gave them aid, and (also) those who follow them in (all) good deeds –“ (Q 9:100).

Chapter X

Mystics among the Followers of Companions

(تابعين Tabieen)

1. Awais al-Qarni (may Allah have mercy on him)

He lived in the time of Prophet, but due to two reasons could never see him. Firstly by the ecstasy which overmastered him, and secondly by duty to his mother. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the Companions that there was a man namely Awais, living at Qarn, who at the Resurrection will intercede for a multitude of my *Ummah*, as many as the sheep of the Clans of Rabia and Mudar. Then turning to Umar and Ali, (may Allah be pleased with them), he said:

“You will see him. He is a lowly man, of middle height, and hairy. There is a white spot on his left, as large as dirham, which is not due to leprosy, and he has a similar spot on the palm of his hand. When you see him, give him my greeting, and bid him to pray for my *Ummah*.”

After the prophet's (peace be upon him) death, Umar and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) came to Mecca, and during the course of a sermon, Umar asked if there was anybody from Najad. People from Najad got up. Then he inquired if anyone of them belonged to Qarn. Some of them belonging to Qarn stepped forward. He inquired from them about Qarn and after getting positive answer, asked if they knew someone with the name of Awais. They affirmed the presence of Awais and said:

“He is a madman who dwells in solitude and associates with no one. He does not eat what men eat, and he feels no joy or sorrow. When others smile he weeps, and when others weep he smiles.”

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) wished to see him. They told that he might be found near their camels in a desert. Umar and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) set out in quest of him. They found him praying and waited until he had finished with his prayer. He saluted them and showed them the marks on his side and palm of his hand. They conveyed him the Prophet's (peace be upon him) greeting and enjoined him to pray for the Muslim *Ummah*. After they had stayed with him for a while, he said:

“You have taken trouble to come here, now return, for the Resurrection is near, there we will have an unending meeting. At present I am engaged in preparing for the Resurrection.”

After the departure of Companions, people exhibited great respect for Awais. Once people of Qarn came to know about him, he left his native place and came to Kufa where only once he was seen by Harim b. Hayyan. He reappeared during the battle of Suffain and fought for Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and got martyred.

He said that safety is laid in solitude, because the heart of the solitary is free from thoughts of others, and in no circumstances he hopes for anything from mankind. By turning away from others, he becomes one with the One.

Let not imagine, that solitude merely consists in living alone. So long as the *Satan* associates with a man's heart, and sensual passion holds sway in his breast, and any thought of this world or the next occurs to him in such a way as to make him conscious of mankind, he is not truly in solitude. It is one and the same whether he takes pleasure in the thing itself or in the thought of it. Thus solitude is that in spite of his association with the people, he is not disturbed in his association with the Truth, but he who is preoccupied with people, may he attain solitude, he remains absent from the Truth. Once love of Allah is inscribed in ones heart, thought of peoples vanishes. Allah said:

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ

“Is not Allah enough for His servants?” (Q 39:36).

2. Harim b. Hayyan (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was among the Sheikhs of the Path of Truth and is an eminent *Sufi*. He had the association of many companions; therefore, he is counted amongst the *Tabieen*. He went to Qarn to meet Awais Qarni, but on arriving at Qarn he found him no longer there. He was guided to Kufa but to his deep disappointment, he could not find him there also and he came back to Mecca. After some time he learned that Awais was living at Kufa. He went there but could not discover him for a long time. At last he set out for Basra and on the way he found him, clad in a patched frock, performing ablution on the bank of the Euphrates. As soon as he came up from the bank of the river and combed his beard, Harim advanced to meet him and saluted him. Awais said:

“Peace be with thee, O Harim b. Hayyan!”

Harim asked that how did he know that he was Harim? Awais answered: “My spirit knew thy spirit.”

He stayed with Awais for some time, during which Awais mostly talked of Umar and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them). He narrated following Hadith also which he had heard from them:

انما الاعمال بالنيات وكل امرئ ما نوي

“The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he intended.

Awais said to Harim,

عليك بقلبك

“keep watch over thy heart,” i.e. guard thy heart from thoughts of others.

This saying has two meanings:

- Make your heart obedient to Allah by self mortification,
- Through contemplation make yourself obedient to your heart.

These are golden principles, therefore, it is the work of novices to make their hearts obedient to Allah in order to purge themselves from familiarity with vain desires and passions, and sever them from unseemly thoughts, and fix them on the method of gaining spiritual health, on the keeping of the commandments, and on contemplation of the signs of Allah, so that their hearts may become the shrine of Love.

To make one's self obedient to one's heart is the work of accomplished adepts, whose hearts Allah illuminates with the light of His Beauty, and delivered them from all worldly causes and means, and invests them with the robe of proximity, and thereby reveals to them his bounties. Those whom He has chosen to contemplate of Him and to be near to Him, He makes their bodies accordant with their hearts. The former class is master of their hearts, the latter are under the dominion of their hearts. The former retrain their attributes, and the latter have lost their attributes. Quran in this verse says about the truth of this matter:

إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمْ الْمُخْلِصِينَ

“Except Thy servants among them, sincere and purified (by Thy grace).” (Q 15:40).

Here some read *mukhlisina* instead of *mukhlasina*. The *mukhlis* (purifying one's self) is active, and retains his attributes, but the *mukhlas* (purified) is passive, and has lost his attributes. I will explain this question more in detail elsewhere.

The latter class who makes their bodies accordant with their hearts, and whose hearts abide in contemplation of Allah, are of higher rank than those who by their own efforts make their hearts comply with the Divine commandments. This subject has its foundation in the principles of sobriety (*Sahw*) and intoxication (*sukr*), and in those of contemplation (*mushahida*) and self-mortification (*mujahida*).

3. Abu Ali al-Hasan Basri (may Allah have mercy on him)

His name was Abu Ali and according to some, Abu Muhammad or Abu Said. He is held in high regard and esteem by the *Sufis*. He gave subtle directions relating to the science of practical religion. Once a Bedouin visited him and asked about patience. Hasan replied:

“Patience is of two sorts:

- firstly, patience in misfortune and affliction; and
- secondly, patience to refrain from the things which Allah has commanded us to renounce and has forbidden us to pursue.”

The Bedouin said that he was an ascetic and he had never seen anyone more ascetic than he was. Hasan said:

“O Bedouin my asceticism is nothing but desire, and my patience is nothing but lack of resilience.”

The Bedouin begged him to explain this saying, otherwise he might lose his belief. Hasan replied:

“My patience in misfortune and in my submission (prayer) declares my fear of Hell-fire, and this is lack of strength; and my asceticism in this world is desire for the next world, and this is the quintessence of desire. How lucky is he who takes no thought of his own interest and his patience and his asceticism are for the sake of Allah and not for fear of Hell or desire of Paradise and this is the sign of intimacy.”

He said,

ان صحبته الاشرار تورث سوء الظن في الاخيار

“One who associates himself to the wicked, gets suspicious of the pious.”

It is a very fine saying and fully elaborates the condition of the people of this era. They got suspicious and disbelieved the honored friends of Allah by adopting company of bad people. The reason of their disbelief is that they associate with pretenders to Sufism, who have only its external forms, and they perceive true *Sufis* also deceitful and talk all nonsense against them. They consider every *Sufi* like the pretender one who possess all bad of the world such like, their actions to be treacherous, their tongues false, their ears listening to idle quatrains, their eyes following pleasure and lust, and their hearts set on amassing unlawful or dubious lucre. They fancy that aspirants to Sufism behave in the same manner, or that this is the doctrine of the *Sufis* themselves.

The true *Sufis* wholly act in obedience to Allah, and their each talk is truth, and devoted to love of Allah and their ear do not respond to anything other than truth and their eyes do not see anything but the beauty of Divine. If evildoers have appeared among them and have adopted their practices, the evil must be referred to those who commit it. What concern they have with these friends of Allah? Anyone who associates with the wicked does so through his own wickedness, for he would associate with the good if there were any good in him. Since *Sufis* are not in accord to their desire, therefore, either they deny them or they follow those who have denied them. When these hypocrites die their followers also perish.

Alas! Had they come in the courts of the friends of Allah, seen them with the eyes of love, adopted their path and whole heartedly associated with them, then they might have fulfilled their desires of both the worlds and had broken their ties with the mortal things.

4. Said b. al-Mussaib (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was head of *Ulama*, and Imam of theologians and *Sufis* and a great saint. He was very well verse on the various branches of religious sciences. Outwardly he looked to be fast but internally he was very pious which is approved in Sufism. He said:

“Be content with a little of this world while thy religion is safe, even as some are content with much thereof while their religion is lost,”

The poverty without harm to religion is better than richness which leads to heedlessness because when poor have an eye on heart he does not find any high handedness of the world and when he sees his hand he finds contentment there. When rich sees his heart he finds high handedness of the world and when he sees his hand he sees doubtful world. That satisfaction of the friends of Allah in His kingdom is better which is free of any heedlessness. When some affliction falls, heedless thanks that they remained safe but the friends of Allah say praise to Allah that affliction did not fall on their faith.

It is related that when he was at Mecca a man came to him and said: “Tell me a lawful thing in which there is nothing unlawful.” He replied:

“*dikr* (Praise of Allah) is lawful thing in which there is nothing unlawful, and praise of aught else is an unlawful thing in which there is nothing lawful,” because your salvation lies in the former and your perdition in latter.

Chapter XI

Mystics of Ancient Period

1. Habib al-Ajmi (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu Muhammad Habib al-Farsi was man of boldness, true follower of *Shariat*, holder of lofty state and enjoyed excellent position amongst the *Sufis*. At first he was a usurer and committed to all sorts of wickedness, but Allah blessed him with sincere repentance, and he took the path of devotion to Allah. His conversion took place before Hasan Basri, who guided him to religious knowledge and practice. He was non Arab and was unable to speak Arabic correctly. Allah blessed him with many *Karamat* (miracles).

One evening Hasan Basri came to his devotional place and found Habib engaged in his prayer. Hasan came in, but did not pray under his leadership, as Habib was unable to recite Quran correctly. The same night, Hasan had vision of the Truth in his dream and he asked Allah, "O Lord, wherein does Thy good pleasure consist?"

Allah answered: "O Hasan, you found My good pleasure, but did not know its value:"

Hasan asked: "O my Lord, how?"

Allah answered: "Had you said your prayer in Habib's leadership and if his true intention had restrained you from taking offence at his Arabic pronunciation, I should have been well pleased with you."

It is well known among *Sufis* that when Hasan Basri fled from the troops of Hajjaj⁷ and entered the cell of Habib, immediately they also reached there. They asked Habib if he had seen Hasan. Habib answered affirmatively. They asked that where was he? "He is in my cell," answered Habib. They went into the cell, but saw no one there. Thinking that Habib was making fun of them, they got angry, abused him and called him a liar. He swore before them that he had spoken the truth and Hasan was in his worship cell. They again searched for Hasan couple of times, but found no one there and at last departed. Hasan immediately came out and said to Habib that Allah had saved him from the hands of those tyrants because of his benedictions. But let me know that why did you tell them that I was here? Habib replied:

"O Master, it was not on account of my benediction that they failed to see you, but was of my speaking the truth. Had I told a lie, we both should have been shamed."

Someone asked Habib that what pleases Allah?

He answered:

في قلبك ليس فيه غبار النفاق

"With a heart which is not desecrated by hypocrisy,"

Because hypocrisy is the opposite of concord, and the state of *rida* (acquiescence) is the essence of concord. There is no link between hypocrisy and love. Love subsists in the state of being well pleased (with whatever is decreed by Allah). Therefore acquiescence is a characteristic of friends of Allah, while hypocrisy is the characteristic of His enemies. This is a very important matter and will be explained at another place.

⁷ Abu Muhammad al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf al-Saqfi, Governor of Iraq, died 95 A.H.

2. Malik b. Dinar (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was a companion of Hasan Basri and amongst the Sheikhs of the Sufism. He is famous for his *Karamat* (miracles) and was well known for his renunciation and devotion. His father was a slave, and Malik was born before his father's emancipation. His conversion took place, as on one evening he along with his friends was enjoying a musical concert. Tired, when they were all asleep, a voice came from the musical instrument which they had been playing:

“O Malik! Why don't you repent?”

As soon as he heard the voice, Malik abandoned his evil ways and went to Hasan Basri, and made an earnest repentance before him. He reached to such a high degree that once when he was aboard on a ship, by chance somebody lost his costly gem stone. Since he was an unknown figure among the passengers, therefore, they pointed their fingers on him for stealing the jewel. He raised his gaze towards the heaven, fishes in abundance each carrying jewel in their mouths appeared on the surface of water. Malik took one of the jewels, and gave it to the man whose jewel had lost. Then he set his foot on the sea and waded through until he reached the shore.

Malik said:

احب الاعمال علي الاخلاص في الاعمال

“The deed that I love best is which is done with sincerity,”

Act only becomes an action in virtue of its sincerity. Sincerity bears the same relation with action as the spirit to the body, as the body without spirit is a lifeless thing, so an act without sincerity is useless. Sincerity is an inward of all the actions, whereas acts of devotion belong to the class of external actions. The latter are completed by the former, while the former derive their value from the latter. Although a man should keep his heart sincere for a thousand years, it is not sincerity until his sincerity is combined with action; and although he should perform external actions for a thousand years, his actions do not become acts of devotion until they are combined with sincerity.

3. Habib b. Salim al-Rai (may Allah have mercy on him)

An unparalleled among the poor and leader of the saints Abu Halim Habib b. Salim al-Rai is regarded by the Sheikhs of Sufism at a very high place. His proofs and evidences on all states are manifest. He was a companion of Salman Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him). He related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

نيت المؤمن خير من عمله

“The believer's intention is better than his act.”

He had flocks of sheep, and resided on the bank of Euphrates. He followed the path of solitude. A certain Sheikh relates that once he saw him praying, while a wolf looked after his sheep. He resolved to meet him as he appeared to him some great saint. So he approached him, and after exchanging greeting he asked him: “O Sheikh: I see the wolf in accord with the sheep.”

He replied: “That is because the shepherd is in accord with Allah.”

With those words he held a wooden bowl and put it under a rock. Two fountains, one of milk and other of honey, gushed from the rock. He bade me to drink. I asked him that how he had attained that degree? He answered:

“By obedience to Muhammad (peace be upon him) the Prophet of Allah. O my son, the rock gave water to the *Ummah* of Moses although they disobeyed him and while Moses (may blessings of Allah

be on him) is not equal in rank to Muhammad (peace be upon him). Why should the rock not give milk and honey to me, while I am obedient to Muhammad (peace be upon him), who is superior to Moses?"

On my request for some counseling he said:

لا تجعل قلبك صندوق الحرص وبطنك وعاء الحرام

"Do not make your heart a chest of greed and your belly a vessel of unlawful things."

It is because both these evils are the cause of human disaster and safety lies in refraining from them.

My Sheikh had many traditions concerning him, but for me narration of more is not possible as my books have been left at Ghazna while I myself have become a captive in the district of Lahore, which is located in the suburbs of Multan. Allah be praised both in joy and sorrow!

4. Abu Hazim al-Madni (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was steadfast in poverty, and thoroughly versed in different kinds of self mortification. He was Sheikh of many *Sufis*. Umru b. Uthman al-Makki, one of his disciples showed great zeal on his behalf. His sayings are popular among the *Sufis* and also quoted in many books. Umru relates that in reply to what he possessed Hazim said that his wealth is laid in, "الرضا عن الله والغناء عن الناس" acquiescence (*rida*) with Allah and independence from mankind."

It is a big blessing for who is satisfied with his Lord and is independent of mankind. *Ghina* غناء, here refers to Allah, i.e. one who is *Ghani* (rich) with Allah, he will not look towards others. He won't be knowing any way other than leading to Allah, both in solitude and in presence his eye do not witness anyone other than Him. He does not expect from others because he knows that honor and humiliation are from Him.

Some Sheikh went to see him and found him asleep. When he awoke he said, "I dreamt just now that Prophet (peace be upon him) gave me a message for you, and bade me to inform you that it is better to fulfill the obligation you owed to your mother than to make the Pilgrimage. Return, therefore, and try to please her." The Sheikh turned back to his native place and did not go for Pilgrimage.

This is what little knowledge we have about Abu Hazim.

5. Muhammad b. Wasi (may Allah be pleased with him)

He was a man of contemplation, spokesman of the followers of the path of mortification and a unique personality of his time. He was associated with many Companions, *Tabieen* and also met some of the ancient Sheikhs. He had a perfect knowledge of Sufism. He said:

ما رأيت شيئاً إلا ورأيت الله فيه

"I never saw anything without seeing splendor of Allah therein".

This is an advanced stage of contemplation. When a man is overcome by the friendship of actual Causer, he attains to such a point that in looking at His act he does not see the act but the Agent only and exclusively, just as one looks at a photo and sees only the artist.

The true meaning of these words is the same as in the saying of Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him), the Friend of Allah who when saw the sun and moon and stars, said, "هَذَا رَبِّي" this is my Lord" (Q 6:76-8), for he was then in that state of longing that what ever he saw, he found the qualities of his Beloved appeared therein. The friends of Allah when see they perceive the same that the universe is subject to His Might and is captive to His Dominion, and that the existence of all created things is nothing in comparison with His command of "كُنْ" (Be), the power of the Agent thereof. When they look

thereon with longing, they do not see the conquered but the absolute Conqueror, the Omnipotent, instead of cause they see the Agent and instead of creature the Creator. I shall treat this in the chapter on contemplation (*mushahida*).

Some persons have fallen into error here, and have alleged that the words of Muhammad b. Wasi, "I saw splendor of Allah therein," involve a status of division and transmigration, which is sheer infidelity. Because place is homogeneous with that which is enclosed in it, and if one supposes that place is created the occupant must also be created; or if the latter be eternal the former also must be eternal. Hence, both these assertions are wrong because one need to accept created as eternal or to creator as non-eternal, and both of which are infidelity. Accordingly, when Muhammad b. Wasi said that he saw splendor of Allah in things, he meant, to have seen in those things the signs, evidences and proofs of Allah. There are some subtle points connected with this question which I shall discuss at the proper place.

6. Imam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu Hanifa Nuaman b. Thabit al-Khazaz is the Imam of Imams and who's *Fiqah* (Religious doctrine) is being followed by the *Sunnis*. He was wholeheartedly committed to mortification and devotion, and is a great authority on the principles of Sufism. At first he went into seclusion and abandoned the society of mankind, for he had made his heart free from every thought of human authority and pomp and started on with pure devotion to Allah. One night, however, he dreamed that he was collecting the bones of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from his grave, and selecting some and discarding others. He awoke in fear and terror and asked one of the companions of Muhammad b. Sirin to interpret the dream. He after hearing interpreted his dream as:

"You will attain a high rank in safeguarding the *Sunnah* (ordinances of the Prophet, peace be upon him), so that you will sift what is genuine from what is unauthentic."

At another time Abu Hanifa dreamed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him:

"You have been created for the purpose of reviving my *Sunnah*, therefore, refrain yourself from solitude"

He was the master of many Sheikhs. Ibrahim b. Adham, Fudayl b. Iyad, Dawud Tai and Bashr Hafi, received religious guidance from him. Besides, there are many others also amongst his disciples.

At the time of Caliph Mansur, a plan was suggested to appoint a *Qadi* (Justice) and Abu Hanifa, Sufyan Thawri, Masar b. Kadam, and Abu Abdullah Shuraik who all were known and accomplished *Ulama* (Religious Scholars) of their time were summoned to the presence of Caliph. On their way to court Abu Hanifa said to his companions that he appreciated what all of you would do in the Caliph's court. Then he said that he would save himself from the office of *Qadi* by some pretension. Masar would feign to be a madman, Sufyan would run away, and Shuraik would be made *Qadi*."

Hence, Sufyan while on their way fled away and embarked in a ship, imploring the passengers of the ship to save him from enemy who wanted to slain him. This was reference to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying in which he said:

"One who is appointed as *Qadi*, is slain without knife?"

The others were ushered into the presence of Caliph who first of all asked Abu Hanifa to act as *Qadi*. Abu Hanifa replied:

"O Commander of the Faithful, I am not an Arab, and belong from the family of their slaves; and the chiefs of the Arabs will not be satisfied with my decisions."

Mansur said that this matter had nothing to do with lineage, it demanded learning, and you were the most eminent knowledgeable *Ulama* of the day. Abu Hanifa persisted that he was not worthy of the appointment, for if he had spoken the truth he was disqualified, and if he had told a lie it was not right that a liar should be a judge over Muslims, and that you should entrust him with the lives, property, and honor of your subjects. He escaped in that way.

Then Masar came forward and seized the Caliph's hand and asked him how was he and his children, and his domestic animals? The Caliph shouted that he was a madman and ordered for his removal. Finally, Shuraik was asked to accept the post of *Qadi* who also argued that he was melancholic and light-witted, but Caliph ignored his contention and advised him to take suitable medicated feed until his intellect was fully restored. So Shuraik was made *Qadi*, and Abu Hanifa never spoke to him again.

This illustrates not only the sagacity of Abu Hanifa, but also his adherence to the path of righteousness and salvation, and his determination not to let himself be deluded by seeking popularity and worldly renown. It shows, moreover, the soundness of blame, since these three venerable men resorted to some trick in order to avoid popularity. The *Ulama* of today deny this sort of conduct because they are the followers of their desires and are afar from the path of Truth. They have made palaces of princes their *Qibla* and the houses of evildoers their temple, and refute what ever go against their wishes.

Once in Ghazna, a self adopted *Ulama* who claimed to be learned in divine and religious matters, declared wearing of *Muraqqa* (patched frock) as heresy. I said to him, "you have made wearing of brocade robe lawful, although it is made of silk and wearing of silk is unlawful for men, and then you beg with importunity these unlawful dresses from the tyrants which is again illegal. Why, then, is it heretical to wear a lawful garment, procured from a lawful place, and purchased with lawful money? Had you not been ruled by inborn conceit and by the error of your soul, you would have expressed a better opinion. The wearing of silk dress is only lawful for women and permissible for lunatics. If you are amongst them, then you are excused (for condemning the patched frock). We seek Allah's shelter from being unfair."

Abu Hanifa relates:

After the death of Naufal b. Hayyan, I saw in my dream that it was Day of Resurrection and whole the creature was going through questioning and answering of their worldly deeds. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), surrounded by many eminent was standing on *Kauthar* fountain. There was an eminent with lighting face and grey hair, which had placed his eyes on the eyes of Prophet (peace be upon him). I also saw Naufal b. Hayyan standing nearby to them. When he saw me, he came towards me and we exchanged saluting. I asked him to give me some water. He said that let him take permission from the Prophet (peace be upon him) who assented permission by pointing his finger. Naufal gave me water in a cup which I drank and made my friends also to drink but the quantity of water in the cup remained unchanged. I asked Naufal that who was standing next to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He told that they were Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him), Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) and this way I counted seventeen eminent. When I got up I found the signs of this counting on my fingers.

Yahya b. Maud al-Razi relates that he in his dream saw Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked him: "O prophet of Allah, where shall I seek you?"

He answered: "in the knowledge of Abu Hanifa."

Once, when I was in Syria, I fell asleep at the tomb of Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him), the *Muadhhdhin*, and dreamed that I was at Mecca, and saw that the prophet (peace be upon him) was entering through the gate of Banu Shaiba, tenderly clasping an old man to his bosom in the same fashion as people are wont to carry children. I ran to him and kissed his hand, and stood wondering who the old man might be? The Prophet (peace be upon him) was miraculously aware of my secret thought and said to me that he was your Imam and the Imam of your countrymen. In consequence of this dream I and my countrymen have great hopes for ourselves. And it also appeared from the dream that Abu Hanifa was one of those who, having annihilated their natural qualities, continue to perform the law of *Shariat*, as appeared from the fact that he was carried by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Had he walked by himself, his attributes should have been subsistent, and such achievers sometimes reach to their destination and sometimes do not. But since he was carried by the Prophet (peace be upon him), his attributes must have been non-existent while he was sustained by the living attributes of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet cannot err, and it is equally impossible that one who is sustained by the Prophet should fall into error.

When Dawud Tai had acquired knowledge and had become a famous authority, he came to Abu Hanifa and sought his counseling for his future activities. Abu Hanifa replied, "Practice what you have learned, for theory without practice is like a body without a spirit."

Until there is practice with the knowledge, it remains void of sincerity and purity. He who contents to learning alone is not learned, and the truly learned man is not content with learning alone, as Divine guidance involves self-mortification, without which contemplation is unattainable. There is no knowledge without action, since knowledge is the product of action, and is brought forth and developed and made profitable by the blessings of action. The two things cannot be divorced in anyway, just as the light of the sun cannot be separated from the sun itself.

7. Abdullah b. Mubarak al-Mervasi (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was well versed on law of *Shariat* and principles of Sufism and was Imam of his time. He saw time of many Sheikhs with most of them consorted also. He is the author of celebrated works and is famous for his *Karamat* (miracles). He was amongst the favorite pupils and associates of Abu Hanifa and had full grasp in each branch of religious knowledge.

The story of his conversion to the Path is very interesting. He was in love with a girl. One night he went to see her. She came on the roof of her house and Abdullah stationed himself at the foot of the wall of her house. They both involved so much in gazing each other that did not realize how much time had passed until they heard the call for the Morning Prayer. Abdullah thought it was time for evening prayer; and only when the dawn started appearing did he discover that he had spent the whole night in rapturous contemplation of his beloved. He got cautioned by this, and thought that he had spent whole night standing on his feet just for own selfish pleasure but always got furious on *Imam* if he read a long *Sura* (chapter) of the Quran during the prayer. He felt ashamed of himself and repented wholeheartedly. He devoted himself to the study of knowledge, and entered upon life of asceticism, in which he attained such a high degree that once his mother found him asleep in the garden, while a big snake was driving the flies away from him with a branch of basil which it held in its mouth.

From Baghdad he moved to Merv and lived there for a long time in the company of Sufi Sheikhs. From there he went to Mecca and spent some time there also.

When he returned to Merv, the people of the town gathered around him and asked him to educate them on religious matters. There were two religious sects in Merv at that time, half of the population was follower of *Hadith* and *Sunnah* and rest of the half followed *Fiqah* (adherent of Opinion). Abdullah was popular amongst both the sects, and they called him *Radi al-Fariqayn* as he always treated both with respect and equality and each party claimed him as one of themselves. He got built two institutions there, one for each sect. Both these institutions are working to the present day. Afterwards he went back to the Hijaz and settled at Mecca.

On being asked that what wondrous thing he had seen, he replied:

I saw a Christian monk, who was emaciated by self-mortification and his body had hunched by fear of Allah. I asked him about the way leading to Allah. He answered, "Had you known Allah, you would have known the way to him."

Then he said, "I worship Him although I do not know Him, whereas you disobey Him although you know Him, (i.e. knowledge entails fear), yet I see you fearless which entails infidelity and ignorance. I feel fear within myself."

Abdullah took his counsel to his heart, and that restrained him from many ill deeds.

Abdullah b. Mubarak said:

السكون حرام علي قلوب اولياء

"Tranquility is unlawful to the hearts of the Saints of Allah,"

For they are agitated in this world by seeking Allah and in the next by witnessing the presence of their Beloved, that is to say, their heart is agitated being away from the presence of the Truth and in the next world being in the presence of the Truth. Hence, for them this world is like the next world and next world is like this world, because tranquility of heart demands two things, either the object is attained or the desire is not fulfilled, since He is not to be attained in this world or the next, the heart can never have rest from the palpitation of love; and since indifference is unlawful to those who love Him, the heart can never have rest from the agitations of seeking Him. This is a firm principle among the adepts of the path.

8. Abu Ali al-Fudayl b. Iyad (may Allah have mercy on him)

He is one of the most celebrated Sheikhs who excelled in the Path of Sufism and is recognized as the eminent *Sufi* Sheikh by whole *Ummah*. He spent a life of truth and sincerity. His sayings are very subtle. He was a bandit initially and used to loot the caravans between Merv and Baward, but he was always inclined to piety, and never lacked courage and generosity which he invariably displayed. He never attacked a caravan in which there was any woman, or took the property of one who possessed little stock and used to allow them to keep some portion of their property, according to the need for further travel.

One day a merchant set out from Merv. His friends advised him to take an escort with him as he might on his way come across with Fudayl. But he refuted them and said that he had heard of Fudayl as God fearing man, therefore, there was no need of getting scared of him. He left on his journey without an escort but he took along a *Qari* (one who recites Quran) and asked him to keep on reciting the Quran aloud throughout during the journey. When they reached the place where Fudayl was laying ambush, the reader happened to be reciting the following verse of Quran:

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

“Has not the time arrived for the Believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah?” (Q 57:16)

Hearing admonition from the words of Quran, the heart of Fudayl softened and he was engulfed by sobbing. He repented on his engaged profession and set to satisfy all those to whom he had looted.

He went to Mecca and resided there for some time and got acquainted with many *Sufis*. Afterwards he returned to Kufa, and got associated with Abu Hanifa. He remained there for quite some time and acquired knowledge from him. He got mastery over commentary of *Hadith*, and on matters relating to the knowledge of Sufism. He is the author of lofty sayings concerning the verities of Sufism and Divine knowledge. His recounts are held in high esteem by the Traditionalists. He said:

من عرف الله حق معرفته عبده بكل طاقته

“One who knows Allah as He ought to be known, worships Him with all his might,”

i.e. one who gets to know Allah, he acknowledges His bounty, His beneficence and mercy and once he knows this, he loves Him which makes easy for him to obey Him with all might he possesses, for it is not tedious on oneself to obey those whom he loves. Therefore, the more one loves, the more one is obedient, and love is increased by true *marifat* (knowledge of Allah). The mother of faithful, Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) relates:

One night Prophet (peace be upon him) went out, and I followed him. I found him saying prayer in the mosque and he was sobbing. The whole night passed, when Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him) called for Morning Prayer he was still in the same condition. After the prayer when he came back to his room, I saw his feet were swollen and fingers were oozing yellow water. I wept and said to him: “O Prophet of Allah, all of your mistakes have been excused, then why do you still pain yourself so much? Those who are fearful of their life of the next world might bear such hardship.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied:

“Aisha! How much Allah’s bounty, beneficence and mercy are upon me, should I not be His thankful slave. When He has bestowed upon me so much of His beneficence and mercy, should I not be thankful to Him by devoting myself to His Lordship.”

At the time of Ascension the Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted command of fifty prayers which he did not feel a burden but on Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him) plea he went back and ultimately these were reduced to five. The acceptance of fifty prayers was nothing but bowing down before the command of the Beloved. Love is the name of obedience of beloved.

It is related that Fudayl said:

الدنيا دار المرضي والناس فيها كاليجانين وللمجانين في دار المرضي الغل والقيد

“The world is a mad house, and the people therein are madmen, wearing shackles and chains.”

Lust is our shackle and sin is our chain.

Fadl b. Rabi⁸ related that he accompanied Haroon al-Rashid⁹ to Mecca for pilgrimage. After the Pilgrimage, he asked me if there was any saint who might be visited. I took him to Abd al-Razzaq.¹⁰ We talked with him for some time. When we were about to leave, Haroon asked me to check up if he had any debts. On his affirmative reply Haroon gave orders for the clearance of his debts. Once we came out from his house, Haroon desired to see a saint of higher stature than Razzaq. I conducted him to Sufyan b. Uyayna¹¹. With him also our visit ended in the same way and Haroon ordered to pay his debts. At the time of departure Haroon said that he had not found the desired person. Then I recollected that Fudayl b. Iyad was also in Mecca. We went to him and founded him reciting Quran in the upper floor of his house. We knocked at the door. He enquired who was at the door. I replied him that it was the Commander of the Faithful. He said what he had to do with the Commander of the Faithful. I said was there not Prophet’s (peace be upon him) tradition that no one should seek to abase himself while in devotion to Allah. He replied:

“My acquiescence in Allah’s will is everlasting glory. You see only my abasement, but I see my exaltation.”

Then he came down, opened the door, extinguished the lamp and stood in a corner. Haroon in his attempt to locate him, his hand fell upon on the hands of Fudayl who exclaimed, “Alas! I have never seen softer hand than this, I wonder if it escapes from the Hell-fire.” Haroon began to weep, and wept so violently that he fainted. When he came to himself, he requested Fudayl to give him a word of counsel. Fudayl said, O Commander of the Faithful, your ancestor (Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him)) was the uncle of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He had asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to give him dominion over men. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him,

“O my uncle, guard your *nafs* (lower soul), I for one moment give you dominion over yourself.” i.e. one moment of your obedience to Allah is better than a thousand years of men’s obedience to you, since dominion brings repentance on the Day of Resurrection.

Haroon pleaded for more counseling. Fudayl continued. When Umar b. Abd al-Aziz¹² (may Allah be pleased with him) was appointed Caliph, he summoned Salim b. Abdullah¹³, Rajaa b. Hyat¹⁴, Muhammad b. Kaab al-Qurzi¹⁵ (may Allah be pleased with them), and said to them,

“What am I to do in this affliction?”

For I count it an affliction, although people in general consider it to be blessing.”

⁸ Abu al-Abbas Al Fadl b. Rabi, d. 208 A.H.

⁹ Abu Jafar Haroon Rashid, the Caliph, d. 193 A.H.

¹⁰ Abu Bakr Abd al-Razzaq b. Hamam Saqat, d. 211 A.H.

¹¹ Abu Muhammad Sufyan b. Uyayna, d. 198 A.H.

¹² died 101 A.H.

¹³ died 106 A.H.

¹⁴ died 112 A.H.

¹⁵ died 117 A.H.

One of them replied:

"If you desire to be saved tomorrow from the Divine punishment, regard the elders as your fathers, and their young men as your brothers, and their children as your children. The whole territory of Islam is your house, and its people are your family. Visit the father, and honor your brothers, and deal kindly with your children." Then Fudayl said:

"O Commander of the Faithful, I fear lest that your handsome face fall into Hell-fire. Fear Allah, and perform your obligations to Him better than this."

Haroon asked Fudayl whether he had any debts. He answered, "Yes, the debt which I owe to Allah, namely, obedience to Him; woe to me, if He calls me to account for it!" Haroon interrupted and said, O Fudayl, I was speaking of debts to men. He replied, "Allah be praised! His bounty towards me is great, and I have no reason to complain of Him to His servants." Haroon offered him a purse of a thousand diners, saying that he might use the money for some of his purposes. Fudayl said, "O Commander of the Faithful, my counseling has done you no good. Here again you are behaving wrongly and unjustly." Haroon inquired how that was. Fudayl said, "I wish thee to be saved, but thou wouldst cast me into predicament: is not this unjust?" Haroon again started crying and in the same condition we took leave of him, and Haroon said to me, "Fudayl is the king indeed."

All this shows his hatred of the world and its people, and his contempt for its gauds, and his refusal to abase himself before worldlings for the sake of worldly gain. He has countless sayings and recounts.

9. Dhu al-Nun b. Ibrahim (may Allah have mercy on him)

The treasure of nobility and *Walayat* (sainthood) Abu al-Fayd Dhu al-Nun b. Ibrahim al-Misri belonged to village Naub and his name was Thwban. He was the son of a Nubian. He is one of the most eminent of the hidden spiritualists, for he adopted the path of affliction and blame. The people of Egypt remained in doubt as to his true spiritual state, and did not believe in him until he was dead. On the night when he died seventy persons dreamed that they saw Prophet (peace be upon him), who said to all of them that Dhu al-Nun, the friend of Allah was coming and he had come to welcome him. And after his death following words were found inscribed on his forehead:

هذا حبيب الله مات في حب الله قتيل الله

"He is beloved of Allah, who died in love of Allah, slain for Allah."

At his funeral the birds gathered above his bier, and shadowed it with their wings. On seeing this, the Egyptians felt guilt and repented of the injustice which they had done to him during his life time.

He has many fine and admirable sayings on the varieties of mystical knowledge. He said:

العالم كل يوم اخشع لانه في كل ساعته من الرب اقرب

"The Gnostic's fear is increased every day, because he is approaching nearer to his Lord every moment,"

The nearer one gets to Allah, the more he becomes flabbergasted and his sincerity in devotion increases because he gets aware of His Omnipotence and Majesty, and his heart is subdued by the majesty of the Truth. He does not consider himself separate and away from Him and at that time abandons his desire of unity with Him, hence his lowliness is increased. Thus Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him) asked Allah: "O Lord, where shall I seek Thee?"

Allah answered: "among those whose hearts are shattered."

Moses said: "O Lord, no heart is more shattered and despairing than mine."

Allah answered: "Then I am where thou art."

One who pretends to know Allah without lowliness and fear is not a Gnostic but an ignorant fool. The sign of *Marifat* (knowledge of Allah) lies in a true desire, and a sincere desire removes all secondary causes and severs all ties of relationship, so that nothing remains except Allah. Dhu al-Nun said, "الصدق الصدق" truth (sincerity) is the sword of Allah on the earth: it cuts everything that it touches." Now sincerity regards the Cause, and does not consist in affirmation of secondary causes. To affirm the latter is to destroy the principle of sincerity.

One day Dhu al-Nun along with his disciples was sailing in a boat on the River Nile. In the mean time another boat filled with merry-makers approached them. They were busy in singing and making noise. The disciples were so disgusted by their unseemly behaviors that they begged Dhu al-Nun to implore Allah to sink the boat, so the people might remain safe from their misdeeds. Dhu al-Nun raised his hands and prayed:

"O Lord, as Thou hast given these peoples a pleasurable life in this world, bestow them a pleasant life in the next world also!"

The disciples were astonished by this prayer. When the boat came nearer and those in it saw Dhu al-Nun, they began to weep and asked pardon. They broke their musical instruments, repented and turned unto Allah. Dhu al-Nun said to his disciples:

"A pleasant life in the next world is repentance in this world. Both of you are satisfied without making harm to anyone."

He acted thus from his extreme affection towards the Muslims, following the example of Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), who notwithstanding the ill-treatment which he received from the infidels, never ceased to say:

اللهم اهد قومى فانهم لا يعلمون

"O Allah! Direct my people, for they know not."

Dhu al-Nun related that once on his way from Jerusalem to Egypt, he noticed in the far distance as some one was advancing towards him. His awful appearance encouraged him to have chat with him. When the person came nearer he found that it was an old woman carrying a staff and dressed up in a woolen tunic. He asked her from where she had come. She answered: "from Allah."

He asked her that where she intended to go then.

She answered: "To Allah."

He drew a dinar and offered it to her, but she shook his hand and slapped on his face and said:

"O Dhu al-Nun, the notion which you have formed of me arises from the feebleness of your intelligence. I work for sake of Allah, and accept nothing unless it is from Him. I worship Him alone and take from Him alone."

With these words she went on her way.

The old woman's saying that she worked for the sake of Allah is a proof of her sincerity in love. Men in their dealings with Allah fall into two categories.

The first category when perform some act they think it is for the sake of Allah but in reality they work for themselves, and though it might not have been done with any sensual motive, but they do keep a desire of recompense in the next world. Others take no thought of reward or punishment in the next world and of ostentation and reputation in this world, but act solely from reverence for the commandments of Allah and their love of Allah bid them to do some act and in obedience to His command they forget every selfish interest.

The former category of people fancy that what they do for the sake of the next world, actually it is for Allah's sake and fail to recognize that the devout have a greater self-interest in devotion than the wicked have in sin, because the sinner's pleasure lasts only for a moment, whereas delight of devout

is for ever. Besides, Allah neither gains from the devotion of mankind, nor does He lose anything if they do not perform devotion to Him. If the whole world acts with the veracity of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), the gain would be wholly theirs, and if with the falsehood of Pharaoh, the loss would be wholly theirs, as Allah hath said:

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا

“If ye did well, ye did well for yourself; if you did evil, (ye did it) against yourself. (Q 17:7);

and also:

وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

“And if any strive (with might and main), they do so for their own souls: For Allah is free of all needs from all creation.” (Q 29:6).

The people seek for themselves an everlasting kingdom and claim to be working for Allah’s sake, but to tread the path of love is a different thing. Lovers, in fulfilling the Divine commandment, regard only the accomplishment of the Beloved’s will, and have no eye for anything else. A similar topic will be discussed in the chapter on sincerity.

10. Ibrahim b. Adham (may Allah have mercy on him)

The chief of his contemporaries, unique in the Path of Sufism Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Adham b. Mansur was disciple of Prophet Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him). He met a large number of ancient *Sufi* Sheikhs and got benefited from their experiences. He was associated with Imam Abu Hanifa, from whom he learned divinity.

In the earlier part of his life he was Governor of Balkh but the will of Allah was to make him emperor of the spiritual world. One day he went for the game, and while pursuing a deer, he got separated from his suite. Allah caused the deer to address him in mankind language who said:

"Were you created for this, or were you commanded to do this?"

He repented, abandoned worldly governance, and entered on the path of asceticism and abstinence. He made the acquaintance of Fudayl b. Iyad and Sufyan Thawri, and consorted with them. After his conversion he never ate anything except what he had earned with his own hands. He had excellent deeds and is famous for his *karamat* (miracles). His sayings on verities of Sufism are original and beautiful. Junaid referred him as the key of the knowledge of Sufism.

Ibrahim Adham said:

اتخذ الله صاحباً وذر الناس جانياً

“Seek friendship of Allah and leave mankind alone.”

When one has rightly turned towards Allah and is sincere in his relation with Him, then his turning towards Allah requires that he should turn his back on mankind, because the society of mankind stands nowhere near the love of Allah. Companionship with Allah is sincerity in fulfilling His commands, and sincerity in devotion springs from purity of love, which proceeds from hatred of passions and lust. One, who is slave of his sensual affections, is separated from Allah, and one who is parted away from sensual affections, is dwelling with Allah. Therefore you are all mankind in regard to yourself; if you turn away from yourself, and you have turned away from all mankind. One who turns away from the mankind but remains concerned to himself, is like one keeping relations with whole mankind, whereas the actions of all mankind are determined by the providence and predestination of Allah but you talk of yourself because you are responsible for yourself.

The outward and inward rectitude of the seeker is based on two things. There are some things to be known, should recognize them and there are others to be acted upon, should be performed. The

former consists in regarding all good and evil and predestined by Allah, so that nothing in the universe passes into a state of rest or motion until Allah has created rest or motion in that thing. The latter consists in performing the command of Allah, in rightness of action towards Him, and in keeping the obligations which He has imposed. Predestination can never become an argument for neglecting His commands. True renunciation of mankind is impossible until one renounces himself. As soon as one has renounced himself, he will know that all mankind is committed to fulfillment of the will of Allah; and as soon as he has turned to Allah, he will also be accomplishing the decree of Allah. Hence it is not permissible to be satisfied with mankind. If one is satisfied with anything save Allah, it should be another, for satisfaction with another is to regard unification, whereas satisfaction with own self nullify the Creator. For this reason Sheikh Abu al-Hasan Saliba used to say that it is better for novice to be under the authority of act than under his own authority. Because companionship with another is for Allah's sake, while companionship with one's self is to cultivate the sensual affections. This topic will be discussed at proper place.

Ibrahim b. Adham tells that once an old man met him in the jungle. He came to him and said, "O Ibrahim, do you know what place this is, and you are journeying without provisions and ride?" I knew that he was Satan. At that time I had four silver coins which I had obtained by selling a basket at Kufa. I cast them away and made a vow that I would pray four hundred *Nuafil* (obligatory prayer) for every stage that I traveled.

I remained four years in the desert, and Allah was giving me my daily bread without any effort on my part. During that time Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him) consorted with me and taught me the Great Name of Allah by blessing of which my heart became wholly empty of others.

11. Bashr b. al-Harith Hafi (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu Nasr Bashr b. al-Harith al-Hafi was possessed with very high dignity in self-mortification and had excellent conduct. He was the disciple of his maternal uncle, Ali b. Khashram¹⁶ and had the association of Fudayl b. Iyad. He was well versed in the principal as well as derivative sciences.

One day, when he was drunk, he saw a piece of paper lying on the road. He picked it up and saw following inscription on it:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

"In the name of Allah, the most Compassionate, the most Merciful."

He picked it up with reverence, perfumed it, and put it at a clean place. The same night he dreamed that Allah said to him:

"O Bashr, as thou hast made My name scented, I swear by My Glory that I will make thy name scented both in this and the next world. Whosoever would hear your name, his heart would feel pleasure."

Thereupon he repented and beheld asceticism. So intensely was he absorbed in contemplation of Allah that he never put anything on his feet. When he was asked the reason of that act, he said:

"The earth is His carpet; I feel it wrong to walk on His carpet while there is something between my foot and His carpet."

This was one of the peculiar practices in the concentration of his mind on Allah that a shoe seemed to him a veil (between him and Allah). He said:

"Whoever desires to be honored in this world and exalted in the next world, he must avoid three things:

- Should not ask anything from the mankind,

¹⁶ Hafiz Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Khashram b. Abd al-Rehman al-Mervasi died 257 A.H.

- speak not ill of anyone,
- Should not accept an invitation to eat with anyone.”

No man who knows the way to Allah will ask a boon from mankind, since to do so is a proof of his ignorance of Allah. One who comes to know the Giver of all boons, he would not ask a boon from a fellow creature. To get a favor from creature is like prisoner getting a favor from fellow prisoner.

Similarly, the one who speaks ill of anyone is criticizing the decree of Allah, because both the individual himself and his actions are created by Allah. How one can criticize the creation of Allah? In reality to criticize some act is to criticize the causer. This does not apply, however, to the blame which Allah has commanded us to bestow upon the infidels.

As to his saying, ‘not to accept an invitation to eat with anyone,’ the reason is that Allah is the only Provider. If He makes a creature the means of giving you daily feed, do not regard that creature, but consider that the daily bread which Allah has caused to come to you does not belong to him but Allah. But if the invitee thinks that it is his, and that he is thereby conferring a favor on you, do not accept it. In the matter of daily bread no one confers on another any favor, because, according to the opinion of the *Sunnis*, daily bread is food, whereas the *Mutazillites* hold it to be property. Allah is nourishing his creature with food not the creature is nourishing creature. This saying may be explained otherwise, if it be taken in a profane sense.

12. Abu Yazid al-Bastami (may Allah have mercy on him)

The firmament of *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) and king of love Abu Yazid Tayfur b. Isa al-Bastami is one of the greatest saints of all times. The *Sufi* Sheikhs considers him of so high stature in state and dignity that Junaid had to say that Abu Yazid held the same rank among them as Gabriel among the angels. His grandfather was a Magian, but his father was one of the notables of Bastam. He is the author of many trustworthy recounts concerning the Traditions of the prophet (peace be upon him). He is one of the ten celebrated Imams of Sufism. No one before him penetrated so deeply into the mysteries of this knowledge. In all circumstances he was a lover of theology and venerator of the *Shariat*, in spite of the fact that some persons with the object of supporting their own interests imposed false doctrine on him. From the beginning, his life was based on self-mortification, abstinence and the practice of devotion. He said:

"For thirty years I engaged in self-mortification, and found nothing harder than to learn divinity and follow its precepts. But, had the *Ulama* not on disagreement I should have utterly failed in my endeavor. The disagreement of *Ulama* is a mercy but save on the point of Unification."

This is true indeed, for human nature is more prone to ignorance than to knowledge. While many things can be done easily and fearlessly with ignorance, but not a single step can be made easily with knowledge. The path of the *Shariat* is much narrower and more dangerous than the *Bridge Sirat*. Therefore it behooves on you to act in all circumstances that, if you do not attain a high degree and an eminent station, and gets drop, you must fall within the field of the *Shariat*. So, even if you lose all states and stations, your practices of devotion will remain with you. Neglect of *Shariat* is the worst mischief that can happen to a novice.

Yazid said:

الجنة لا خطر لها عند اهل المحبة واهل المحبة محجوبون بمحبتهم

"Paradise has no value in the eyes of lovers, and lovers are veiled (from Allah) by their love."

Paradise though is of great magnitude but is a creation, whereas love is an uncreated and attribute of Allah. Whoever is got involved by a created thing from that which is uncreated, is a loser. Created things are worthless in the eyes of lovers. Lovers are veiled by love, because the existence of love involves duality, which is incompatible with Unification. The way of lovers is from oneness to Oneness, but friendship is tested by the friendship and there is a desirer and an object of desire, therefore, either

Allah must be the desirer and Man the desired, or vice versa. If Man is the desirer and Allah the object of desire, the creature's search and desire can find no way unto Him, in either case the evil of being remains in the lover. Accordingly, the annihilation of the lover in the everlastingness of love is more perfect than his subsistence through the everlastingness of love. Yazid said:

Once I went to Mecca and saw a house standing apart. I thought that my pilgrimage was not accepted, for I had seen many stones of this sort. Second time I went there, and saw the house and also the Lord of the house. I thought that this was not yet real unification. When I went there third time, I saw only the Lord of the house. A voice in my heart whispered,

"O Bayazid, if you had not seen yourself, you would not have been involved in polytheism though you had seen the whole universe; but if you have closed your eyes to whole universe but see to yourself, it is polytheism."

Thereupon I repented, and once more I repented of my repentance, and yet once more I repented of seeing my own existence."

This is a subtle tale concerning the soundness of his state, and an excellent indication to spiritualists.

13. Harith b. Asad al-Muhasibi (may Allah have mercy on him)

Imam of crafts, knower of the inward Abu Abdullah al-Harith b. Asad al-Muhasibi was well learned in the principal and derivative sciences, and his authority was recognized by all the theologians of his day. He was author of many works but his book, entitled "*Ridyat li-huquq Allah*, (The observance of what is due to Allah) and on the principles of Sufism is very famous. In every branch of learning he was a man of lofty sentiments and noble mind. He was the chief Sheikh of Baghdad in his time. He said:

العلم بحركات القلوب في مطالعة الغيوب اشرف من العمل بحركات الجوارح

"Who is aware with the secret motions of the heart is better than he who merely acts with the motions of limbs."

It means that knowledge is the palace of perfection, whereas ignorance is the palace of exploration, and knowledge in the Court of the Truth is better than ignorance. Knowledge raises one to the degrees of excellence but ignorance hinders him to enter to the proximity of the Truth. In reality knowledge is better than action, because it makes possible to know Allah. It is not possible to attain Him by only means of action. Had it been possible that only by actions one could reach to Him, then the Christians and their monks with their self-mortification would have attained to His presence and sinful believers would have remained in the degree of veil (to Allah). Knowledge is an attribute of Divine and action is an attribute of human. Some relaters of this saying have fallen into error by reading العلم بحركات القلوب which is bizarre, since human actions have nothing to do with the motions of the heart. However, if the author uses this expression to denote meditation and contemplation of the inward feelings then it is not impossible. The prophet (peace be upon him) said,

تفكر ساهات خير من عبادة ستين سنة

"a moment's meditation is better than sixty years of devotion."

In fact the spiritual actions are more excellent than body actions, and the effects produced by inward feelings and actions are better than the effects produced by outward actions. Hence it is said,

نوم العالم عبادة وسهر الجاهل معصية

the sleep of the sage is an act of devotion and the wakefulness of the fool is a sin,"

because under both the conditions (sleep and wakefulness) the inward of the ignorant is overpowered and when inward is subdued, the outward is also overpowered. Accordingly, the heart that is

controlled by the sway of Allah is better than the sensual part of man which controls his outward motions and acts of self-mortification.

Once he said to a dervish that *كن لله والافلا تكن* (be of Allah or parish) i.e. either be subsistence through Allah or perish to your own existence; either be united with the Purity or get separated by Poverty; either try for the state described by the Quran *اسجدوا لآدم* (Bow down to Adam, (Q 2:34) or create that attribute in yourself as described in Quran:

هَلْ أُنِىَّ عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا مَّذْمُورًا

“Has there not been over Man a long period of Time, when he was nothing – (not even) mentioned?” (Q 76:1).

If you will be of your own free choice, your resurrection will be through yourself, and if you are not with your free choice then your resurrection will be through Allah. It is very subtle point.

14. Dawud al-Tai (may Allah have mercy on him)

Independent from the desire of states, status and retired and reluctant from creature Abu Suleiman Dawud b. Nusair al-Tai was amongst the eminent Sheikhs and Imams. He was a unique personality of his time. He was pupil of Abu Hanifa and a contemporary of Fudayl b. Iyad and Ibrahim b. Adham. In Sufism he was disciple of Habib Rai. He was deeply versed in all the sciences and unrivalled in jurisprudence. He had adopted solitude and had forsaken the authority and the world. He took the path of asceticism and piety. He has many virtues and literary attainments. He was knowledgeable on matters dealing with community and was accomplished on reality of *marifat*.

He said to one of his disciples:

ان امرت السلامة سلم علي الدنيا وان امرت الكرامة كبر علي الاخرة

"If you desire peace, bid farewell to this world and if you desire grace, pronounce the *Takbir* over the next world,"

Both these are the palaces of veils (places which prevent you from the vision of the Truth). Every kind of tranquility depends on them. Who wants tranquility of the body should ignore the world and one who desires tranquility of heart, should clear his heart of all the desires of the next world.

Dawud used to have frequent associations with Muhammad b. al-Hasan¹⁷, but would never receive *Qadi* Abu Yusuf¹⁸. On being asked why he honored one of these equally eminent divines but refused to admit the other to his presence, he replied that Muhammad b. al-Hasan had become a theologian after being rich and wealthy, and theology was the cause of his religious advancement and worldly abasement, whereas Abu Yusuf had become a theologian after being poor and despised, and had made theology the means of gaining wealth and power. How both can be equal?

Maruf Karkhi said that he had never seen anyone who held worldly goods in less account than Dawud Tai. The world and its occupants had no value, not even equal to the weight of the wings of a gnat. He used to regard dervishes although he might himself be in affliction.

15. Sari Saqati (may Allah have mercy on him)

Sheikh of the aspirants of Sufism Abu al-Hasan Sari b. al-Mufhlis al-Saqati was the maternal uncle of Junaid. He was well versed in all the sciences and an eminent *Sufi*. He was the first who devoted his attention to arrange the *maqamat* (stations) and explanations of spiritual states (احوال ahwal). Most of

¹⁷ Died 189 A.H.

¹⁸ Died 182 A.H.

the Sheikhs of Iraq were his disciples. He had seen Habib Rai and benefited from his association but was disciple of Maruf Karkhi. He had huckster's shop in the bazaar of Baghdad. Once the bazaar caught fire, and he was told that his shop was also burnt. His instant reply was, "then I am freed from the care of it." Later on it was discovered that his shop had not been burnt, although all the shops surrounding it were destroyed. On seeing this, Sari gave all that he possessed to the poor and took the path of Sufism. On asking that how the change in him began, he replied:

"One day Habib Rai passed my shop, and I gave him a piece of bread, so he might give that to the dervish. He said to me, 'May Allah reward thee!' Since I heard this prayer, the love of the world vanished from my heart."

Sari said:

اللهم مهماً عذبتني بشيء فلا تعذبني بذل الحجاب

"O Allah, whatever punishment Thou may inflict upon me but do not punish me with the humiliation of being veiled from Thee,"

because, if I am not veiled from Thee, my suffering and affliction will be lightened by the remembrance and contemplation of Thee. But if I am veiled from Thee, even Thy bounty will be deadly to me.

Whatever affliction one faces during contemplation is not suffering rather the bounty, but what one attains in veiled condition is an affliction. There is no punishment in Hell more painful and hard to bear than that of being veiled. If Allah were revealed in Hell to the people of Hell, sinful believers would never think of Paradise, since the vision of Allah would so fill them with joy that they would not feel any affliction or pain. And in Paradise there is no pleasure more perfect than the unveiling of the Beloved. If the people there enjoyed all the pleasures of that place and other pleasures a hundred fold, but were veiled from Allah, their hearts would be utterly broken. Therefore it is the *Sunnah* (custom) of Allah to let the hearts of those who love Him have vision of Him always, in order that the delight thereof may enable them to endure every tribulation. And their prayer is always:

"We deem all torments more desirable than to be veiled from Thee. When Thy Beauty is revealed to our hearts, we take no thought of affliction."

16. Shaqiq b. Ibrahim (may Allah have mercy on him)

The leader of the afflicted Abu Ali Shaqiq b. Ibrahim al-Balkhi has been leader and Imam of *Sufis*. He was well versed in all the branches of religious sciences and composed many works on various subjects. He consorted with Ibrahim b. Adham and many other Sheikhs. He said:

جعل الله اهل طاعته احياء في مماتهم واهل المعاصي امواتا في حياتهم

"Allah keeps pious living in their death, and the immoral dead during their lives," i.e. the pious, though they be dead, yet alive, since the angels utter blessings on their piety, therefore, their reward keeps on increasing. Hence, in the annihilation wrought by death they subsist through the everlastingness of retribution.

Once an old man came to Shaqiq and said to him, "O Sheikh, I have sinned much and now wish to repent."

Shaqiq said: "You have come late."

The old man answered: "No, I have come early. Whoever makes repentance before he dies has come soon."

Once there was famine at Balkh, and the people had started eating flesh of each others. While all the Muslims were bitterly distressed, Shaqiq saw a youth laughing and making merry in the bazaar. The people asked him why he was laughing. Were you not ashamed to rejoice when everyone else was

mourning? The youth said that he had no sorrow as he was the servant of a man who owned big property and he had relieved him of all care for his livelihood. Shaqiq exclaimed:

“O Lord Allah, this youth rejoices so much in having a master who owns minor property, but Thou are the King of kings, and Thou hast promised to give us our daily bread; and nevertheless we have filled our hearts with all this sorrow because we are engrossed with worldly things.”

He turned to Allah and adopted the Path of the Truth, and never troubled himself again about his daily bread. Afterwards he used to say that he was the pupil of a youth; all that he had learned was from him. His humility led him to say this.

17. Abu Suleiman al-Durani (may Allah have mercy on him)

Sheikh of his time, unique on the path of Sufism Sheikh Abu Suleiman Abd al-Rahman b. Atiyya al-Durani was held in honor by the *Sufis* as he was (called) the sweet basil of hearts. He was distinguished by his severe austerities and act of self-mortification. He was versed in the science of “*waqt* وقت” (time) and a specialist in the knowledge of the cankers of the soul and had a keen eye for its hidden snares. He spoke in subtle terms concerning the practice of devotion and the guard that should be kept over the heart and the limbs. He said:

إذا غلب الرجاء على الخوف فسد الوقت

“When hope predominates over fear, one's *waqt* وقت (time) is spoilt,” because *waqt* (time) is the guard of one's state, and one only guards it so long as one is possessed by fear. And when fear is vanquished, he stops guarding his state and his time is spoilt. And if fear predominates over hope, belief in *tawhid* توحيد (Unity of Allah) is lost; because fear springs from despair, and despair from Allah is *shirk* شرك (polytheism). Therefore, safety of *tawhid* is only possible by keeping right hope and *waqt* (time) can only be guarded by developing right fear and when both fear and hope are equal, the *waqt* and *tawhid* would also be safe. Maintenance of belief in *tawhid* makes one a believer while maintenance of *waqt* makes one pious.

Hope is connected entirely with contemplation which is the basic root of belief and fear is connected with purgation, which involves an anxious uncertainty. Contemplation is the fruit of purgation. This means that all hopes get life from despair. Whenever a man, on account of his actions, despairs of his future salvation, that despair shows him the way to salvation and welfare and Divine mercy, and opens to him the doors of gladness, and clears away sensual corruptions from his heart, and reveals to him the Divine mysteries.

Ahmad b. Abi al-Hawari relates that one night, he said prayer in privacy, and felt great pleasure therein. Next day I told this to Abu Suleiman, who replied:

“You are weak in the way of Path, for you still have mankind in your mind, so that you have one attitude in private and another in public. There is nothing in the two worlds that is sufficiently important to hold man back from Allah. Have you not seen that when a bride is unveiled to the people, the reason is that everyone may see her that she may be honored the more through being seen, but it is not proper that she should see anyone except the bridegroom, because it will be disgraceful act on her part to see others. If all mankind should see the glory of a pious man's piety, he would suffer no harm, but if he sees the excellence of his own piety he is lost.”

18. Maruf Karkhi (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu Mahfuz Maruf b. Firuz al-Karkhi was brought up by Ali b Musa al-Raza (may Allah have mercy on him) and was counted amongst the Imams of ancient *Sufis*. He was famed for his humility, generosity and devoutness.

The mention of him should have come earlier in the book, but I have placed it here in accordance with two venerable persons who wrote before me, one of them a relater of traditions and the other an independent authority. Sheikh Abd al-Rahman al-Salami, who in his work adopted the arrangement which I have followed, and the other is Imam Abu al-Qasim Qushayri, who has put the mention of Maruf in the same order in the introductory portion of his book.

Maruf was the master of Sari Saqati and the disciple of Dawud Tai. At his early age Maruf was a non-Muslim, Ali b. Musa al-Raza, converted him to Islam. He held him in the highest esteem. He has many virtues and literary attainments and is recognized as a guide and leader in many branches of the knowledge of the *Shariat*. He said:

للفتیان ثلاث علامات وفأبلا خلاف ومدح بلا جود وعطا بلا سوال

“There are three signs of generosity;

- to keep faith without resistance,
- to praise without being incited thereto by liberality, and
- to give without being asked.”

To keep faith without resistance is that one in devotion should deny all evil acts and anything which astray him from the path of Truth.

And to praise without being incited thereto by liberality is one must extend the kindest attitude even towards him also who never have done any good to him.

And to give without being asked is that if resources permit one should not make any discrimination in giving charity and if he comes to know about a needy, he must fulfill his need without bringing him to begging state.

These are the ethics set by mankind, and all these qualities are temporarily given to them, whereas in reality these belong to Allah, Who acts thus towards His servants. Allah keeps unresisting faith with those who love Him, and although they show resistance in keeping faith with Him, He continues with His kindness towards them. The sign of Allah’s keeping faith is that in eternity past He called His servants to His presence without any good action on their part, and that today He does not banish His servants on account of evil actions. He alone praises without the incitement of liberality, for He has no need of His servant’s actions, and nevertheless extols him for a minor act that he has performed. And similarly He alone gives without being asked, for He is generous and knows the state of everyone and fulfils his desire unasked.

Accordingly, when Allah graces a man with honor, makes him noble, and distinguishes him by His favor, and acts towards him in the three ways mentioned above, and when that man, as far as lies in his power, acts in the same way towards his fellow creatures, then he is called generous and gets a reputation for generosity. Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him) possessed these three qualities in very truth, as I shall explain it at the proper place.

19. Hatim al-Asam (may Allah have mercy on him)

The beauty of servants, elegance of nobles Abu Abd al-Rahman Hatim b. Unwan al-Asam was the noblest man of Balkh and one of the ancient Sheikhs of Khurasan. He was a disciple of Shaiq and Sheikh of Ahmad Khadruya. In all his circumstances, from beginning to end, he never once acted untruthfully, so that Junaid said, “Hatim is the *Siddiq* (veracious) of our time.” He has lofty sayings on the subtleties of discerning the cankers of the soul and the weaknesses of human nature, and is the author of famous works on ethics. He said:

الشهوات ثلاث شهوة في الاكل وشهوة في الكلام وشهوة في النظر فأحفظ الاكل في التقته واللسان بالصدق والنظر بالعبرة

“Lust is of three kinds,

- lust in eating,
- lust in speaking and
- lust in looking.

Therefore guard

- your food by trust in gnosis,
- your tongue by speaking the truth, and
- thine eye by taking reprimand (*ibrat*)."

One who adheres to *tawakul* توكل (trust in Allah) for his food, he is saved from the lust of eating. One who speaks the truth, he is saved from the lust of speaking, and one who keeps his eyes under control he gets rid of from the lust of looking.

Real *tawakul* (trust in Allah) proceeds from right knowledge that Allah is the real provider of subsistence. One should straighten his intellect and should know Him aright and should speak and look with right knowledge, so that his food and drink is only love, and his speech is only ecstasy, and his looking is only contemplation. Accordingly, when he knows aright he eats what is lawful, and when he speaks aright he utter praises (of Allah), and when he look aright he beholds Him, because no food is lawful except what He has given and permits to be eaten, and no praise is rightly offered to anyone in the eighteen thousand worlds except to Him, and it is not allowable to look on anything in the universe except His Beauty and Majesty. It is not lust when you receive food from Him and eat by His leave, or when you speak of Him by His leave, or when you see His actions by His leave. On the other hand, it is lust when you eat with your own desire, may it be lawful food or you speak with your own will, even may it be praise of Him, or of your own will you look even for the purpose of seeking guidance.

20. Imam Shafii (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Idris al-Shafii was an eminent Imam of his time and was well versed in all the branches of religious knowledge. He was famed for his high mindedness and abstinence. He has many virtues and literary attainments and his sayings are highly appreciated.

During his stay in Medina he acquired knowledge from Imam Malik and when he came to Iraq he was associated with Muhammad b. al-Hasan. He from the very beginning had a natural desire for seclusion, and used to seek an intimate comprehension of the Sufism. Slowly and steadily people gathered around him and followed his authority. Ahmad b. Hanbal was one of them. When Shafii became Imam, he got occupied by his position and started exercising his authority. At first he was not favorably disposed towards aspirants to Sufism, but after seeing Habib b. Salim Rai and obtaining his association, he continued to seek the truth wherever he went. He said:

إذا رأيت العالم يشغل بالرخص فليس يجي منه شيء

"When you see a Religious Scholar indulging to bring ease in *Shariat*, no good thing will come from him,"

Ulama (Religious Scholars) are the leaders of all classes of men, and no one may take priority over them in any matter, and the way of Truth cannot be traversed without precaution and the utmost self-mortification. To seek indulgences in divinity is the act of those who flee from self-mortification and prefer easing for themselves. To seek indulgences is the work of ordinary people and that too preserving themselves within the bounds of *Shariat*, but the elects practice self-mortification to feel the fruit thereof in their hearts. *Ulama* are among the elects, and if they are satisfied to behave like ordinary people, nothing good will come from them. Moreover, to seek indulgences is to think lightly of Allah's commandment, and *Ulama* are the friends of Allah, and a friend does not think lightly and try to

seek easiness in the command of a friend neither he under estimates the command of a friend and show any relaxation in executing it.

One of the *Sufi* Sheikh related that one night he dreamed of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked him: "O Apostle of Allah, a tradition has come down to me from thee that Allah hath upon the earth saints of diverse rank."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that the relater of the tradition had transmitted it correctly, and in response to the Sheikh's request that he might see one of these holy men, he said: "Muhammad b. Idris is one of them."

21. Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (may Allah have mercy on him)

Sheikh of *Sunnah*, vanquisher of the religious innovations Abu Abdullah Ahmad b. Hanbal was distinguished by devoutness and piety, and was the guardian of the Traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Both *Ulama* and *Sufis* of all sects regard him as blessed. He was associated with great Sheikhs, such as Dhu al-Nun, Bashr Hafi, Sari Saqati, Maruf Karkhi, and others. His *karamat* (miracles) were manifest and his intelligence sound. The doctrines attributed to him today by certain anthropomorphist are inventions and forgeries. He was above from all such distortions. He had a firm belief in the principles of religion, and his faith was approved by all the religious scholars.

When the *Mutazilites* came into power at Baghdad, they wished to obtain (under duress) from him a confession that the Quran was a creation. He was a feeble old man at that time, but they tightened his hands on the back, put him to the rack and flogged him one thousand lashes. In spite of all that he did not say that the Quran was a creation. While he was undergoing punishment his *izar* (trouser string) got untied. His hands were fettered, but miraculously two hands appeared and tied his *izar*. Seeing this miraculous evidence, they let him go. He died of the wounds inflicted on that occasion. Shortly before his death people asked what he had to say about those who flogged him. He answered:

"What should I have to say? They flogged me for Allah's sake, thinking that I was wrong and that they were right. I will not claim redress from them for mere blows at the Resurrection."

He is the author of lofty sayings on ethics. When questioned on any point relating to practice he would answer the question himself, but if it was a point of mystical theory he would refer the questioner to Bashr Hafi. One day a person questioned him about *ikhlas* (sincerity). He replied:

"*Ikhlas* (sincerity) to escape from the cankers of one's actions," i.e. let your actions be free from ostentation and hypocrisy and self-interest.

The questioner then asked about *tawakul* (trust in Allah). Ahmad replied:

"To have confidence in Allah, that He will provide your daily bread."

The man then asked about *rida* (acquiescence). He replied:

"*Rida* (acquiescence) is to commit your affairs to Allah."

Finally he asked about *mahabat* (love). Ahmad said that questioner might ask that from Bashr Hafi, for he would not answer while Bashr was alive.

Ahmad b. Hanbal throughout remained exposed to persecution. During his life, he faced the attacks of *Mutazilites* and after his death by the suspicion of sharing the views of the anthropomorphist. Even *Sunnis* (orthodox Muslims) were ignorant of his true state and held him suspect. But he is clear of all that is alleged against him.

22. Ahmad b. Abi Hawari (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. Abi al-Hawari was like a sun of his time and a triumphant over affliction of *nafs* (lower soul). He was one of the most eminent of the Syrian Sheikhs and was praised by all the

leading *Sufis*. Junaid said that Ahmad was the sweet basil of Syria. His discourses on different topics of Sufism are of very high quality, fine and subtle. He is referrer of many Hadith. He was the resort of all and people used to seek his guidance on many issues. He was the disciple of Abu Suleiman Durani, and associate of Sufyan b. Uyayna, Marwan b. Muawiya and Abu Abdullah Binaji. He spiritually benefited from all of them. He had been a wandering devotee. He said:

الدنيا مذبذبة ومجمع الكلاب واقل من الكلاب من عكف عليها فان الكلب ياخذ منها حاجة وينصرف عنها والمحب لا يذول عنها ولا يتركها بحال

“This world is a heap of rubbish and a place of dogs and one who lingers there is worse than a dog, for a dog takes what he wants from it and goes, but the lover of the world never gets satisfied and neither he likes leaving it at any time.”

Highly esteemed Sheikh named the world as heap of rubbish and its inhabitants worse than dogs, for dogs leave the heap once they have fulfilled their desire but lovers of the world always remain in the process of accumulating worldly gains and keep on sitting over them like a snake and remain dipped in its love. Renunciation of the world is the delight of the friends of Allah.

Initially he learned religious doctrines and achieved the highest rank of Imam, but afterwards he threw all his books into the river and said,

نعم الدليل انت واما الاشتغال بالدليل بعد الوصول بحال

“you were excellent logics, but it is impossible to occupy one's self with logic after one has reached the goal.”

The logic is needed only so long as the disciple is on the way to reach his goal. When he is admitted in the presence of the Truth then methods and routes are worthless. The Sheikhs have said that Ahmad did this in the state of *sukr* سكر (intoxication). In the mystic Path he who says that he has reached to his destination, has gone astray. Since reaching to destination is to refrain from reaching; occupation is (superfluous) trouble, and freedom from occupation is idleness, and in either case the principle of union is non-existence, for both occupation and its opposite are human attributes. Union depends on the Eternal Will and providence of Allah, by which Allah blesses the Man with righteousness and it is not attainable in one's occupation and idleness. Therefore, there are no principles laid down and rules to get His union and terms like nearness and neighborhood have no link with him. A man is united to Allah when He holds him in honor, and is separated from Him when He holds him in contempt.

I, Ali b. Uthman al- Jullabi, say that possibly that eminent Sheikh in using the word “وصول *wusul*” (union) might have meant “discovery of the way to Allah”, for the way to Allah is not found in books and when the way is clear before one no bookish explanation is necessary. There is no need of any expression or speech when one gets obvious way. It is only needed until the desired object is hidden, but when the object is manifest then expression loses its worth. He who attains true knowledge has no use of speech, and even less of books. Sheikhs such like Abu Said b. Fadl b. Muhammad al-Mehni and some formal *Sufis* also acted in the similar manner. Some formal *Sufis* followed their suit whose only object was to gratify their insolence and ignorance, whereas, the aim of those noble Sheikhs was nothing else but the desire of severing all worldly ties and making their hearts empty of all save Allah. This however, is the initial stage of *sukr* (intoxication) and in Sufism, is just a childish fervor. Those in state of fixity are not veiled (from Allah) by the whole universe, how then few pieces of paper be veil for them. When heart has pronounced the world then what value paper carries before them? It may be said that the destruction of a book signifies the impossibility of expressing the real meaning (of an idea). In that case the same impossibility should be predicted of the tongue, because spoken words are no better than written ones. I imagine that Ahmad b. Abi al-Hawari, finding no corroborator in his fit of ecstasy, wrote down an explanation of his feelings on pieces of paper, and having amassed a large quantity, did not regard them as suitable to be divulged and accordingly cast them into the water. It is also possible that he had collected many books, which diverted him from his devotional practices, and that he got rid of them for this reason.

23. Abu Hamid Ahmad b. Khadruya al-Balkhi (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was leader of *Sufis* and an eminent Sheikh of Khurasan. He was famed for his excellent state, nobility and honor. He adopted the path of blame and used to wear soldier's dress. His wife Fatima, daughter of the Amir of Balkh, was also of lofty standing on the path of Sufism. When she desired to repent (of her former life), she sent a message to Ahmad bidding him to ask her in marriage from her father. Ahmad did not pay any heed to the message. After some time, she sent another message admonishing him that she did not consider him that type who closes the way of the Truth; be a guide and not a creator of hurdles for those who are the seekers of the way of Truth. Ahmad asked her father for marriage with her. He married Fatima to him with a hope that marriage might be blessed one. After marriage, she totally renounced the world and along with her husband adopted seclusion.

She accompanied Ahmad when he went to visit Bayazid. When they reached to him Fatima removed her veil and talked to Bayazid without any embarrassment. It looked very odd to Ahmad and he ridiculously asked her that why she had behaved so disrespectfully before the Sheikh. She replied:

“Because you are my natural spouse, but Bayazid is my religious consort; I have worldly relations with you but with Bayazid relation is of the way to Allah and the proof is that he has no need of my society, whereas to you it is necessary.”

She continued to discuss with Bayazid with same boldness, until one day Bayazid observed that her hands were stained with henna. He asked her why she had applied henna on her hands. She replied:

“O Bayazid, so long as you did not see my hands and the henna I was at my ease with you, but now your eye has fallen on my hands therefore, our companionship has become unlawful.”

Then Ahmad and Fatima came to Nishapur and abode there. The people of Nishapur were well pleased with Ahmad. When Yahya b. Maud al-Razi passed through Nishapur on his way from Rayy to Balkh, Ahmad wished to give him a banquet. He consulted with his wife Fatima as to what all would be required for the feast. She told him to procure some quantity of oxen and sheep, sweet herbs, condiments, candles, and perfumes, and added twenty donkeys. Ahmad asked the reason for including donkeys. She said when a noble comes as guest to the house of a noble the dogs of the area have also the right to the feast; therefore, these donkeys will be slaughtered for them. Bayazid said of her:

“Whoever wishes to see a man disguised in women's clothes should have a look at Fatima!”

About Ahmad Abu Hafs Haddad said, “But for Ahmad b. Khadruya generosity would not have been displayed.”

He has lofty sayings and faultless utterances to his credit. He is the author of famous works in every branch of ethics and of brilliant discourses on mysticism. He said:

الطريق واضح والحق لا يخفى والداعي قد اسمع فيما التحذير بعد هذا الامن العمي

“The way is manifest and the truth is clear, and the caller has uttered his call; after this astonishment and distraction is what else than blindness,”

It is wrong to seek the way, since the way to Allah is like the blazing sun; rather find thyself that where are thou, when thou have found thyself, thou have found the way. The Truth is too manifest to admit His being sought.

He said, “استعز فقرك” hide the glory of thy poverty,” do not say to people that you are a dervish, lest your secret be discovered, for it is a great grace bestowed on you by Allah.

A dervish invited a rich man to a repast in the month of Ramadan. Incidentally there was nothing in his house except a loaf of dry bread. On returning home the rich man sent to him a purse of gold coins but the dervish did not accept it and sent it back, saying, that this serves me right for revealing my secret to one like you. The genuineness of his poverty led him to act thus.

24. Abu Turab Askar b. al-Hussein al-Nasfi (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was the most eminent and chief Sheikh of Khurasan. He was celebrated for his generosity, asceticism, and devoutness. He performed many miracles, and experienced marvelous adventures in the desert and elsewhere. He was one of the most noted travelers among the *Sufis*, and used to cross the deserts in complete disengagement from worldly things. His death took place in the desert of Basra. After many years had elapsed he was found standing erect with his face towards the *Qibla*, shriveled up, with a bucket in front of him and a staff in his hand; and the wild beasts had not come near him.

It is related that he said:

الفقير قوته ما وجد ولباسه ما ستر ومسكنه حيث نزل

“The food of the dervish is what he finds, and his clothing is what covers him, and his dwelling place is wherever he stops.”

To have self desire for these three things is a state of distraction while the whole world is slave of these things. This is the practical aspect of the matter, but in a mystical sense the food of the dervish is ecstasy, his clothing is piety, and his dwelling place is Unseen, for Allah hath said,

وَأَلَّا اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا

“(And Allah’s Message is): If they (the Pagans) had (only) remained on the (right) Way, We should certainly have bestowed on them Rain in abundance.” (Q 72:16),

and

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا لِيُرِيَّ سَوْءَ أَعْمَالِكُمْ وَرِبِيشًا وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ

“O ye children of Adam! We have bestowed upon you to cover your shame, as well as to be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness - that is the best.” (Q 7:26).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الفقر وطن الغيب“

poverty is to dwell in the Unseen.”

Therefore, the food of aspirant following the path of *Faqr* (poverty) is ecstasy, his clothing piety and mortification, and his dwelling is with the Unseen (Truth). *Faqr* (poverty) has a straight Path, and its devotions are clear and this is the ultimate highest degree.

25. Yahya b. Maud al-Razi (may Allah have mercy on him)

Eloquent orator of love and sincerity, elegance of Sufism Abu Zakarriya Yahya b. Maud al-Razi was man of good nature and lofty state. He was perfectly grounded in the true theory of hope in Allah (*raja*), so that Husri said:

“Allah created two Yahya, one a prophet and the other a saint. Yahya b. Zakarriya (may blessings of Allah be on him) trod the path of fear in such a way that all seekers of the Truth seeing his state of fear got despaired of their salvation, while Yahya b. Maud trod the path of *raja* رجا (hope) so that he surpassed all the seekers of the Path of hope.”

On a question that the state of Yahya b. Zakarriya (may blessings of Allah be on him) was well known, but what was the state of Yahya b. Maud. Husri said that to his knowledge, he never came across with the state of ignorance, and he never committed any greater sin. In the practice of devotion he showed an intense perseverance which was beyond the power of anyone else.

One of his disciples said to him: "O Sheikh, thy *maqam* (station) is the *maqam* of *raja* (hope), but thy practice is the practice of those who fear." Yahya answered: "Know, my son, that to abandon the service of Allah is to go astray."

Fear and hope are two pillars of Faith. It is impossible that by following either pillar of Faith, one should fall into error because the seeker of the Path of Fear carryout devotion for the fear that he might not go astray from his *maqam* (station) and the seeker of the Path of *raja* carryout devotion with an hope of attaining union (with Allah). Without devotion neither fear nor hope can be truly felt, but when degree of devotion is achieved then fear and hope would be called devotion and metaphors are useless where devotion is required.

Yahya is the author of many books, fine sayings, and original precepts. He was the first of the Sheikhs to mount the pulpit after the first four Caliphs. I am very found of his sayings, which are delicately molded and pleasant to the ear and subtle in substance and profitable in devotion. He said:

الدنيا دار الاشغال والآخره دار الاهوال ولا يزال العبد بين الاشغال والاحوال حتي يستقر به القرار اما الي الجنة واما الي النار

"This world is an abode of occupation and activities and the next world is an abode of fear, and man always remains amidst activities and fear, until he finds rest either in Paradise or in Hell-fire."

Blessed are the souls who save themselves from the worldly activities and fear of the next world by renouncing both and attain union (with Allah)!

He preferred wealth over poverty. Having laden with heavy debts at Rayy, he set out for Khurasan. When he arrived at Balkh, the people of that city detained him. For some time he entertained the people with his discourses and when he set to leave them they gave him hundred thousand dirham. On his way back to Rayy he was attacked by brigands, who seized the whole money. He came in a destitute condition to Nishapur, where he died. He was always honored and held in respect by the people.

26. Abu Hafs Umar b. Muslimat al-Nishapuri al-Hadad (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was the grand Sheikh of Khurasan, and a wonderful person of Sufism. He was guide and leader of *Sufis* and is praised by all the Sheikhs. He was associated with Abu Abdullah Bawardi and Ahmad b. Khadruya. Shah Shuja came from Kirman to visit him but he had already left for Baghdad to meet the Sheikhs there. Since he did not know Arabic, and when he reached Baghdad his disciples said to one another that it would be great awkwardness for the grand Sheikh of Khurasan to use an interpreter to exchange views with the Sheikhs of Baghdad. They came to Shuniziyya Mosque. All the Sheikhs of Baghdad including Junaid gathered there. He conversed with them in such elegant Arabic that they felt amazed of his eloquence. They questioned him about generosity. He asked that each one present there should declare what it was. Junaid said, "الفقره عندي ترك الروية واسقاط النسبه", in my opinion generosity consists in not regarding your generosity and in not referring it to yourself."

Abu Hafs replied that outwardly well Sheikh has spoken! But in my opinion generosity, "اداء الانصاف وترك مطالبه", اداء الانصاف consists in doing justice and in not demanding justice."

Junaid said to his disciples: "Rise! For Abu Hafs has surpassed Adam and all his descendants (in generosity)."

He had an interesting tale about his conversion. His heart was captivated by a slave girl. His friends suggested him to seek help from a Jew magician. He went to see him at his dwelling place Nishapur and sought his help in winning the heart of that girl. The Jew suggested him not to perform prayer for forty days, and refrain from praising God or do any good deed or form any good intention; he would then devise a magical mean whereby Abu Hafs would gain his desire. Abu Hafs complied with these instructions, and after forty days the Jew made a talisman as he had promised, but it proved ineffectual. He pointed out to Hafs that undoubtedly he had done some good deed during these last

forty days. Abu Hafis replied that he remembered no good deed which he committed inwardly or outwardly during those past forty days except that one day he had removed a stone lying on the road lest some one might stumble on it. The Jew said to him, "do not offend that God who has not let such a small act of yours be wasted though you have neglected His commands for forty days." Abu Hafis repented, and the Jew also became a Muslim.

After repentance, Abu Hafis adopted the profession of blacksmith until he went to Baward and took the vows of discipleship to Abu Abdullah Bawardi. One day, after his return to Nishapur, when he was sitting in his shop, he saw a blind man reciting Quran in the bazaar. Hafis became so absorbed in listening recitation that he put his hand into the fire and without using the pincer, drew out a piece of molten iron from the furnace. On seeing that, the shocked apprentice shouted on him to look for his hand. When Abu Hafis got recovered to himself he left that profession and never returned to that shop. He said that he left work and when he returned to it the work left him and then he never returned to that again.

Because when anyone leaves a thing by one's own act and effort, the leaving of it is no better than the taking of it. The basis of this is that all effortful acts are cause of calamity, and the acts which flows from the Unseen without effort carries value. When one conceives that the act takes place because of his own effort, he loses the subtlety of reality. Man has not been empowered to take or deny anything, but only rest with Allah. When man possesses something, in fact it is given by Allah and when he loses something its Allah Who gets wasted that thing from him. Therefore man only takes what Allah has given or leaves what Allah has taken away. Though a devotee should strive a thousand years to win the favor of Allah, it would not be equal to that single moment when Allah blesses His favors on him, for, everlasting prosperity is bound with the Eternity and everlasting delight is bound with felicity of the past, and man has no means of escape except by the unalloyed bounty of Allah. Blessed is the one then from whose state the Causer has removed all secondary causes.

27. Abu Saleh Hamdun b. Ahmad b. Umara al-Qassar (may Allah have mercy on him)

He belonged to the ancient Sheikhs, and was one of those who were scrupulously devout. He attained the highest rank in jurisprudence and divinity, in which he was a follower of Thawri. In Sufism he was a disciple of Abu Turab Nakhshabi and Ali Nasrabadi. His writings on ethical practices consist of symbols and concealment and on mortification delicate phrases. When he became renowned as a theologian, the Imams and notables of Nishapur urged him to mount the pulpit and preach to the people. He said that it was not appropriate for him to preach. The people asked the reason for his refusal on which he said:

"My heart has not yet been got rid of the desire of the world and its honor, therefore, my sermon will not be beneficial to the audience and will mark no good impression on their hearts. To speak unprofitable words is to despise theology and ridicule the *Shariat* (religious law). Speech is permissible to him alone whose silence is injurious to religion, and whose speaking would remove the injury."

On being asked why the sermons of the early Muslims were more effective and appealing to men's hearts than those of his contemporaries, he replied:

"Because they discoursed for the glory of Islam and the salvation of souls and the satisfaction of the Merciful Allah, whereas we discourse for the glory of ourselves and the quest of worldly gain and the favor of mankind."

Whoever speaks in accordance with Allah's will and by Divine impulsion, his words have a force and vigor that makes an impression on the heart of the listener. And one who sermons to meet selfish desires, his words would be weak and tame and audience will get no benefit from him. To remain silent for such person is better than to deliver sermon. It is better for the man of Truth to refrain from the jugglery of the words.

To my opinion, the Sheikh uttered all this to keep the people unaware of his state and to deny worldly honor.

28. Mansur b. Ammar (may Allah have mercy on him)

Abu Alsari Mansur b. Ammar al-Marori was an honored *Sufi* who was well acquainted with the hazards of heart. He was a reputed Sheikh and a leader of *Sufis*. He belonged to the school of Iraq, but was approved by the people of Khurasan. His sermons were unequalled for beauty of language and elegance of exposition. He was learned in all the branches of divinity, traditions, sciences, principles, and practices. Some aspirants to Sufism exaggerate his merits beyond measure.

He said:

سبحان من جعل قلوب العارفين اوعية الذكر وقلوب الذاهدين اوعية التوكل وقلوب المتوكلين اوعية الرضا وقلوب الفقراء
اوعية القناعة وقلوب اهل الدنيا اوعية الطمع

“Glory be to Him who have made the

- hearts of Gnostic vessels of *dikr* ذكر (remembrance of Allah),
- and the hearts of ascetics vessels of *tawakul* توكل (trust in Allah),
- and the hearts of *mutawakkilin* متوكلين (who keeps trust on Allah) vessels of acquiescence,
- and the hearts of dervishes palace of contentment,
- and the hearts of worldlings vessels of covetousness!”

It is worth considering that Allah has placed in every limb of the body and in every sense, a homogeneous quality, e.g. quality of holding in hands, quality of walking in feet, in eyes quality of seeing and in ear quality of hearing, but He has placed diverse qualities and different desires in the hearts of each individual. Therefore, some hearts are the seats of knowledge, some of error, some of contentment, while some of covetousness, and so on. Hence the marvels of Divine actions are manifested in none more clearly than in human hearts.

He said:

الناس رجلان عارف بنفسه فشغله في المجاهدة والرياضة وعارف بربه فشغله بخدمة وعبادة ومرضاة

“All mankind is of two types; the man who knows himself, and who is occupied in self-mortification and discipline, and the man who knows his Lord, and keeps him busy to serve, worship and please Him.” Accordingly, the worship of the former is abstinence, while the worship of the latter is sovereignty. The former practices devotion in order that he may attain a high degree, but the practice of latter is far above than such desires. What a vast difference between the two! One subsists in self-mortification, the other in contemplation.

He also said:

الناس رجلان مفتقر الى الله فهو في اعلى الدرجات علي لسان الشريعة
واخر لا يري الافتقار لما علم من فراغ الله من الخلق والرزق والاجل والحياة والسعادة والشقاء فهو في افتقاره اليه واستغناءه به

“There are two classes of men:

- those who have need of Allah and they hold the highest rank from the standpoint of the *Shariat* – and
- those who has not witnessed indigence, for they know that Allah has predestined their creation, livelihood, death, life, happiness and misery: they need Allah alone, and having Him are independent of all else.”

The former through seeing their own need, are veiled from seeing the Divine providence, whereas the latter, through not seeing their own need, are unveiled and independent. The former enjoys felicity, but the latter enjoys the Giver of felicity. The former are seeker of booty and they are poor although worldly they look rich. The later who are the lover of the Giver, are rich in His presence although worldly they might be poor.

29. Abu Abdullah Ahmad b. al-Asim al-Antaki (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was Imam of those following the path of acquiescence and was lauded by all the *Sufis*. He is counted among the pillars and Imams of Sufism. He was well versed on knowledge of *Shariat* and an expert on principals and derivatives, and ethics. He lived to a great age and associated with the ancient Sheikhs, and was acquainted with those who belonged to the third generation after the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was a contemporary of Bashr and Sari, and a disciple of Harith Muhasibi. He had seen Fudayl and consorted with him. He was praised by all. His work on Sufism and its different branches was of immense stature and his sayings and signs are of very subtle nature. He said:

انفع الفقر ما كنت به متجملاً وبه راضياً

“The most beneficial poverty is that which you regard as honorable, and with which you are well pleased.”

The honor of the creature consists in the ownership of causes, but the honor of the dervish consists in denying causes and affirming the Causer, and in referring everything to Him, and in being well pleased with His decrees. Poverty is the non-existence of causes, whereas wealth is the existence of it. The one independent of causes is with Allah, and one who is attached to causes is with himself. Therefore, causes involve the state of being veiled (from Allah), while their absence involves the state of unveiledness and wealth of both the world lies in unveiledness and acquiescence and the evil of the universe lies in veiledness. This indicates superiority of poverty over wealth.

30. Abu Muhammad Abdullah b. Khubaiq (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was an ascetic and scrupulously devout. He has related trustworthy traditions. He followed the doctrine of Thawri in jurisprudence, as well as in the practice and theory of divinity. He consorted with many associates of Thawri. His discourses on Sufism were of colossal value. He said:

من اراد ان يكون حياً في حياته فلا يسكن الطمع في قلبه

“Whoever desires to live hearty life, let him not admit covetousness to dwell in his heart,”

because the covetous man is dead in the toils of his covetousness, which is like a seal on his heart, and the sealed heart is dead. Blessed are the hearts that are dead to all save Allah and lives through Him. The reason is that Allah created disgrace and covetousness is disgrace and He created glory and His *dikr* (praise) is the glory of men’s hearts. He said:

خلق الله تعالى القلوب مساكن الذكر فصارت مساكن الشهوات ولا يمحوا الشهوات من القلوب الا خوف مزعج او شوق مقلق

“Allah honored the men’s hearts to be the palace of His praise, but they having association of *nafs* (lower soul) became the resting place of lust. Now nothing can clear them of lust except an agitating fear or a restless passion.”

Fear and passion are the two pillars of faith and when heart is the palace of *dikr*, and faith is settled there, praise and contentment accompany it, not covetousness and heedlessness. That’s why, neither the pious is attracted to lust, nor does he follow the selfish desires. Lust and covetousness are the result of fear and heart is stranger from fear of Allah and faith. The faith has intimacy with the Truth

and is fearful of all other than Truth. It is said, "الطماع مستوحش منه كل واحد" everyone shuns away from covetous"

31. Junaid Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him)

Sheikh of Sheikhs of Sufism and Imam of Imams of Shariat Abu al-Qasim al-Junaid b. Muhammad b. al-Junaid al-Qawarari al-Baghdadi was celebrity of externalists and spiritualist *Sufis*. He was perfect in every branch of science, and spoke with authority on theology, jurisprudence, and ethics. He was a follower of Thawri. His sayings are lofty and his inwardly state perfect, so that all *Sufis* unanimously acknowledged his leadership. Junaid was disciple of Sari Saqati who was his maternal uncle.

One day Sari was asked whether the rank of a disciple is ever higher than that of his spiritual Sheikh. He replied in affirmation and said there was manifest proof of that as rank of Junaid was above him. It was the humility and insight of Sari that caused him to say that, as no one can have insight of the one who is higher in rank than him but he may have the insight of one who is lower in rank than him. Such utterance on his part clearly indicates that he saw Junaid in higher rank than him but when he saw him, he saw him at a higher rank but in reality it was a lower rank.

It is well known that when disciples requested Junaid to discourse them so their hearts were benefited and gain tranquility, but Junaid refused saying that as long as his Sheikh (Sari) was alive, he would not discourse. One night he dreamed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him,

"O Junaid, speak to the people, your discourse would be means of delight and tranquility for the people. Allah hath made your words the means of saving a multitude of mankind."

When he awoke the thought occurred to him that his rank was superior to that of Sari, since the Prophet (peace be upon him) had commanded him to discourse. At day break Sari sent a disciple to Junaid with the following message:

"You would not discourse to your disciples when they urged you to do so, and you rejected the intercession of the Sheikhs of Baghdad and my personal entreaty. Now that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has commanded you, obey his orders."

Junaid said that the fancy immediately went out of his head and he perceived that Sari was acquainted with his outwardly and inwardly thoughts in all circumstances, and his rank was higher than his, since he was familiar with his secret thoughts, whereas he was ignorant of his state. He went to Sari and repented and begged his pardon. He asked him how he knew that he had dreamed of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Sari answered that he dreamed of Allah, who told him that he had sent the Apostle to bid you to preach.

This anecdote contains a clear indication that spiritual Sheikhs are in every case acquainted with the inwardly experiences of their disciples.

Junaid said:

كلام الانبياء نباء عن الحضور وكلام الصديقين اشارة عن المشاهدات

"The speech of the prophets gives information concerning presence (حضور), while the speech of the siddiqin (saints) mentions contemplation (مشاهدات)."

The information is confirmed by sight and contemplation by meditation. Information is disseminated of actual event, whereas allusion involves reference to another thing. Hence the perfection and ultimate goal of the saints is the beginning of the state of the prophets. The distinction between prophet and saint, and the superiority of the former to the latter, is clear, except that two heretical sects declare the saints above the prophets in excellence.

Junaid said that once he desired to see *Iblis* (Satan). One day, when he was standing in the mosque, he saw an old man came through the door and turned his face towards him. When he saw him, horror

seized Junaid. When he came near Junaid asked him: "Who are you? I cannot bear to look at you, or think of you."

He answered, "I am he whom you desired to see."

Junaid exclaimed, "O accursed one! What hindered you from bowing down to Adam?"

He answered, "O Junaid, how can you imagine that I should have bowed down to other than Allah?"

I was amazed at his saying this, but a secret voice whispered: "Say to him, you are a liar. Had you considered yourself His servant you would not have transgressed His command."

Iblis heard the voice in my heart. He cried out and said, "by God, you have burnt me!" and vanished.

This narration proves of the safety and piety of Junaid as Allah preserves His saints in all circumstances from the guile of Satan.

One of Junaid's disciples got annoyed with him. He thought that he had achieved some rank and had no need of Junaid's teaching anymore. One day he came to Junaid with the intention of testing him. Junaid through insight got aware of his intention. In reply to his question Junaid said: "Do you want a formal or spiritual answer?"

The disciple said: "Both"

Junaid said: "The formal answer is that if you had tested yourself you would not have needed to test me. The spiritual answer is that I depose you from your saintship."

The disciple's face immediately turned black. He cried, "the delight of faith is gone from my heart," and got busy in repentance and abandoned his foolish self-conceit. Junaid said to him, "did not you know that Allah's saint possess mysterious powers? You cannot endure their blows."

He cast a breath at the disciple, who forthwith resumed his former rank and repented of criticizing the Sheikhs.

32. Abu al-Hasan Nuri (may Allah have mercy on him)

The king of *Sufis*, innocent of affliction of extravagance Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Nuri was excellent in his conduct, eloquent in his speech and holder of an eminent position in mortification. He is the founder of a particular doctrine in Sufism and group of Sufis known as Nuris is his followers.

The whole body of aspirants to Sufism is composed of twelve sects, of which ten are approved while the remaining two are condemned. The approved are:

- Muhasibis,
- Qassaris,
- Tayfuris,
- Junaidis,
- Nuris,
- Sahlis,
- Hakimis,
- Kharrazis,
- Khafifis,
- Sayyaris,

All these assert the truth and belong to the mass of orthodox Muslims. The two condemned sects are,

- Firstly, the Hululis, who derive their name from the doctrine of incarnation and incorporation? The *Salami* and *Mushiah* sects are also connected with them.

- Secondly, the *Hallajis*, who have abandoned the *Shariat* and have adopted heresy. *Ibahatis* and *Faris* are closely related to them.

I shall include in this book a chapter on the twelve sects and shall explain their different doctrines and will highlight difference among them, so that one is fully acquainted about them.

Nuri took a praiseworthy course in rejecting the flattery and indulgence and in being diligent in self-mortification. Nuri related that he went to Junaid and found him presiding the gathering. He said to him, "O Abu al-Qasim, you have concealed the truth from them and they have put you in the place of honor; but I gave them the advise and they have pelted me with stones." Because flattery is in compliance with one's desire and advice is averse to it. It is the tendency of mankind to dislike all which is against their wishes and like whatever is in accord to their desires.

Nuri was the companion of Junaid and the disciple of Sari. He had been associated with many Sheikhs, and had met Ahmad b. Abi al-Hawari. He is the author of subtle precepts and fine sayings on various branches of the mystical knowledge. He said:

الجمع بالحق تفرقة عن غيره والتفرقة عن غيره جمع به

"Union with the Truth is separation from all else, and separation from all else is union with Him,"

One gets independent of the care and thoughts of the world by associating one's heart and mind to Allah. Once man's separation from creation is fully grounded then he attains association with the Truth and once he is fully associated with the Truth, the dependability of the creation is straightened, as two opposites can not exist side by side.

Once, Nuri stood in his house at one place for three days and nights. During this period he never moved away from his place or ceased to wail. Junaid went to see him and said, "O Abu al-Hasan, if you have seen that crying aloud to Allah is of any benefit, tell me, in order that I too might cry aloud but if you know that it benefits naught, surrender yourself to acquiescence in Allah's will, in order that your heart may rejoice." Nuri stopped his practice and wailing and said to Junaid that he was a good teacher.

Nuri said:

اعز الاشياء في زماننا شيان عالم يعمل بعلمه وعارف ينطق عن حقيقة

"The two rarest things in our time are learned man who practices what he knows and a Gnostic who speaks from the reality of his state," i.e. both learning and gnosis are appreciable, since knowledge without practice is not learning, and gnosis is not gnosis unless it has reality. Although Sheikh referred to his own age, but these things are rare at all times, and they are rare even today also. Anyone who should occupy himself in seeking for learned men and Gnostics would waste his time and would not find them. Therefore, he should get engaged to search himself in order that he might see learning everywhere, and should turn to Allah in order that he might see gnosis everywhere. The learned and Gnostics are a rare phenomena and rare is achievable only with determined efforts. It is mere wasting of time to look for that thing, which is difficult to be conceived. Learning and gnosis should be sought from oneself and similarly one should create practice and reality by oneself.

Nuri also said:

من عقل الاشياء بالله فرجوعه في كل شيء الى الله

"Who regards things as determined by Allah and sees His splendor in everything, his focus remains towards Allah, for existence of ownership lies with Owner." Therefore, Gnostic finds rest in regarding the Creator, not from creation, whereas they would always be in tribulation if they considered things to be the causes of actions. To look at the created things is polytheism, for a cause is not self-subsistent, but depends on the Causer. When they turn to Him they are escaped from trouble.

33. Abu Uthman Said Hairi (may Allah have mercy on him)

The leader of the ancients and successor of his predecessors Abu Uthman Said b. Ismail al-Hairi is one of the most eminent *Sufis* of past time and possessed a unique personality and was respected by everyone. At first he was associated with Yahya b. Maud, and then he consorted for some time with Shah Shuja Kirmani, and accompanied him to Nishapur on a visit to Abu Hafs. He remained with Abu Hafs till end of his life. He related his own account as follow:

Since childhood I was seeking the Truth, and the externalists inspired me with a feeling of abhorrence. I perceived that there beside outward practice of *Shariat* which people were commonly following, it had an inward mystery concealed under its superficial forms. On reaching adult age, one day I happened to hear a discourse by Yahya b. Maud and I found out that I was right in my thoughts and have got my objective. I got associated with him. But in the mean time I heard a lot from my friends about Shah Shuja Kirmani and I felt a desire to visit him. Accordingly, I left Rayy and set out for Kirman. Shah Shuja, however, would not admit me to his associates and said:

“You have been nursed in the doctrine of hope (*raja* رجا), as you have been associated with Yahya who occupies the *Maqam* (station) of hope. No one who has imbibed this doctrine can tread the path of purgation, because belief in hope produces sluggishness.”

I besought him earnestly, and lamented and stayed at his door for twenty days. At last he admitted me, and I remained in his society until he took me with him to visit Abu Hafs at Nishapur. On this occasion Shah Shuja was wearing a *quba* (coat). When Abu Hafs saw him he rose from his feet and advanced to meet him, saying, that what he sought in the cloak (*aba*), he had found that in the *quba*.

During our stay at Nishapur I strongly desired to get associated with Abu Hafs, but Shah Shuja's dignity and pomp restrained me from devoting my self to attendance of Abu Hafs. I prayed to Allah to make it possible for me to enjoy the society of Abu Hafs without hurting the feelings of Shah Shuja. Abu Hafs was aware of my wishes. When Shah Shuja decided to leave for Kirman, I also dressed myself for the journey, although I was leaving my heart with Abu Hafs. At the time of departure Abu Hafs said intimately to Shah Shuja, that he was pleased with that youth (referring me), let him stay here. Shah Shuja turned to me and said, “Do as the Sheikh bids thee.” So I stayed with Abu Hafs and experienced many wonderful things in his company.

Allah caused Abu Uthman to pass through three *maqam* (stations) by means of three Sheikhs and these stations which have been indicated were part of his self. He achieved them through:

- “station” of *raja* (hope) through association with Yahya,
- the “station” of *Ghairat* (jealousy) through association with Shah Shuja, and
- the “station” of *shafqat* (affection) through association with Abu Hafs.

At times an aspirant may need the association of five to six Sheikhs to get to his goal. This sort of association leads to revealing of different spiritual stations by each one of the Sheikhs. But it is better that he should not compare them with his own state and never should measure their station with his own. He should think of their perfection in that station and say that he gained that by having association with them, but they are superior to him. This is more in accord with good manners, for spiritual adepts have nothing to do with “stations” and “states”.

Due to Abu Uthman Sufism flourished in Nishapur and Khurasan. He consorted with Junaid, Ruwaym, Yusuf b. al-Hussein, and Muhammad b. Fadl al-Balkhi. No Sheikh ever benefited as much spiritual advantage from his spiritual guides as he did. The people of Nishapur set up a pulpit that he might discourse to them on Sufism. He is the author of sublime treatises on various branches of Sufism. He said:

حق لمن اعزه الله بالمعرفة ان لا يذله بالمعصية

“It behooves on whom Allah have honored with gnosis not to dishonor himself by disobedience to Allah.”

This refers to actions acquired by man to his continual effort to keep the commandments of Allah. If we consider other meanings, it is worthy of Allah not to dishonor anyone whom He has honored with gnosis. Gnosis is Allah's gift and disobedience is man's act. It is impossible that one who is honored with Allah's gift should be dishonored by his own act. Allah honored Adam with His *Marifat* (knowledge) and He did not dishonor him on account of his sin.

34. Abu Abdullah Ahmad b. Yahya (may Allah have mercy on him)

The star of the Path, the lord of love Abu Abdullah Ahmad b. Yahya b. al-Jalla was leader of the path and guide of his age. He had possessed excellent nature and laud conduct. He was companion of Junaid and was also associated with Abu al-Hasan Nuri and many other great Sheikhs. His sayings and signs on reality and Sufism are of very subtle nature. He said:

هممة العارفة الى مولادة فلم يعطف علي شي بسواها

"The mind of the Gnostic is fixed on his Lord; he does not pay attention to anything else," because the Gnostic possesses nothing except gnosis, and since gnosis is the whole capital of his heart, his thoughts are entirely bent on vision (of Allah), for distraction of thought is the cause of sorrowfulness which keeps one back from Allah.

He said that one day he saw a beautiful Magian boy. He was amazed by his beauty and stood still before him. In the mean time Junaid passed by me. He said to him, "O master, will Allah burn a face like this in Hell-fire?" Junaid answered:

"O my son, this is a trick of the *nafs* (lower soul), which has engrossed you in this thought. If you look with due consideration, the same marvel is existent in every atom of the universe. You will soon be punished for this negligence."

As soon as Junaid turned away from him, he immediately forgot the Quran. And it did not come back to his memory until for years he had implored Allah to help him and had repented of his sin. Now he dare not pay heed to any created object or waste his time by looking at things.

35. Abu Muhammad Ruwaym b. Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him)

The non-parallel of his age, Imam of his time Abu Muhammad Ruwaym b. Ahmad was Sheikh and Imam of *Sufis*. He was an intimate friend of Junaid but in Jurisprudence he followed Dawud. He was deeply versed in the interpretation and reciting of the Quran. He was famed for the loftiness of his state and the exaltedness of his station, and for his journeys in detachment from the world and for his severe austerities.

Towards the end of his life he (to hide his state) accepted the post of *Qadi*, but such was the perfection of his spiritual rank that he was not thereby veiled from Allah. Hence Junaid said, "we are claiming to be free from the world but still occupied (with the world), and Ruwaym is a man occupied (with the world) and still free of it." He wrote several books on Sufism, one of which, entitled *Ghalat al-Wajidin*, deserves particular mention. I am exceedingly fond of it.

One day he was asked that how did he do?" He replied:

كيف حال من دينك هواه وصمته دنياه ليس بصالح لتقي ولا بعارفت تقي

"What could be the state of that whose religion is his lust and whose thought is (fixed on) on worldly affairs, he is neither a pious man free from people, nor a Gnostic one of Allah's elect?"

He referred to the ills of his *nafs* (lower soul) that is subject to passion and regarded lust as its religion, for *nafs* gives name of faith to personal desires. Sensual people consider faith as following of desires, and for them following of *nafs* is *Shariat* and one who complies with their inclinations, even though he be a heretic, he is a religious person and one who thwarts their desires is irreligious, even though he

be the most pious. This is widely spread disease of present time. May Allah save us from associating with any such person!

Ruwaym doubtlessly gave this answer in the light of prevailing conditions at that time or in reference to the inwardly state of the questioner, which he truly diagnosed, or it might be that for the purpose of diagnosing the questioner he referred the state to himself which is a good method of correcting.

36. Abu Yaqub Yusaf b. al-Hussein al-Razi (may Allah have mercy on him)

An unparallel, of high nobility Abu Yaqub Yusaf b. al-Hussein al-Razi was one of the ancient Sheikhs. He was a disciple of Dhu al-Nun, and consorted with a large number of Sheikhs and performed service to all of them.

He said:

اذل الناس الفقير الطموع واعزهم المحب المحبويه

“The meanest of mankind is the covetous dervish and the most honored is he who loves his beloved.”

Covetousness renders embarrassment to the dervish in both the worlds, because *faqir* (poor) are already contemptible in the eyes of worldlings, and becomes more disgraceful if they develop any hope on them. Therefore, wealth with honor is far more perfect than poverty with dishonor. Covetousness and lust causes the dervish to incur the charge of sheer falsehood. The lover in the eyes of his beloved considers himself to be the meanest of mankind, since the lover acknowledges himself to be very despicable in comparison with his beloved. This all is because of covetousness and lust and if one refrains from them, repute takes the place of contemptuousness.

So long as Zulaikha desired Yusaf, she became everyday more mean and when she cast desire away, Allah gave beauty and youth back to her. It is an established law that when the lover advances, the beloved retires. If the lover is satisfied with friendship alone, and considers it enough and gets carefree of his beloved, then the beloved would try to get his attraction. In truth, the lover has honor only while he has no desire for union. When the lover desires for union and is unable to achieve, he loses all respect. His love would remain based on mere self desire, unless his love diverts him from all thought of union or separation.

37. Abu al-Hasan Sumnun (may Allah have mercy on him)

The sun of the lovers Abu al-Hasan Sumnun b. Abdullah al-Khawwas was held in great esteem by all the Sheikhs. They called him Sumnun *al-Muhibb* (the Lover), but he called himself Sumnun *al-Kadhdhab* (the Liar). He suffered much persecution from the hands of Ghulam al-Khalil¹⁹. He provided false evidences against him, so that all the Sheikhs were annoyed with him. He was a wicked person who pretended piety and Sufism. He had made himself known to the Caliph and courtiers by his wickedness. He had sold out the religion for worldly gains. Such types of people are present today also. This hypocrite used to speak evil of the Sheikhs and dervishes, to establish his own power in the court and hoping to keep the king away from them so that he might not get blessings from them. Fortunate indeed was Sumnun and his contemporaries of having only one Ghulam Khalil against them whereas in our age there are thousands of such characters for every true spiritualist. There is nothing to worry as vultures have more rights on carrions.

When Sumnun gained eminence and popularity in Baghdad, Ghulam al-Khalil could not digest all that and started intriguing against Sumnun. Incidentally at that time one woman got fallen in love with Sumnun and made marriage proposal to him, which he refused. She went to Junaid, begging him to intervene and force Sumnun to marry her. Junaid also returned her empty handed. Then somehow

¹⁹ Abu Abdallah Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ghali b. Khalid al-Basri al-Bahili, generally known as Ghulam Khalil died in 275 A.H.

she reached to Ghulam Khalil and accused Sumnun of having attempted her virtue. He listened eagerly to her slanders, and induced the Caliph to command that Sumnun should be put to death. When the Caliph was about to give the word to the executioner his tongue stuck in his throat. The same night he was told in the dream that his empire would last no longer than Sumnun's life. Next day he asked his pardon and restored him to favor.

Sumnun is the author of lofty sayings, and subtle indications concerning the real nature of love. Once while on his way back from Hijaz, the people of Fayd requested him to discourse to them about this subject. He mounted the pulpit, but while he was speaking he found that people were not much attentive to his discourse. Sumnun turned to the lamps and said: "I am speaking to you." Immediately all the lamps collapsed and broke into small bits. He said:

لا يعبر عن شيء إلا بما هو أرق منه ولا شيء أرق من المحبة فيما يعبر عنها

"A thing can be explained only by what is more subtle than itself: there is nothing subtler than love: by what, then, shall love be explained?" It means that love cannot be explained because explanation is an attribute of the explainer whereas love is an attribute of the Beloved, therefore no explanation of its real nature is possible.

38. Shah Shuja al-Kirmani (may Allah have mercy on him)

The king of the Sheikhs, independent from change of states Abu al-Fawaris Shah b. Shuja al-Kirmani was of royal descent and unparallel. He was among the associates of Abu Turab Nakhshabi and he also consorted with many other Sheikhs. Some mention has been made of him in the notice of Abu Uthman al-Hairi. He composed a celebrated treatise on Sufism as well as a book entitled *Mirat al-Hukama* (The mirror of Sages). His sayings are of immense value. He said:

لا اهل الفضل فضل ما لم يروا فلا يراه ولا اهل الولاية ولاية ما لم يروها فلا يروها فلا ولاية لهم

"The eminent have eminence until they see it, and the saints have saintship until they see it," i.e. whoever regards his eminence loses its reality, and whoever regards his saintship loses its reality, for eminence and saintship are such attributes which cannot be seen and expressed respectively. No one can personally claim eminence or saintship.

His biographers relate that for forty years he never slept; then he fell asleep and dreamed of Allah. He asked:

"O Lord, I was seeking Thee in nightly vigils, but I have found Thee in sleep."

Allah answered:

"O Shah, you have found Me by means of those nightly vigils: if you had not sought Me there, you would not have found Me here."

39. Umru b. Uthman Makki (may Allah have mercy on him)

The pleasure of hearts, the *Nur* (light) of inward Umru b. Uthman al-Makki was one of the principal *Sufis*, and author of celebrated works on the mystical sciences. He became a disciple of Junaid after he had seen Abu Said Kharraz. For short while he was associated with Nibaji also. He was the Imam of his age in theology.

He said:

لا يقع علي كيفية الوجد عبارة لأنه سر الله عند المؤمنين

"Ecstasy does not admit explanation, because it is a secret between Allah and the true believers."

Since it is a secret of Allah with the True Believer and it will be no more a secret if he tries to explain it to others. All human power and effort is divorced from the Divine mysteries.

When Umru came to Isfahan, a young boy associated with him. His father was not happy with this union and he made strenuous efforts to stop him which resulted into sickness of young boy. One day the Sheikh along with a party of dervishes came to visit him. The boy begged the Sheikh to bid the *qawal* (singer) to chant a few verses. Sheikh asked the *qawal* who started chanting the following verse:

مالي مرضت فلم يعدني عايد منكم ويمرض عبدكم فأعود

What I care that when I fell ill none of you visited me,
Though I visit your slave when he falls ill?

On hearing this boy got up and suddenly he felt much recovery from his disease and he bid for more chant. So the singer chanted:-

واشد من مرضي علي صدوركم وصدود عبدكم علي شديد

Hindrance from you is graver to me than my sickness;
And for me this hindrance from you is very painful.
The boy felt active and sickness departed from him.

His father permitted him to get associated with the Sheikh and repented of the suspicion which he had harbored in his heart. The young boy became an eminent *Sufi*.

40. Abu Muhammad Sahl b. Abdullah al-Tustari (may Allah have mercy on him)

The owner of the hearts, Abu Muhammad Sahl b. Abdullah al-Tustari was Imam of his time and beloved of all. His austerities were great and his devotions excellent. He has fine sayings on sincerity and the defects of human actions. The formal *Ulama* say that he was whole of *Shariat* and the Truth. This statement is erroneous, for the two things have never been divided. The *Shariat* without Truth and the Truth without *Shariat* are meaningless. Their assertion is founded on the fact that the explanations of this Sheikh are more intelligible and easy to apprehend. As Allah enjoined the *Shariat* and Truth one thing, how is it possible that saints should separate them? If they be taken to separate from each other, one must inevitably be rejected and the other accepted. Rejection of the *Shariat* is heresy, and rejection of the Truth is infidelity and polytheism. When separation between them is made, it not to establish a difference of meaning, but to affirm the Truth, as when it is said: "The words لا اله الا الله there is no God but Allah," are Truth, and the words محمد رسول الله Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah" are *Shariat*. No one can separate the one from the other without impairing his faith, and it is vain wish to do so.

In short, the *Shariat* is a branch of the Truth and knowledge of Allah is Truth, and obedience to His command is *Shariat*. These formalists deny whatever does not suit their fancy, and it is dangerous to deny one of the fundamental principles of the Way to Allah. Praise be to Allah for the faith which He has given us! Tustari said:

ما طلعت الشمس ولا غربت علي وجه الارض الا وهم جهال بالله الامن يوثر الله علي نفسه وروحه ودينه واهله واهله

"The sun does not rise or sets upon anyone on the face of the earth who is ignorant of the *marifat* (knowledge) of Allah, unless he prefers Allah to his own soul and spirit and to his present and future life,"

If anyone adheres to self-interest, that would be a proof of his ignorance of Allah, because knowledge of Allah demands abandonment of forethought. Abandonment of forethought is resignation, whereas perseverance in forethought arises from ignorance of predestination.

41. Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Fadl al-Balkhi (may Allah have mercy on him)

The light of the eyes of Sheikhs Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Fadl al-Balkhi was very popular among the people of Iraq and Khurasan. He was disciple of Ahmad b. Khadruya. Abu Uthman Hairi had a great affection for him. The religious fanatics forced him to quit Balkh. He went to Samarqand and spent rest of his life there. He said:

اعرف الناس بالله اشد هم لمجاهداتي او مرأة واتبعهم لسنة نبيه

“Among the people, one who has most knowledge of Allah is the one who strive the hardest to fulfill His commandments, and follows most closely the *Sunnah* of His Prophet.” The nearer is to Allah the more eager is one to fulfill His commandments. And the farther is from Allah the more reluctant one is to follow the *Sunnah* of His Prophet.

He said:

عجبت لمن يقطع البوادي والقفار والمفاوز حتي يصل الي بيته وحرمة لان فيه اثار انبياءة كيف لا يقطع نفسه وهو اة حتي يصل الي قلبه لان فيه اثار مولاة

“I wonder at that man who crosses deserts and wilderness to reach His House and Sanctuary, because the traces of His prophets are to be found there: but he does not cross his own passions and lusts to reach to his heart, which is the palace of the traces of Lord?”

The heart which is the seat of knowledge of Allah, is more sacred than the Kaba, to which men turn in devotion. Men are ever looking towards the Kaba, but Allah is ever looking towards the heart. Wherever the heart is, my Beloved is there; wherever His decree is, my desire is there, wherever the traces of my prophets are, the eyes of those whom I love are directed there.

42. Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Ali al-Tirmidhi (may Allah have mercy on him)

A mystic who was free of all attributes of humanity. He was perfect in divine knowledge and an Imam of his time. He enjoyed an eminent position amongst the Sheikhs of Sufism. He composed many excellent books which, by their eloquence, declare the miracles vouchsafed to him, e.g., the *Khatm al-Wilayat*, the *Kitab al-Nahj*, the *Nawadir al-Usul*, and many more books. I adore these works and regard them of very high standard. I hold him in great veneration and am entirely devoted to him. My Sheikh used to praise that Muhammad was a unique jewel that had no like in the whole world.

He has also written many books on the formal sciences, and is a trustworthy authority for the traditions of the Prophet. He began a commentary on the Quran, but did not live long enough to finish it. The completed portion is widely circulated among the theologians. He studied jurisprudence from Muhammad Hakim who was an intimate friend of Abu Hanifa and the *Hakimis* a *Sufi* sect in that region are his followers. He is said to have been associated with the Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him). His disciple, Abu Bakr Warraq, relates that Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him) used to visit him every Sunday, and they used to converse with each other.

He said:

من جهل اوصات العبودية فهو بنعوت الربودية اجهل

“Anyone who is ignorant of the nature of servanthship, is yet more ignorant of the nature of lordship,”

One who is not aware of the way to his own *nafs* (lower soul), how can he get aware of the *marifat* (knowledge) of Allah. Whoever is ignorant of contamination of human qualities, how could he recognize the purity of the Divine attributes, as the outward is connected with the inward, and he who wants to possess the former without the later and later without the former, makes an absurd assertion. Therefore, knowledge of the nature of lordship is coupled with the soundness and rightness of reverent servanthship and without mending them, knowledge of the nature of lordship is unattainable. This is very profound and instructive saying. It will be fully explained at the proper place.

43. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Umar al-Warraq (may Allah have mercy on him)

The leader of the follower of the path of poverty and purity Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Umar al-Warraq is counted among the great Sheikhs and ascetics. He benefited from the association of Muhammad b. Ali and also met Ahmad b. Khadruya. He is author of many books on rules of discipline and ethics. The *Sufi* Sheikhs have called him "*Mu'addib al-awliya*" (one who educates the saints on ethical matters).

He related that once Muhammad b. Ali handed him over some of his writings with the instructions that those were to be thrown in river Oxus. Since he had not the heart to do so, therefore, he kept them at his house and lied to Sheikh that he had obeyed his instructions. Sheikh inquired if he had observed anything at the time of obeying his instruction. He had no answer except to say that he had observed nothing. Then the Sheikh said that he had not obeyed him and commanded him to go back and throw them into the river. Overwhelmed with Sheikh's insight, he went back and threw the papers into the river. Suddenly, the water parted and a chest with its lid open appeared. As soon as the papers fell into it, the lid closed and the waters joined again and the chest vanished. He went back to him and told him what had occurred. He acknowledged and said, "Now you have thrown them in the river." On his request to unveil the mystery the Sheikh said, "I had composed a work on theology and mysticism which could hardly be comprehended by the intellect. My brother Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him) desired it of me, and Allah bade the water to take it to him."

Abu Bakr Warraq said:

الناس ثلاثة العلماء والفقراء والامراء، فاذا فسد العلماء فسد الطاعة والشريعة، واذا فسد الفقراء فسد الاخلاق، واذا فسد الامراء فسد المعاش

"There are three classes of men; *Ulama* (divines), Dervishes (poor), and rich. When the *Ulama* are corrupt, obedience and *Shariat* are vitiated; when the dervishes are corrupt, men's morals are depraved; and when the Rich are corrupt, men's means of livelihood are spoiled."

The decline of the divines consists in covetousness, that of the dervishes in hypocrisy and that of the rulers and wealthy in injustice. The Monarch do not become corrupt until they turn their backs on *Ulama*, and *Ulama* do not become corrupt until they associate with monarchy, and dervishes do not become corrupt until they seek ostentation, because the injustice by monarch is due to ignorance, covetousness of *Ulama* is due to dishonesty, and the hypocrisy of dervishes is due to lack of trust in Allah.

44. Abu Said Ahmad b. Isa (may Allah have mercy on him)

The fountain of *tawakul* (trust on Allah) and *rida* (acquiescence), aspirant of the path of annihilation Abu Said Ahmad b. Isa al-Kharraz had the insight of the disciples' *auqat* (time) and full awareness of their inwardly states. He was the first who explained the doctrine of *fana* (annihilation) and *baqa* (subsistence). He is the author of brilliant compositions and famous for sublime sayings and allegories. He had met Dhu al-Nun, and had association with Bashr Hafi and Sari.

In response to the following saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that "جملت القلوب علي حب من احسن اليها" *hearts are naturally incline to love him who acts compassionately towards them,*" he said:

واعجاب لمن لم ير محسنا غير الله كيف لا يميل بكليته الى الله

"One wonders at him who sees none other extending benevolence towards him except Allah, still he does not incline to Allah with his whole being."

In reality true beneficence is that which is bestowed by the Lord and it is conferred upon those who have need of it. How can he who needs beneficence from others bestow it upon anyone? All that exists belongs to Allah, and He is the Lord of all and hath need of none. The entire creation is

dependent on Him. The Saints (friends of Allah) recognizing this, observe in every reward and beneficence the Giver and the Benefactor. Their hearts are wholly taken captive by love of Him and they turn away from everything else.

45. Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Muhammad Isfahani (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was a great Sheikh and is also known as Ali b. Sahl. Junaid and he exchanged exquisite letters to one another. Umru b. Uthman who had consorted with Abu Turab and Junaid, visited Isfahan to meet him. His theology on Sufism based on *rida* (acquiescence) and self-discipline is likened and considered to be safe from mischief and contamination. He spoke eloquently on the theory and practice of mysticism, and lucidly explained its difficulties and symbolical allusions. He said:

الحضور افضل من اليقين لان الحضور وطناً واليقين خطرات

“Presence (حضور) with the Truth is better than faith, because presence is an abiding state in the heart and forgetfulness has no access there.”

The faith is a transitory state that comes and goes. The present are in attendance whereas possessors of faith remain at the door. The subject of absence and presence will be discussed in a separate chapter of this book.

He also said:

من وقت ادم الي قيام الساعة الناس يقولون القلب! القلب! وانا احب ان اري رجلا يصف ايش القلب او كيف القلب فلا اري

“From the time of Adam to till the Resurrection Day people will keep on crying, my heart, my heart! I am in search of a person who may be able to describe that what the heart is, or how it is, but I find none.”

People generally give the name of heart to that flesh of meat palpitating in our body, which is existent in every living human, may he be a child, a madman or an ecstatic but they can not be called “Possessor of Heart”. What, then, is this heart, of which we hear only the name? If we call intellect the heart, it is wrong, and if we call spirit the heart, it is not the heart. Similarly, if we call knowledge the heart, it is also not the heart whereas all the evidences of the Truth subsist in the heart, yet we only find the name of it.

46. Abu al-Hasan Muhammad b. Ismail Khair al-Nassaj (may Allah have mercy on him)

The straight on the Path of love Abu al-Hasan Muhammad b. Ismail Khair al-Nassaj was a great Sheikh of his time, and discoursed with eloquence on ethics and preached excellent sermons. He died at an advanced age. Both Shibli and Ibrahim Khawwas repented on his hand and took the Path of Truth. He sent Shibli to Junaid, wishing to observe the respect due to the latter. He was the disciple of Sari Saqati, and was contemporary of Junaid and Abu al-Hasan Nuri. Junaid held him in high regard, and Abu Hamza Baghdadi also acknowledged his high stature. He obtained the name Khair al-Nassaj due to the following event.

Once he left his native town Samara with the intention of performing the pilgrimage. When he reached Kufa, which was on his route, he was seized by a silk weaver who claimed that he was his slave and his name was Khair. Believing it to be an ordeal from Allah, he did not deny the weaver’s claim, and remained in his service for many years. Whenever anybody called him Khair, he used to immediately respond saying, “*labbayk*” (At thy service), until one day the weaver repented of what he had done to him and said to Khair: “I made a mistake, you are not my slave.” Then he continued his journey for pilgrimage and reached Mecca. He attained to such a degree that Junaid said, Khair was the best amongst them. He always felt happy when somebody called him Khair, saying that it was not right that he should alter a name which was given to him by a Muslim.

It is said, that when the hour of his death approached, it was time for evening prayer. From the senselessness of death, he opened his eyes and looked towards the door and addressed to the angel of death:

“Allah saves thee! Stop for a while! You are Allah’s deputed servant, and so am I. And to what you are commanded to do (viz. to take my life) will not escape thee, but that which I am commanded to do (viz. to perform the evening prayer) will escape me, therefore, give me few moments, so I do as I am bidden, and then do as you are bidden.”

He then called for water, performed ablution, said the evening prayer and gave up his life. On the same night he was seen in a dream and was asked: “What has Allah done to you?”

He answered: “Do not ask me of this, but I have gained better comfort than your world.”

Once he said in his place of meeting:

شوح الله صدور المتقين بنود اليقين وكشف بصائر الموقنين بنور حقائق الايمان

“The pious can not live without faith and their breasts are expanded with the *Nur* (light) of faith. The true believers can not live without accepting the realities of faith, so their insight of intellect is shining with the *Nur* (light) of belief.”

So, where there is belief, faith would also be there and where there is faith, piety would be there, for they are inseparable from each other.

47. Abu Hamza Khurasani (may Allah have mercy on him)

A unique preacher of his time Abu Hamza al-Khurasani was one of the ancient Sheikhs of Khurasan. He was associated with Abu Turab, and had seen Kharraz. He was firmly grounded in *tawakul* (trust in Allah).

Once he fell down into a dry well. He spent three days and nights in the well. Incidentally on forth day, some people from a caravan passed by. He thought of calling them for help but then he rejected the idea thinking that it was inappropriate to seek help from anyone save Allah. It would be a complaint of Allah if he told them that He had cast him in the well and they would rescue him. When they reached there and saw an open well in the middle of the path, they consulted amongst them and decided to cover the well lest anyone might fall in to that. Hearing that, Abu Hamza became deeply agitated and abandoned hope of life. The people from caravan blocked the opening of the well and departed. He had no contact with mankind anymore and being despaired of his life, he started imploring Allah. When the night fell he heard some movement near the top of the well. On looking attentively he found that some part of the mouth of the well had opened and a dragon was pushing its tail downward. He knew that Allah had sent the dragon for his help and perceived that he would be saved through him. He got hold of its tail and it raised him out. A heavenly voice came to him,

“O Abu Hamza, this is an excellent escape of thine, We have saved thee from death by means of a death.”

He was asked that who was poor (*gharib*)?

He replied,

المستوحش من الالفت

he who shuns intimacy.”

Who shuns intimacy of all desires, is poor because the dervish has no home or society either in this world or the next, and when he is dissociated from phenomenal existence he shuns everything, and then he is poor; and this is a very lofty grade of the path of Truth.

48. Abu al-Abbas Ahmad b. Masruq (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was one of the most eminent Sheikhs of Khurasan, and the Saints of Allah are unanimous that he was one of the *Autad* (noble saints) of the land and he had association with the *Qutb*, who is the pivot of the universe. On quest of someone that who was *Qutb*, he did not declare his name but hinted that Junaid was that personage. He served forty Sheikhs who had attained the rank of fixity (*sahib-i tamkin*) and benefited from them. He said:

من كان سروره بغير الحق فسروره يورث الهموم ومن لم يكن انسه في خدمة ربه فأنسه يورث الوحشة

“If anyone takes joy from others save Allah, his whole joy is actually sorrow, and one who is not found of devotion to Allah, he is ruptured by loneliness.”

All save Allah is perishable, and whoever rejoices in what is perishable, when that passes away will cause him to stricken with sorrow and all else except His service is useless. When the baseness of created objects is made manifest, one’s intimacy (with them) is turned to loneliness and abhorrence. Hence, the sorrow and loneliness of the entire universe consist in regarding that which is other (than Allah).

49. Abu Abdullah b. Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him)

The guide of the keepers of trust on Allah, Sheikh of the philosophers Abu Abdullah b. Ahmad b. Ismail al-Maghrabi was a popular Sheikh of his time and a watchful protector of his disciples. Both, Ibrahim Khawwas and Ibrahim Shaiban were his disciples. He has lofty sayings and shining evidences, and he had a very high rank on the path of solitude. He said:

ما رايت انصف من الدنيا ان خدمتها خدمتك والاتركتها تركت

“I have never seen anything more just than the world: if you serve her she will serve you, and if you leave her she will leave you.” As long as you seek her she will seek you, but when you turn away from her and seek Allah she will flee from you and worldly thoughts will no more cling to your heart. Therefore, one who renounces the world he rescues himself from her evils and ordeals.

50. Abu Ali al-Hasan b. Ali Jurjani (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was a unique personality of his time. He wrote brilliant works on the science of ethics and detection of spiritual cankers. He was a disciple of Muhammad b. Ali al-Tirmidhi, and a contemporary of Abu Bakr Warraq. Ibrahim Samarqandi was his disciple. He said:

الخلق كلهم في ميادين الغفلة يركضون وعلي الظنون يعتمدون وعندهم اهم في الحقيقة ينقلوبون وعن المكاشفة ينظقون

“The whole mankind is occupying the ground of heedlessness, relying upon idle fancies, while they perceive themselves to be on the path of Truth and to be speaking from Divine revelation.”

This saying refers to self-conceit and pride of the soul. Men, though they are ignorant, have a firm belief in their ignorance, especially ignorant *Sufis* are more affected by this. As wise *Sufis* are the noblest creature of Allah, so are the ignorant *Sufis* vilest creatures of Allah.

The former possess the Truth and are without conceit, whereas the later possess conceit and are without the Truth. They remain entrapped in the sphere of heedlessness and perceive that they are wandering through the valleys of saintship. They rely on fancies and suppose them to be certainty. They go along with the formal practices and think it is reality. They speak from their own lust and think it is a Divine revelation. One can not get rid of conceit until and unless one is set to the Vision and Beauty of His Majesty, for in the manifestation of His Beauty one see Him alone, and their conceit is annihilated, while in the revelation of His majesty they do not see themselves, and their conceit does not intrude.

51. Abu Muhammad Ahmad b. al-Hussein al-Jurairi (may Allah have mercy on him)

The donor of the pleasure of knowledge, a mediator of the formal practices Abu Muhammad Ahmad b. al-Hussein al-Jurairi was a confidant friend of Junaid, and among the associates of Sahl b. Abdullah. He was learned in every branch of religious knowledge and was the Imam of his time in jurisprudence. He was also well acquainted in theology. His rank in Sufism was such that Junaid requested him to educate his disciples on principles of ethics and abstinence. After the death of Junaid he succeeded him.

He said:

دوام الايمان وقوام الاديان وصلاح الابدان في خصال ثلاث الاكتفاء والاتقاء والاحتماء,
فمن اكتفى بالله صلحت سريره ومن اتقى ما هيى الله عنه استقامت سريره ومن احتمي ما لم يوافقته ارتاضت طبيعة,
فثمره الاكتفاء صفو المعرفة وعاقبة الاتقاء حسن الخليقة وغاية الاحتماء اعتدال الطبيعة

“The safety of faith, the subsistence of religions and the health of bodies depend on three qualities, i.e.

- satisfaction (*iktifa*),
- piety (*ittiqā*) and
- abstinence from illegal feed (*ihtima*).

Hence,

- If one is satisfied with Allah, his conscious become good;
- if one guards himself from what Allah has forbidden, his character becomes upright; and
- if one abstain from eating what does not agree with him, his body constitution is brought into good order.

Therefore,

- the fruit of satisfaction is pure knowledge of Allah, and
- the result of piety is excellence of moral character, and
- the abstinence from unlawful feed, brings equilibrium to the nature of the body.”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

من كثر صلواته بالليل حسن وجهه بالنهاى

“One who prays much by night, his face will be bright and shining by day,”

and the Prophet (peace be upon him) also said that the pious shall come at the Resurrection with dazzling faces on thrones of light.

One who is careful in his diet, his body would remain save from diseases and his soul from lust. This saying is delicate and complete in itself.

52. Abu al-Abbas Ahmad b. Sahl al-Arimi (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was always held in great respect by his contemporaries. He was versed in the sciences of Quranic exegesis and commentary, and expounded the subtleties of the Quran with an eloquence and insight peculiar to himself. He was an eminent disciple of Junaid. He had associated with Ibrahim Maristani.

Abu Said Kharraz regarded him with the utmost veneration and did not recognize anyone except him as established Sheikh of Sufism.

He said:

السكون الي ما لوفات الطباء ع يقطع صاحبه عن بلوغ درجات الحقائق

“Submission to natural habits prevents a man from attaining the exalted degrees of spirituality.”

Who submits himself to self desires remains veiled from the Truth, because natural dispositions are the instruments and organs of the *nafs* (lower soul), which is the centre of veiling; whereas the spirit is the centre of revelation, and a veiled and resident desirer never becomes a man of revelation. One can only attain the Truth by restraining him from natural temperament. Natural dispositions become attached to two things:

- to this world and its accessories, or
- to the next world and its circumstances:

Therefore, one who is attached to the world is attracted to its homogeneous things and to the latter through imagination and in virtue of heterogeneousness and non-cognition. Therefore they are attached to the notion of the next world not to its idea, for if they knew its reality, they would have abandoned the mortal world. And if they would have abandoned the world, they would have trodden the path of the saintship and reality would have manifested on them that this disposition of temporary abode is nothing but perishable. There can be no harmony between the next world and human nature until the latter is annihilated, because in the next world is that which the heart of man has never conceived.

The way to the next world is full of danger. A thing that comes into one's thoughts has no worth, since imagination is incapable of knowing the reality of the next world, therefore, how can human nature become familiar with the truth thereof? It is certain that our natural faculties can be acquainted only with the notion of the next world.

53. Mansur Hallaj (may Allah have mercy on him)

Absorbed in veracity, martyr of love Abu al-Mughith al-Hussein b. Mansur al-Hallaj was an enamored and intoxicated votary of Sufism. He had a strong ecstasy and a lofty spirit. The *Sufi* Sheikhs are at variance concerning him. Some reject him, while others accept him. Among the latter class are Umru b. Uthman, Abu Yaqub Nahrajuri, Abu Yaqub Aqta, Ali b. Sahl Isfahani, and others. Those who reject him are Ibn Ata, Muhammad b. Khafif, and Abu al-Qasim Nasrabadi. But all the moderns accept his eminence and spiritual stature and include him among the *Auliya* (saint). Some such like Junaid, Shibli, Jurairi, and Husri have suspended their judgment about him. Some accuse him of magic. In our days the Grand Sheikh Abu Said, Sheikh Abu al-Qasim Gurgani and Sheikh Abu al-Abbas Shaqani looked upon him favorably, and in their eyes he was a great *Sufi*.

Abu al-Qasim Qushayri remarks that if Hallaj was a genuine spiritualist he is not to be rejected from Allah on the ground of peoples' condemnation and if he was rejected by the Truth, his popularity with the people was of no use to him. Therefore we leave him to the Judgment of Allah, and honor him according to the signs of the Truth which we have found him to possess.

But of all the Sheikhs only a few deny the perfection of his merit, the purity of his spiritual state, and abundance of his ascetic practices. It would be an act of dishonesty to omit his biography from this book because only few have pronounced his outwardly behavior to be that of an infidel, and disbelieved in him and charged him with trickery and magic. They suppose that Hussein b. Mansur Hallaj is that Hasan b. Mansur Hallaj heretic of Baghdad who was the master of the famous infidel of Baghdad, Muhammad b. Zakarriya²⁰ and the companion of Abu Said Qarmati. But the Hussein whom

²⁰ The famous physician Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Zakarriya al-Razi, died 320 A.H

we are discussing here was resident of village Bayda of Faris. The reluctance or rejection shown by some Sheikhs was not due to any dispute on his religious conduct but was due to his prevailed conduct and behavior.

At first he became a disciple of Sahl b. Abdullah, whom he left without obtaining his permission. Then he attached himself to Umru b. Uthman to whom also he left without seeking his permission. Then he sought to associate himself with Junaid, but he did not admit him. This led to his non-acceptance by other Sheikhs also and this was all because of conduct and not due to any other reason.

Shibli said about him,

انا والحلاج شيء واحد فخلصني جنوني واهلكه عقله

Hallaj and I are one; my madness saved me, while his intelligence destroyed him?"

Had his religion been suspected, Shibli would not have said: "Hallaj and I are one."

And Muhammad b. Khafif said, "هو عالم رباني" he is divinely learned man.

There are many such praises uttered by Sheikhs. The annoyance and abhorrence on part of *Sufi* Sheikhs led him to solitude. He is the author of brilliant compositions and allegories and polished sayings in theology and jurisprudence.

I have seen about fifty works by him at Baghdad and its neighboring districts, and some in Khuzestan, Faris and Khurasan. I found his writings like as the novices talks at the initial stage of the path. Some of them are of high caliber, some pathetic, some easier, and some more unseemly than others.

When Allah bestows His splendor on anyone, he endeavors to describe what he has seen with the power of ecstasy and help of Divine grace, his words are obscure, especially if he expresses himself with haste and self-admiration then they are more disgusting to the imaginations, and incomprehensible to the minds of those who hear them, and they appreciate the utterance. At such stage because of ignorance some deny it and some follow it but their following is also such like denial. On the other hand, persons of true spirituality and insight visions, make no effort to describe such states and do not occupy themselves with self-admiration on that account, and are careless of praise and blame alike, and are undisturbed by denial and acceptance.

It is absurd to charge Hallaj as a magician. According to the Sunnites, magic is real just as miracles are real. The manifestation of magic in the state of perfection is infidelity, whereas the manifestation of miracles in the state of perfection is excellence of *Marifat*, because the former is the result of Allah's anger, while the later is outcome of His being pleased. I will explain this more fully in the chapter on affirmation of miracles. By consent of all Sunnites who are gifted with wisdom, no Muslim can be a magician and no infidel can be held in honor, for contraries never meet.

Hussein, as long as he lived, remained virtuous and pious. He always showed humility in his prayers, diligence in devotion and *dikr* (praise of Allah) and continual fasting. His sayings on the subject of Unification are of excellent nature. If his actions were magic, all this could not possibly have ensued from him. Consequently, they must have been *karamat* (miracles), and *karamat* are vouchsafed only to a true saint.

Some theologians reject him on the ground that his sayings refer to transmigration and union. But the fault lies with the expression, not in the meaning. A person overcome with ecstasy has not the power of expressing himself correctly. Besides, the meaning of the expression may be difficult to apprehend, so that people mistake the writer's intention, and repudiate not his real meaning but a notion which they have formed for themselves.

I have seen in Baghdad and its surroundings a number of heretics who pretend to be followers of Hallaj and make his sayings an argument for their profanity and call themselves Hallajis. They spoke of him in the same terms of exaggeration as the *Shiites* apply to Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). I will refute their doctrines in the chapter concerning the different *Sufi* sects.

Since Hallaj was an ecstatic and not firmly settled, therefore, it is not recommended to follow his sayings. A man needs to be firmly settled before his sayings can be considered authoritative. Although Hallaj is dear to me and I have lot of love for him in my heart, yet his path is not soundly established on any principle, and his state is not fixed in any position and his experiences leads to fear of evil. When my own visions began I derived much support from him, that is to say, in the way of argument and evidence. I have already composed a book in explanation of his sayings and demonstrated their sublimity by proofs and arguments. Furthermore, in another work, entitled *Minhaj al-din*, I have given some detail of his life from beginning to end and now I have given some account of him in this place. How can a doctrine whose principles require to be confirmed with so much caution be followed and imitated? But Truth and idle fancy never agree. The followers of desires are continually seeking to fasten upon some erroneous theory. As he said:

الاستهامة مستطقات تحت نطقها مستهلكات

“Tongues are eager to speak, but there is destruction in their speaking.”

Such expressions are entirely harmful and futile in their meaning. If the meaning exists it is not lost by expression, and if it is non-existent it is not created by expression. Expression only produces an unreal notion and leads the student mortally astray by causing him to imagine that the expression is the real meaning.

54. Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Ahmad al-Khawwas (may Allah have mercy on him)

The leader of the custodians of trust on Allah, Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Ahmad al-Khawwas attained a high degree in the doctrine of *tawakul* (trust in Allah). He met with many Sheikhs and benefited from their association. Many signs of saintship and miracles were vouchsafed to him. He is the author of excellent works on the ethics of Sufism. He said:

العلم كله في كلمتين لا تتكلف ما كفت ولا تضيع ما اسكفت

“All knowledge is comprised in two sentences, do not trouble yourself with that whose fear has been expelled from you by Allah, and do not lack in anything which is mandatory on you to do.”

Do not trouble yourself with destiny, for what is destined from eternity will not be changed by your efforts, and do not neglect his commandments, for you will be punished if you neglect it.

On asking that what wonders he had seen, he replied:

“Many wonders, but the most wondrous was that the Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him) desired to let him associate with me, but I refused. Not that I desired any better companion, but I feared that I would depend on him rather than on Allah, and my trust in Allah would weaken by consorting with him, and that in consequence of performing a work of supererogation, I should fail to perform a duty incumbent on me. This is the degree of perfection.

55. Abu Hamza Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him)

The confidant of the steadfast, the foundation of the believers of faith Abu Hamza al-Baghdadi al-Bazzaz was one of the principal *Sufi* scholastic theologians. He was a disciple of Harith Muhasibi, and had association with Sari. He was contemporary of Nuri and Khair Nassaj and enjoyed the company of many eminent Sheikhs. He used to preach in the Rusafa mosque at Baghdad. He was versed in Quranic exegesis and commentary, and related traditions of Prophet (peace be upon him) on trustworthy authority. He was with Nuri at the time of his persecution. Allah delivered all of them from that calamity. I will tell this story in the place where doctrine Nuri is explained. He said:

اذا سلمت منك نفسك فقد اديت حقها واذا سلم منك الخلق قضيت حقوقهم

“If your *nafs* (lower soul) is safe from you, you have rendered its due; and if mankind is safe from you, you have paid that is due to them.”

There are two obligations; one which you owe to yourself and the other which you owe to others. If you have refrained yourself from sin and have sought the path of future salvation for it, you have fulfilled your obligation towards it and if you have made others secure from your evils and have wished no injury to them, you have fulfilled your obligation towards them. Remember that neither you blow any harm to others nor to yourself and then fulfill the obligation to Allah.

56. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Musa al-Wasti (may Allah have mercy on him)

Imam of the path, holder of high states and eloquent in his speech Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Musa al-Wasti was a profound theosophist. He attained excellent state in realities of *marifat* and was praiseworthy in the eyes of all the Sheikhs. He was one of the early disciples of Junaid. His sayings and expressions were so complex and deep that formalists were unable to comprehend their depth. He remained agitated wherever he lived until he came to Merv. The inhabitants of Merv welcomed him on account of his amiable disposition and benefited from his discourses. He passed rest of his life there. He said:

الذاكرون في ذكره اكثر غفلة من الناسين لذكره

“Probability of those who remember Allah is more to get into heedlessness than those who do not remember Him.”

The heedlessness of one who remembers Allah in his heart and does not praise His *dikr* is less harmful to that who is forgetful of Him but regular in his *dikr* (praise).

Praise is not the same thing as the object of praise and neglect of the object of praise combined with thought of the praise leads to heedlessness more intimately than neglect of the praise without thought. He who fails to remember His praise, due to forgetfulness and absence, does not think that he is present (with Allah), but he who remembers, in his remembrance and absence from the object of praise, thinks that he is present (with Allah). Therefore, in the state of absence, to consider presence (with Allah) without any assumption is closer to heedfulness than being in absence (from Allah), for conceit is the destruction of the devotee. Where there is more conceit, reality would be extinct and where the reality is less, the conceit would be more. Conceit springs from the suspiciousness of the intellect which leads intellect to more conceits.

Actually *dikr* (remembrance of Allah) is either in absence or in presence and when devotee is absent from himself and present with Allah, that state is not presence but contemplation, and when one is absent from Allah and present with himself, that state is not of *dikr* (remembrance of Allah) but absence from Him. And absence is the result of heedlessness.

57. Abu Bakr Shibli (may Allah have mercy on him)

The ship of discourse Abu Bakr b. Dalaf b. Hujdar al-Shibli was a great and celebrated Sheikh. He had excellent state and spent a pure life. He was subtle in the use of symbolism which was so highly applauded that one of the moderns says that there are three wonders of the world, i.e. the symbolical utterance of Shibli, the mystical sayings of Murtaish, and the anecdotes of Jafar.

He was Imam of the followers of the Path and guide to the adherents of *Shariat*. At first he was chief chamberlain to the Caliph. He repented in the hands of Khair al-Nassaj but became a disciple of Junaid. He remained acquainted with large number of Sheikhs. It is related that he explained the verse of Quran “**Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze,**” (Q 24:30) as follows:

اي ابصار الرءوس عن المحارم و ابصار القلوب عما سوي الله

“Refrain their bodily eyes from what is unlawful, and refrain their spiritual eyes from everything except Allah,” i.e. do not look at lasciviousness and have no thought except the vision of Allah. It is a mark of

heedlessness to follow one's lusts and to regard unlawful things, and the greatest calamity that befalls on heedless is that they remain ignorant of their own faults. Who is ignorant here shall also be ignorant hereafter:

مَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى

“Those who were blind in this world will be blind in the Hereafter,” (Q 17:72).

Actually, until Allah clears one's heart from lusty desires the physical eyes are not safe from its hidden dangers, and until Allah establishes the desire of Himself in a man's heart the spiritual eye is not safe from looking at others than Him.

Once when Shibli was passing through the bazaar, the people called him an insane. He replied:

“You think I am mad, and I think you are sensible. My insanity is the result of intense love of Allah, while your sense is the result of great heedlessness. May Allah increase my madness so that I become nearer to Him, and may He increase your sense so that you get farther from Him.”

This he uttered because of modesty, considering that why anyone should be so beside one's self as not to separate love of Allah from insanity and not to distinguish between them.

58. Abu Muhammad b. Jafar b. Nusair al-Khuldi (may Allah have mercy on him)

He is a well-known biographer who eloquently portrayed the life sketches of the Saints. He was one of the most eminent and oldest disciples of Junaid. He was an expansive ocean of the knowledge of Sufism. He was trustee of the liberalities and blessings of the Sheikhs and watchman of their rights. He has sublime sayings in each branch of the religion. In order to avoid spiritual conceit, he attributed to different persons the anecdotes which he composed in illustration of each topic. He said:

التوكل استواء القلب عند الوجود والعدم

“*Tawakul* (Trust in Allah) is composure of the heart whether you get anything or not.”

One may not feel pleasure on having something, or feel sorrow by not having something, because body is the property of the Lord, Who has a better right than you either to preserve or to destroy it. You need not to interfere, hand over the ownership to the Owner and you should have no control or right on it.

Once he went to Junaid and found him suffering from fever. He asked him to pray Allah so he might restore his health. Junaid replied that last night he was about to tell Him, but a voice whispered in his heart,

“Thy body belongs to Me: I keep it well or ill, as I please. Who are thou, that thou shouldst interfere with My property. Refrain thyself from excessiveness, so thou mayst become a true slave.”

59. Abu Ali b. Muhammad al-Qasim al-Rudbari (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was the devotee of the Path and leader of the followers of Sufism. He was of royal descent. He attained very high stature in ethical sciences. Many signs and virtues were vouchsafed to him. He discoursed lucidly on the mysteries of Sufism.

He said:

المريد لا يريد لنفسه إلا ما أهد الله له والمراد لا يريد من الكونين شيئاً غيره

“*Murid* (desirous) is the one who does not desire anything for himself except what Allah desires for him, and *Murad* is he who does not desire anything in this world or the next except Allah.”

Who is satisfied with the will of Allah, if abandons his desire and will, be His *murid* (desirous). The lover has no will of his own, so that only Beloved should be his *Murad* (desire). And who desires Allah, desires only what Allah desires for him, and what Allah desires, he also desires the same. Hence *rida* (satisfaction) is one of the initial *maqamat* (stations) whereas *muhabat* (love) is one of the last states. The *maqamat* are connected with the realization of worship while the degrees of states (ecstasy) are attained by corroboration of Lordship. This being so, the *murid* (desirer) subsists in himself, and the *murad* (desired) subsists in Allah.

60. Abu al-Abbas Qasim b. Mehdi Sayyari (may Allah have mercy on him)

The treasure of unity, gainer of celibacy Abu al-Abbas al-Qasim b. Mehdi al-Sayyari was Imam of his time and was well versed in the inward and outward knowledge. He was associated with Abu Bakr Wasti and also got benefited from many other Sheikhs. He was the most accomplished in companionship and was the most venerable ascetic in cankers of *nafs* (lower soul). He is author of lofty sayings and praiseworthy compositions. He said:

التوحيد ان لا يخطر بقلبك ما دونه

“*Tawhid* (Unity of Allah) is that nothing should occur to ones mind except Allah.”

One’s secrets should not pass through the hearts of creature and there should not be any impurity in one’s acts because thought of other (than Allah) proves its existence and when other is established then *Tawhid* will be non existent?

He belonged to a learned and influential family. There was no family in Merv who could stand equal to his family. Having inherited a large fortune from his father, he gave the whole of it in return for two of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) hairs. Through the blessing of those hairs Allah bestowed on him a sincere repentance. He found the company of Abu Bakr Wasti, and attained such a high status that he was counted among the Imams of Sufism. He made a precept that after his death, the hairs of the Prophet (peace be upon him) should be placed in his mouth. His tomb at Merv is visited by the people who go there to seek their desires. The prayers are granted there.

61. Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Khafif (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was the *Imam* of his age and Sheikh in different religious *sciences*. He was renowned for abstinence and mortifications and for his convincing elucidation of mystical truth. His spiritual attainments are clearly evident from his compositions. He had the honor to meet Ibn Ata, Shibli, Hussein b. Mansur and Jurairi, and while at Mecca he was associated with Abu Yaqub Nahrajuri. He traveled the path of *tajreed* تجريد (detachment from the world) to its depth. He was a royal descent, but when Allah bestowed on him repentance, he turned his back on the glories of this world. He is held in high esteem by spiritualists. He said:

التوحيد الاعراض عن الطبيعة

“Unification consists in turning away from disposition,”

The disposition of mankind is veiled from the bounties and is blind to the beneficence of Allah. Hence no one can turn to Allah until he has turned away from disposition, and the possessor of disposition is ignorant of the truth. When you see the corruption of your own nature, you will get to know the reality of the Truth. He has lot of sayings and proofs on *Marifat* and Divine.

62. Abu Uthman Said b. Salam Maghrabi (may Allah have mercy on him)

The sword of leadership, the sun of auspiciousness Abu Uthman Said b. Salam al-Maghrabi was an eminent spiritualists of the class *ahl-i tamkin* (those who attained the state of fixity), and was

profoundly versed in various departments of knowledge. He practiced austerities, and is the author of many notable sayings and excellent proofs concerning the observation of spiritual blemishes. He said:

من اترصحة الاغنياء علي مجالسة الفقراء ابتلاه الله بموت القلب

“One who prefers the association of the rich over sitting with the dervishes, Allah afflicts him with spiritual death.”

The terms “association” and “sitting with” are used, because only that man turns away from the dervishes who has sat with them, not one who has associated with them, for there is no turning away in association. Since the result of preferring the association of rich over sitting with the dervishes is spiritual death, what would be the result of turning away from the association of dervishes? The two terms are clearly distinguished from each other in this saying.

63. Abu al-Qasim Ibrahim b. Mahmud Nasrabadi (may Allah be pleased with him)

A resident of Nishapur where he was like a king, save that the glory of kings is in the materialistic world, while his was in the spiritual world. Many original sayings and exalted signs were vouchsafed to him. He was a disciple of Shibli and master of the later Sheikhs of Khurasan. He was the most learned and ascetic venerable of his age.

He said:

انت بين النسبتين الي ادم ونسبة الي الحق فاذا اتنسبت الي ادم دخلت في ميادين الشهوات ومواضع الافات والزلات وهي نسبة تحقق البشرية

“You are between two relationships: one to Adam, and the other to Allah. If you claim relationship to Adam, you enter in the arenas of lust, error, evils and indignity. Since physical relationship has no value and this is a proof of your relationship with humanity, for Allah has said,

إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا

he was indeed unjust and foolish” (Q 33:72),“

If, however, you claim relationship to Allah, you enter the stations of revelation, evidence, chastity and saintship. The first relationship is connected with the affliction of mankind and the second relationship is the devotion to Allah.” Allah hath said:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا

“And the servants of (Allah) most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility,” (Q 25:63).

The first relationship pertains to the calamities of humanity and the second to the realization of devotion to Allah. The Relationship to Adam will end at the Resurrection, whereas the relationship of being a servant of Allah will subsist always and is unalterable. The excellence of relationship when a man refers him to himself or to Adam is

إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي

I have indeed wronged my soul” (Q 28:16),

but when he refers himself to Allah, his state should be such that as Allah says,

يَا عِبَادِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ

My devotees! No fear shall be on you that day,” (Q 43:68).

64. Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ibrahim al-Husri (may Allah have mercy on him)

The delight of the aspirants, noble of the Court of the Truth Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ibrahim al-Husri was one of the great Imams of the *Sufis* and was unrivalled in his time. He has lofty sayings and admirable explanations on all spiritual matters. He said:

دعوني في بلائي ها توامالكم الستم
من اولاد ادم الذي خلقه بيده ونفخ فيه من روحه واسجد له ملائكته'
ثم امره فخالف فاذا كان اول الدون وروحيا كيف يكون اخره

“Leave me alone in my affliction and listen! Are you not the children of Adam, whom Allah without any intermediary formed with His own hand and breathed a spirit into him and caused the angels to bow down to him?

Then He commanded him to do something, and he disobeyed. If the first of the goblet has dregs, what will its last be? When a man is left to himself he is all disobedience, but when Divine favor comes to his help he is all love. Therefore, regard the beauty of Divine favor and continue to compare ugliness of your character with it, and pass your whole life in this way.”

I have mentioned some of the ancient *Sufis* whose example is authoritative. If I had mentioned them all and had set forth their lives in detail and had included the anecdotes respecting them, my purpose would have relegated to secondary position, and this book would have run to great length. Now I will add some accounts of the modern *Sufis* so that you are benefited the maximum.

Chapter XII

Mystics of Recent Times

Nowadays there are some persons who cannot endure the burden of continence and the religious exercise but still are desirous of rank and authority. They consider the followers of the Sufism like themselves. When they hear the sayings of the ancestors, see their eminence and read their devotional practices and then examine themselves, and found that they are far inferior to the Sheikhs of old times. Even then they are reluctant to accept their weaknesses, rather stress that their era do not have those types of devotees whose anecdotes they have read in the books. Their contention is ridiculous, for Allah never leaves the earth without a disputation and neither this *Ummah* (Muslim community) would ever be without the presence of *Wali* (saint), as the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said:

لا يزال طاعة من امتي علي الخير والحق حتي تقوم الساعة

“My *Ummah* would never be free of a group who would be on honesty and truth until the hour of the Resurrection.”

And:

لا يزال من امتي اربعون علي خلق ابراهيم

“In my *Ummah* there shall always be forty pious who would be on the nature of Abraham.”

Some of those whom I shall mention here have already deceased and have met with eternal happiness in the highest Heaven, and some are still living. May Allah be well pleased with them.

1. Abu al-Abbas Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Qassab (may Allah have mercy on him)

The adornment of the seekers of the Path, the beauty of the righteous Abu al-Abbas Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Qassab was associated and benefited from the leading Sheikhs of Transoxania. He was celebrated for his spiritual sublimity, true sagacity, ascetic practices, and abundant proofs and miracles. Imam of Tibrastan Abu Abdullah Khayyati said of him:

“It is one of Allah’s bounties that He raises an uneducated person to that eminence which was occupied by Abu Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him). Whenever we faced any difficulty on religious knowledge, its principles or on matters pertaining to subtleties of *Tawhid* (Unification) we seek his help.”

Although he was illiterate but he discoursed with inspiring style concerning the science of Sufism and theology. In short, he was whole noble and pious venerable. I have heard many stories of him, but for the sake of brevity would include only one here.

One day a boy along with his camel which was heavily burdened, was passing through the bazaar of Amul. This place was always filled with mud slime. The camel slipped there and broke its leg. People nearby thought to unburdened the beast, while the boy started imploring Allah to seek His help. In the mean time Abu Abbas passed from that place. People told him about the incident. He picked up the bridle of the camel and facing skyward which is the Qibla for prayer, said, “O Lord! Make the camel healthy. If Thou wilt not do so, why hast Thou let the heart of Qassab be melted by the tears of a lad?” As soon as he finished his prayer, the camel immediately got up and moved to its way in perfect condition.

He said:

“All mankind, whether they will or not, must reconcile themselves to the will of Allah, else they will suffer pain,”

because, who reconciles to His will, at the time of affliction, he will see the Causer of the affliction and won't feel it. And if one is not reconciled to His will, on coming of affliction his heart will fill with anguish. Allah does not alter His predestination on someone's satisfaction and dissatisfaction; therefore our pleasure lies in satisfaction of His decrees. Whoever reconciles to the will of Allah, his heart will remain rejoiced and whoever turns away from Him, he will be distressed by the coming of destiny.

2. Abu Ali Hasan b. Muhammad Daqqaq (may Allah have mercy on him)

The exposition of *murid* (desirers), the proofs of researcher Abu Ali al-Hasan b. Muhammad al-Daqqaq was the leading authority in his department (of religious knowledge) and had no rival among his contemporaries. He was lucid in exposition and eloquent in speech as regards to revelation of the way of Allah. He had met many Sheikhs and benefited from their association. He was disciple of Nasrabadi and was regular in preaching. He said:

من انس بغيره ضعف في حاله ومن نطق من غيره كذب في مقاله

“Who is intimate with other (than Allah) is weak in his spiritual state, and who speaks of other (than Allah) is liar in his speech,”

The intimacy with others (than Allah) is an evidence of knowing Allah inadequately. The intimacy with Him demands renunciation of others and who renounces others, would not speak of them.

An old venerable one day went to the place where Daqqaq held his meetings, with the intention to ask him about the state of those who trust in Allah. Daqqaq was wearing a fine Tibrastani turban. The heart of the old man longed for it. He questioned Daqqaq about *tawakul* (trust in Allah). The Sheikh replied, “*tawakul* is that you refrain from coveting people's turbans.” With these words he flung his turban in front of the questioner.

3. Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ahmad al-Khurqani (may Allah have mercy on him)

An unmatched Imam, nobility of era Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ahmad al-Khurqani was a great splendid Sheikh. He was praised by all the Saints in his time. Sheikh Abu Said visited him, and they conversed with each other on every topic. When he was about to take leave he said to al-Khurqani that he had chosen him to be his successor.

Hasan Muadib who was the servant of Abu Said said that when Abu Said visited al-Khurqani, he did not speak a single word at his own but committed himself to hear Khurqani and spoke only when he was needed to reply of some question. Hasan asked him why he had been so silent. He replied:

“From One, one is enough to talk.”

Abu al-Qasim Qushayri said that when he came to Khurqan, because of the dignity and veneration of the Sheikh of the time he lost his eloquence and no longer had any power to express himself. He thought that he might have deposed from his saintship.

Khurqani said:

“There are two ways, one of erring and one of righteousness. The one is Man's way to Allah and the other is Allah's way to Man. The erring path is Man's way to Allah and righteous way is from Allah's part His way to Man. Whoever says he has attained to Allah has not attained but who says that he has been made to attain to Allah, knows that he has really attained.” It is because made to attain is linked with not attaining and not attained is linked with attaining.

4. Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Ali al-Maruf Dastani (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was the king of the world of Sufism of his time and was unique in his eloquent speech and discourse. He was learned in various branches of religious knowledge, accomplished and a chosen one of the Court of the Lord. He is the author of refined discourses and fine symbolical indications. He found an excellent successor in Sheikh Sehlaki, who was the Imam of that area. I have heard from Sehlaki some of his spiritual utterances which are very sublime and admirable. He said:

التوحيد عنك موجود وأنت في التوحيد مفرد مفقود

“*Tawhid* (Unification) is in accord and right with you but you are not in accord and right with *Tawhid*.” i.e. you are not firm with the just demands of the *Tawhid*. The lowest degree in unification is the negation of your personal control over anything that you possess, and the affirmation of thy absolute submission to Allah in all your affairs.

Sheikh Sehlaki relates that once the locusts came to Bastam in such numbers that every tree and field got black with them. The people cried aloud for help. The Sheikh asked me about the uproar. I told him that people were distressed over the locusts attack in the city. He got up and went up to the roof and looked towards heaven. The locusts immediately began to fly away. By the hour of the afternoon prayer not one was left, and nobody lost even a leaf.

5. Abu Said Fadalallah b. Muhammad al-Mehni (may Allah have mercy on him)

The Shah of lovers, Imam of the *Sufis* Abu Said Fadalallah b. Muhammad al-Mehni was the king and the ornament of the Mystic Path. All his contemporaries were subject to him, some through their sound perception and belief, and some through the strong influence of their spiritual feelings. He was versed in the different branches of religious science. He had a wonderful religious experience and an extraordinary power of reading men's secret thoughts. Besides, he had many remarkable powers and evidences, of which the effects are manifest at the present day.

In his early days he went to Sarkhas and associated with Abu Ali Zahir. He used to learn from him his three days syllabus in one day, and spend his spared time in devotion. Abu Ali Zahir seeing the signs of obedience and devotion in his disciple developed regards and affection for him. Abu Fadl Hasan was the saint of Sarkhas at that time. One day, when Abu Said was walking by the river of Sarkhas, he met with Abu Fadl who said to him that the way he had adopted did not suit to him and advised him to follow his own course. Sheikh's message stuck to his heart. He returned to his lodging and engaged in asceticism and austerities until Allah opened to him the door of guidance and raised him to the highest rank.

Sheikh Abu Muslim Farisi related that his heart was never clean towards the Sheikh. Once he went to him clad in a patched frock which was so dirty and old that it had become like leather. When he entered to his presence, he found him sitting on a couch, dressed in a robe of Egyptian linen. He thought in his heart that how could this man claim to be a dervish with all these worldly encumbrances, and comparing his own state with his, he thought that there was no possibility of conformity with him. The Sheikh read his thoughts, and raising his head cried,

يا أبا مسلم في أي ديوان وجدت من كان قلبه قائماً في مشاهدة الحق يقع عليه اسم الفقير

“O Abu Muslim, in which *divan* have you found that the name of dervish is applied to one whose heart subsists in the contemplation of Allah?”

The contemplators are rich with Allah, whereas the name of dervish is applied to those who are occupied with self-mortification. Abu Muslim repented of his conceit and asked Allah to pardon him for such an unseemly thought.

Abu Said said:

التصوف قيام القلب مع الله بلا واسطة

“Sufism is the subsistence of the heart with Truth without any intermediary.”

This alludes to contemplation, which is attained through deep love, absorption in realizing the vision of Allah, and their annihilation by the everlastingness of the Truth. I will discuss the nature of contemplation in the chapter which treats of the pilgrimage.

On one occasion Abu Said set out from Nishapur for Tus. While he was passing through a cold valley his feet felt chill. A dervish who was accompanying him thought of tearing his waist-cloth into two halves and wrapping them round his feet. Since his garment was costly therefore he refrained from acting on his thought. After reaching at Tus, in one of the meetings the dervish asked the Sheikh to tell him the difference between evil suggestion and inspiration. The Sheikh answered, “It was a divine inspiration that urged you to tear your waist garment into two pieces for the sake of warming my feet and it was devil’s suggestion that hindered you from doing so.”

He performed a whole series of miracles of this kind.

6. Abu al-Fadi Muhammad b. Hasan Khutli (may Allah have mercy on him)

The adornments of noble saints Abu al-Fadi Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Khutli is my Sheikh in Sufism. He was well versed in the science of Quranic exegesis and in traditions. In Sufism he was the follower of Junaid. He was a disciple and close confident of Husri and a contemporary of Abu Umru Qazwini and Abu al Hasan Saliba. He remained in solitude for sixty years, for people had even forgotten his name also. He spent his most part of the solitude on Mount Lukam. He displayed many signs and proofs. He did not wear the garb or adopted the external fashions of the *Sufis* and he was very severe on formalists. I never saw any person of better dignity and awe than him.

I heard him saying:

الدنيا يوم ولنا فيها صوم

“The world is but a single day, in which we are fasting,”

We get nothing from it, and are not tempted by it, because we have perceived its corruption and its veils, therefore, have turned our backs upon it.

Once while I was helping Sheikh in his ablution a thought occurred to me that when everything was predestined, why then free men make themselves the slaves of spiritual guides? The Sheikh picked up my thought and said:

“O my son, I know what you are thinking. Be assured that there is a cause for every decree of Providence. When Allah wishes to bestow a crown and a kingdom on an ordinary man, He guides him to repentance and employs him in the service of one of His friends, and ultimately this service leads him to nobility and honor.”

Many such happening I used to witness every day.

At the time of his death he was at Bayt al-Jinn, a village situated at the head of a mountain pass between Baniyar and Damascus. While he was counting last breaths, his head was resting on my bosom. At that time I was feeling hurt, as it is the nature of man to feel sad on departure of his close associate. The Sheikh said to me:

“O my son, I tell you one article of belief which if you follow firmly will deliver you from all troubles. Know that all good or evil is created by Allah, it is not desirable from you to put across your finger on any of His act or feel grieved in your heart.”

He did not give any further command, but yielded up his soul.

7. Abdul Karim Abu Qasim (may Allah have mercy on him)

The teacher and Imam, and adornment of Islam Abdul Karim Abu al-Qasim b. Hawazin al-Qushayri is a wonder of his time. His rank is high and his position is great, and his spiritual life and manifold virtues are well known to the people of the present age. He is the author of many fine sayings and exquisite works, all of them profoundly theosophical in every branch of science. Allah has rendered his feelings and his tongue secure from all sorts of extravagances. He said:

مثل الصوفي كعلة البرسام اوله هذيان واخره سكوت فاذا تمكنت خرس

“The *Sufi* is like the disease of *birsam*, which begins with disordered talks and ends in silence; for when the disease sets in, it make the one dumb.”

Sufism (mysticism) has two sides, ecstasy and *namud* غمود (vision). Vision belongs to novices, and the expression of such vision is delirium. Ecstasy belongs to adepts, and the expression of ecstasy, while it continues, is impossible. So long as they are only seekers they utter lofty aspirations, which seems delirium even to aspirants, but when they attain their object they cease to utter, and no more express anything either by word or sign. Its example is that since Moses was a beginner therefore all his desire was for vision of Allah. He expressed his desire and said,

رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ

O Lord, show (Thyself) to me that I may look upon Thee,” (Q 7:143).

This state of an unattained desire is like delirium. But Prophet (peace be upon him), however, had acquired the excellence and was firmly established of that state, therefore, when his person arrived at the highest station his desire was annihilated, and he said, “لا احصي ثناء عليك” I cannot praise Thee aptly.” This is the highest station and most exalted position.

8. Abu al-Abbas Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Ashqani (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was an Imam in every branch of fundamental and derivative sciences of religion, and an accomplished venerable in all respects. He had met a great number of eminent *Sufi* Sheikhs. He is counted among the eminent *Imams* and Sheikhs. His doctrine was based on “annihilation”, and his expressions used to be highly complex. Some ignorant imitated him and have adopted his difficult writing style. When in its spiritual meaning it is not laudable to imitate then how it is right to imitate a mere expression! I was very intimate with him, and he had also a sincere affection for me. He was my teacher in some sciences. In my whole life I have never seen anyone, who held the *Shariat* in greater veneration than him. He kept himself detached from all created things.

Because of his complicated writings on account of the subtlety of his theological expositions only an *Imam* of profound insight could derive instruction from him. He always had a natural disgust of this world and the next, and would constantly exclaim, “اشتهي عدماً لا عود فيه” I yearn for a non-existence that has no existence.”

And he used to say:

“Every man desires for impossible, and I too have desire for impossible, which I surely know will never be realized, namely that Allah should take me to a non-existence that will never return to existence, for stations and miracles are all veils and troubles and the man is becoming a suitor of his own veil. It is better to get annihilated in vision than being remain in constant state of veil. Almighty Allah is a Being that is not subject to none being, what loss would His kingdom suffer if I become a nonentity that shall never be endowed with existence?”

This is a sound principle in a real annihilation.

9. Abu al-Qasim b. Ali b. Abdullah al-Gurgani (may Allah have mercy on him)

He was unique and incomparable *Qutb* of his time. His initial state was excellent and strong. He performed long journeys with conscientious observance (of *Shariat*). All the aspirants of his time were whole heartedly inclined to him and seekers of the path of Truth had full faith on him. He possessed marvelous power of revealing the inwardly states of novices. He was well learned in various branches of knowledge. All his disciples because of their knowledge and conduct are ornaments of the society in which they move. Allah wills, he will have an excellent successor, whose authority the whole body of *Sufis* will recognize, namely, Abu Ali al-Fadl b. Muhammad who has fully committed himself to the service of his Sheikh and has turned his back on all (worldly) things. Allah in reward has made him the spiritual mouthpiece of that venerable Sheikh.

One day in the presence of Sheikh I was recounting to him my spiritual experiences and visions, in order that he might test them, for he had unrivalled skill in that. He was listening kindly to what I was saying. The vanity and enthusiasm of youth made me to relate those matters, and the thought occurred to me that perhaps the Sheikh, in his novitiate, did not enjoy such experiences, and that's why he was fully concentrated towards me. The Sheikh perceived what I was thinking and said:

"O my son, you must know that my humility is not on account of you or your experiences, because who alters the conditions does not come to altering place. I am doing this all for the respect and majesty of Creator of the states. They are not peculiar to you, but common to all seekers of Allah and you are not any exception."

I was taken aback by his statement. He noticed my confused state and said:

"O my son, man has no more relation to this Path than that when he is admitted to the path, he commits himself to obtain it and when is deposed from it, he gets delight by remembering it. Hence his negation and affirmation, his existence and non-existence, are imagination. Man can never escapes from the prison of imagination. The man should follow the path of devotion and put away from himself every relation except that of manhood and obedience."

I had much spiritual conversation with him, but if I were to enter upon the task of setting forth his extraordinary powers my purpose would be defeated.

10. Abu Ahmad Muzaffar b. Ahmad b. Hamdan (may Allah have mercy on him)

Leader of the Saints, an admonisher of the pious Abu Ahmad al-Muzaffar b. Ahmad b. Hamdan was ruler of a state while Allah opened to him the door of this path and bestowed on him the crown of honor and greatness. He spoke eloquently and discoursed with sublimity on annihilation and subsistence. Sheikh, Abu Said, said:

"We were led to the Holy Court (of Allah) by the way of servitude, but Khawaja Muzaffar was conducted thither by the way of magnitude and dominion, i.e. we attained contemplation by means of self-mortification, whereas Muzaffar came from contemplation to self- mortification."

I heard Khawaja Muzaffar saying that:

"What blessings other mystics obtained by traversing deserts and wilderness I gained that while in the seat of power and pre-eminence."

Some foolish and conceited persons have attributed this saying of his to arrogance; it is merely their short sightedness. It is never arrogant to declare one's true state, especially when the speaker is a capable spiritualist. Muzaffar has an excellent and honored successor namely Rashid Khawaja Ahmad.

One day, while I was in his company, a pretender of Sufism from Nishapur visited him and during discussion he used the expression, "He becomes annihilated and then becomes subsistent." Khawaja Muzaffar said:

“How subsistence can emerge of annihilation? Annihilation means not-being, while subsistence refers to being, and each negates the other. Therefore, annihilation is known until non-being is under consideration and if non-being is missing i.e. non-being becomes being then its identity is lost. Essences are not capable of annihilation, however attributes can annihilates, and similarly the cause is also get annihilated. Therefore, when attributes and causes are annihilated, the object invested with attributes and the Author of causes continues to subsist. His essence does not admit of annihilation.”

I do not recollect the precise words in which Sheikh Muzaffar expressed, but this was how I comprehended his words. Now I will explain more clearly what he intended, in order that it may be more generally benefited.

One’s free will is an attribute of him, and he is veiled by his will from the will of Allah, therefore man’s attributes veil him from Allah. Necessarily, the Divine will is eternal and the human will is non eternal, and what is eternal cannot be annihilated. When the Divine will in regard to a man becomes subsistent, his will is annihilated and his personal initiative disappears.

One day in a hot weather wearing traveler’s dress covered with dust and my hair in disorder I came into Sheikh’s presence. He asked me to tell him in what state I was then. I replied that I had desire of *sama* سماع (singing). He immediately sent for a *qawal* (tale teller) and a number of musicians. In the mean time a group who would fall into ecstasy on *sama* also came. I being young and enthusiastic and filled with the ardor of a novice became deeply agitated as the initial verses fell to my ear. After a while when break took place, I also regained my normal posture. Sheikh asked me how was the *sama*. I told him that I had enjoyed it very much. He said:

“A time will come when *sama* will be no more to you than the croaking of a raven. The desire of *sama* only lasts so long as there is no contemplation, and as soon as contemplation is attained the desire for *sama* subsides. Take care not to accustom yourself to this, lest it becomes part of your nature and keep you back from contemplation.”

Chapter XIII

Modern Mystics of Different Countries

If the detailed account of all the Sheikhs from different parts of the world is mentioned it would lengthen the book and if some are mentioned and some are left would not meet my aim. Therefore I now mention the names of the *Sufis* and leading spiritualists who have lived in my time or are still alive. They are eminent lords and Sheikhs of the path of Sufism. They are not the formalists but the true spiritualists. The aim of mentioning the names of these Sheikhs (may Allah have mercy on them) is that it may ease up the acquisition of my desire.

Syria and Iraq

Zaki Ibn Ula was an eminent Sheikh and a guide of his time. When I met him I found him to be like a flame of love. He was endowed with superb signs and evidences.

Abu Jafar Muhammad b. al-Misbah Saydalani was one of the leading aspirants to Sufism. He discoursed eloquently on theosophy and had a great fondness for Hussein b. Mansur. I have read some of his works.

Abu al-Qasim Suddi followed the path of mortification and abstinence. He led an excellent spiritual life. He cared for dervishes of whom he had great belief.

Persia

Abu al-Hasan b. Saliba, spoke with the utmost elegance on Sufism and with extreme lucidity on *tawhid* (unification). His sayings are well known.

Abu Ishaq b. Sheharyar was one of the most venerable *Sufis* and well authoritarian.

Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Bakran was a great *Sufi*.

Abu Muslim was unique and highly respected Sheikh.

Abu al-Fateh b. Saliba is hopeful of blessings and succession to his father.

Abu Talib was a man enraptured by the words of the Truth.

Abu Ishaq was a grand Sheikh but I could not meet him.

Qahistan, Azerbaijan, Tibrastan, and Kimish

Shafique Farj alias as **Akhi Zanjani**, was a man of excellent disposition and admirable doctrine. He was the Sheikh of his time and his good deeds are many.

Vandari was among the venerable of Sufism.

Badshah Taib was profoundly versed in mysticism.

Abu Abdullah Junaid was a very respectable Sheikh and always used to be in service of the aspirants of Sufism.

Abu Tahir Makshuf was amongst the eminent *Sufis*.

Khawaja Hussein Simnan is an enraptured and hopeful for the Mercy of Allah.

Sheikh Sehlaki was one of the intellectuals of dervishes.

Ahmad was an excellent successor to his father **Khurqani**.

Adib Kumandi was distinguished personality of the time.

Kirman

Khawaja Ali b. al-Hussein al-Sairgani was the wandering devotee who made long journeys in the way of Truth. His son, **Hakim** is also a wonderful personality.

Muhammad b. Salma was among the eminent of his time. There have been unknown and hidden saints of Allah before him but now many hopeful youths to be found there.

Khurasan

It is a blessed area where nowadays shadow of Allah's blessing is in its full bloom.

The Sheikh and *Mujtahid* (practicing Jurisprudence) **Abu al-Abbas** was the heart of spiritualism..

Khawaja Abu Jafar Muhammad b. Ali al-Jawani is one of the eminent theosophists of Sufism.

Abu Jafar Turshizi was highly respected personality.

Khawaja Mahmud Nishapuri was regarded as an authority by his contemporaries.

Sheikh Muhammad Mahshuq had an excellent spiritual life.

Jumrat al-Hub was pious inwardly and was happy with his *auqat* (time).

Khawaja Syed Muzaffar son of **Sheikh Abu** is hopeful to become an example to all *Sufis* and a point to which their hearts will turn.

Khawaja Ahmad Hammadi Sarkhasi was the falcon of his time. For some time we remained together and I witnessed many wondrous experiences from him. He was man of the path of the *Shariat*.

Sheikh Ahmad Najar Samarqandi belonged to Merv, was the *sultan* of the path of the *Shariat*.

Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Abi Ali al-Aswad was an excellent successor to his father, and was unique in the sublimity of his aspiration and the sagacity of his intelligence.

It would be difficult to mention all the Sheikhs of Khurasan. I have met over three hundred saints in Khurasan alone residing separately and who had such mystical endowments that a single one of them would have been enough for the whole world. They are the luminaries of love and prosperity on the spiritual sky of Khurasan.

Transoxania

The Khawaja and Imam, honored by all high and low, **Abu Jafar Muhammad b. al-Hussein al-Harmi** a hearer, ecstatic and enraptured man, who has great affection towards the seekers of Allah. He was all purity in his life.

Khawaja Abu Muhammad Bathghari had an excellent spiritual life, and free of weakness in his devotional practices.

Muhammad Ailaqi was the Sheikh and respectable personality of his time. He hated forms and habits.

Khawaja Arif was unique and unparallel person in his days.

Ali b. Ishaq was very eloquent in his speech and a guide of his time.

I have met all these Sheikhs and got knowledge of their virtues and literary attainments. They were all profound theosophists.

Ghazna

Abu al-Fadl b. Asad was venerable director, with brilliant evidences and manifest miracles. He was like a flame of the fire of love. His spiritual state was hidden.

Ismail al-Shashi was highly esteemed Sheikh. He followed the path of blame.

Sheikh Salar Tibri was one of the *Sufi* divines and had an excellent state.

Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. al-Hakim known as **Murid** also, was amongst the intoxicated of Allah. He was unrivaled by any contemporary in his own field. His state was hidden from the mankind, but his signs and evidences were conspicuous. His state was very high and his inward was much pure and cleaner than his outward.

Sheikh Said b. Abu Said al-Ayar was preserver of *Hadith*. He had seen many Sheikhs and had lofty spiritual state and had great knowledge of the path. He followed the way of concealment and never exhibited his true character.

Abu al-Ala Abd al-Rahim b. Ahmad Safri is honored by all *Sufis*, and my heart is well-disposed towards him. His spiritual state was excellent. He was well acquainted with various branches of science.

Qasurat b. Muhammad al-Kardezi has boundless affection for the *Sufis* and holds every one of them in reverence.

In consequence to my faith, I have firm conviction of the people and divines of Ghazna, that hereafter persons will appear in whom we shall believe, and that those wretches who have found their way into this city and have made the externals of Sufism abominable will be cleared out, so that Ghazna will once more become the abode of saints and venerable men.

Chapter XIV

Doctrines of Sufism

I have already stated in the recital of Abu al-Hasan Nuri that the Sufism has twelve sects, of which ten are approved and two are reprobated. Every one of these ten sects has an excellent system and doctrine as regards both *mujahida* مجاهدة (purgation) and *mushahida* مشاهدة (contemplation). They all possess elegant style in their doctrines and all own subtleties of *mushahida*. Although they differ from each other in their devotional practices and ascetic disciplines, but they agree in the fundamentals and derivatives of the *Shariat* (religious law) and *Tawhid* (Unification). Abu Yazid said,

اختلاف العلماء رحمة الافي تجريد التوحيد

“except true concept of Unification, the difference of *Ulema* (religious Authorities) on religious matters is mercy,”

and in agreement to this there is a famous *Hadith* (tradition) also. The real essence of Sufism lies amidst the sayings and traditions of the Sheikhs, and its division among different *Sufi* sects is only figuratively and formally. I will briefly touch upon this division and will elucidate the basis and basics of the doctrine of each sect in order that the seekers of Truth may understand the matter, *Ulama* get the proofs, may cause reform to the disciples and I may be blessed with success in both the worlds.

The Muhasibis

They are the followers of Abu Abdullah al-Harith b. al-Asad Muhasibi. All of his contemporaries are agreed upon that he was a man of approved spiritual influence and mortified passions. He was learned in theology, jurisprudence, and mysticism. His discourse is on detachment from world, proofs of unification, and accuracy of outward and inward states. The oddity of his doctrine is that he does not reckon *rida* (satisfaction) among the *maqamat* (stations). He considers *rida* amongst the types of *ahwal* (states). He was the first to hold this view, which was adopted later on by the people of Khurasan. The Sheikhs of Iraq on the contrary, asserted that *rida* is one of the stations and it is the extreme of *tawakul* (trust in Allah). The controversy between them is still on and we start our discussion from this point.

The Nature of Satisfaction (*rida*)

It will be proper to first establish the true nature of *rida* رضا (satisfaction) and set forth its various kinds and after this the reality of *maqam* (station) and *hal* (state) and the difference between them will be discussed.

Rida is mentioned both in Quran as well as in Hadith (traditions of Prophet, peace be upon him) and whole *Ummah* is unanimous on it. Allah revealed:

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ

“Allah well pleased with them, and they with Allah:” (Q 5:119),

“Allah’s Good Pleasure was on the Believers when they swore Fealty to thee under the Tree: (Q 48:18).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

ذاق طعم الايمان من قدر رضي الله ربنا

“Who proclaimed satisfaction on Allah’s being Lord, he has found the True Faith.”

Satisfaction (*rida*) is of two kinds:

- the satisfaction of Allah with man, and
- the satisfaction of man with Allah.

Allah’s satisfaction consists in that He recompenses the man (for his good deeds) and bestows His blessings, favors and *karamat* (miracles) upon him. The man’s satisfaction consists in his performing the commands of Allah and submitting to His decree. Allah’s satisfaction is preferred that of man, for until man is divinely aided he can not submit to Allah’s decree and perform His command, because man’s satisfaction is connected with Allah’s satisfaction and subsists thereby.

In short, the satisfaction of man is that he remains satisfied towards destiny under both the conditions, may he be rewarded or withheld. Similarly, satisfaction also includes that he shows spiritual steadfastness under different circumstances and states, whether they be the manifestation of Divine Beauty or of Divine Majesty; he passes through forbidden areas or blessed with happiness both should be same for him. And if he is being consumed in the fire of wrath or illuminated by the light of mercy, both should be alike for his heart, as all is being caused by Allah and are evidences of Him and whatever proceeds from Him is right and correct and he must wholeheartedly be satisfied with His decree.

Imam Hussein b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was asked about the saying of Abu Dhar Ghaffari (may Allah be pleased with him): “الفقر ابي احب من الغني والسقم احب من الصحة” I love poverty more than prosperity, and sickness than health,”

Hussein replied:

رحم الله ابا ذر اما انا فاقول من اشرف علي حسن اختيار الله لم يتمن الا ما اختار الله

“Allah have mercy on Abu Dhar! But I say that who ever have the knowledge of His will, does not desire anything except what Allah has chosen for him.”

When a man has attained the knowledge of Allah’s will and abandoned his own choice he is delivered from all sorrows. This state, however, can not be achieved while in absence from Allah but it requires presence with Allah because “لأن الرضا للاحزان نافية وللغفلة معالجة شافية” satisfaction is deliverance from sorrows and heedlessness and cleans the heart from the thoughts of others (than Allah) and frees from the bonds of distresses and troubles,” for *rida* (satisfaction) is the cause and means of salvation. The true satisfaction is the acquiescence of one on the knowledge of Allah and to have firm belief that Allah sees him in all circumstances. There are four ways to attain satisfaction:

- the first group gets satisfied with Allah’s bounty, it is cognizance;
- the second group who gets satisfied with delight, are worldly;
- the third group gets satisfied with affliction, they pass through diverse distresses; and
- the forth group is of those who are satisfied with being chosen (by Allah), it is love.

He who looks in the gift the Giver accepts it with his soul, and trouble and grief vanishes from his heart. And he who looks in the Giver the gift he is satisfied with the gift and treads the path of satisfaction by his own effort which is painful and grievous. The true gnosis is apprehended only when the seeker is divinely revealed. If gnosis becomes cause of veil and obstacle then that gnosis is non-cognition, delight is inconvenience and gift becomes veil and who gets satisfied with this in this world suffers from destruction and perdition and his satisfaction is the faggot for Hell. Therefore, the world is not worth that one should keep any concern with it and any thought or grief of it enters one's mind.

Blessing is that which be a proof of the Beneficent and if one is veiled from the Beneficent then it is an affliction. He who is satisfied with the affliction that Allah sends is amongst those who see the Author thereof and they endure its pain with delight in the contemplation of the Beauty of the Beloved and when in the delight of contemplation with the Beloved the affliction is no more an affliction.

Finally, those who are satisfied with being chosen by Allah are His lovers, and for them satisfaction and severity is alike. Their hearts are ever present in His presence and the veils of their confidentiality do not open except in mortification in His love. They are ever present (with Allah) though seem to be absent; they are on Empyrean while living on earth and spiritual with physical existence. Such are the believers of Allah. Their hearts are free of the thoughts of creation and are free from the bonds of stations and states and are ever devoted for the love of Allah Who said:

لَا يَنْبَغِيكَونَ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَنْبَغِيكَونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً وَلَا نُشُورًا

“that they have no control of hurt or good to themselves; nor they can control Death nor Life nor Resurrection.” (Q 25:3).

To get satisfied with other (than Allah) is surly loss and destruction whereas satisfaction with Allah leads to delight and happiness. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

من لم يرض بالله وبقضاءه يشغل قلبه وتعب بدنه

“One who is not satisfied with Allah and His Decree, his heart for destiny and causes and his body is captivated by pain and affliction to acquire these things.”

Moses said,

اللهم دلني علي عمل اذا عملت رضيت عني

O Allah, guide me an action with which, if I did it, Thou would be satisfied.”

Allah answered,

انك لا تطيق ذلك يا موسى

“thou canst not do that, O Moses!”

Hearing this Moses fell in prostration and started bewailing. Allah sent a revelation to him:

“O son of Imran, My satisfaction with thee consists in thy being satisfied with My decree,” i.e. when a man is satisfied with Allah's decrees it is a sign that Allah is satisfied with him.

Bashr Hafi asked Fudayl b. Iyad which was better of abstinence (*zuhd*) and satisfaction (*rida*). Fudayl replied:

الرضا افضل من الزهد لان الراضي لا يتمني فوق منزلته

“*Rida* (satisfaction) is preferred over *zuhd* (abstinence) because it is the last desire of the one who is satisfied.”

He does not have anything better in his heart to desire, that means he does not have any desire whereas the ascetic is desirous of the *hal* (state) of *Rida* (satisfaction). There is no degree higher than

Rida which the one who is satisfied should desire. Therefore, the presence with the Truth has superiority over being remain away from Him.

This also justifies the doctrine of Muhasibi, that satisfaction belongs to the class of states and is a gift of Divine, not to the stages that are acquired (by effort). It is possible, however, that the satisfied man should have no desire as the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say in his prayers:

اسألك الرضا بعد القضاء

"O Allah, I ask of Thee satisfaction after going forth of Thy decree,"

i.e. keep me in such a state that when the decree comes to me from Thee, destiny may find me satisfied with its coming.

Here it is affirmed that satisfaction has no significance before the advent of destiny because under such condition there will only be an intention to be satisfied, which is not the same thing as actual satisfaction. Abu al Abbas b. Ata says:

الرضا نظر القلب الي قديم اختيار الله للعبد

"In the light of eternal choice of Allah, *Rida* (satisfaction) for a man is to take care of his heart." i.e. the man is bound that whatever befalls on him, he should recognize it as the eternal will of Allah and His decree, and should not be distressed, but should accept it cheerfully. Harith Muhasibi, the author of the doctrine, says:

الرضا سكون القلب تحت مجاري الاحكام

"*Rida* (satisfaction) is the quiescence of the heart under the commands which proceed from the Divine decree."

This is a sound doctrine, because the quiescence and tranquility of the heart is not acquired through man's own efforts but is the result of Divine gift. Hence, as an argument to establish that *Rida* is a "state", not a "station", Muhasibi cites the incidence of Utba al-Ghulam, who one night did not sleep, but kept on saying:

ان تعذبني فانا لك محب وان ترحميني فانا لك محب

"If Thou punish me I love Thee, and if Thou have mercy on me I love Thee," i.e. the pain of punishment and the pleasure of bounty affect the body alone, whereas the anxiety of love resides in the heart, which is not affected thereby. This also confirms the view of Muhasibi because satisfaction is the result of love, as the lover is satisfied with each and every act of the Beloved. Abu Uthman Hairi says:

منذ اربعين سنة ما اقامني الله في حال فكرهته وما نقلني الي غير افسخ خطته

"For the last forty years I am satisfied in whatever state Allah kept me and never resented when He transferred me from one state to another."

This indicates continual satisfaction and perfect love.

Once, a dervish fell into the Tigris River. A man standing on the bank of the river, realizing that the dervish did not know swimming cried out to him: "Shall I tell some one to bring you ashore?"

The dervish said, "No."

He again cried: "Then do you wish to be drowned?"

"No." was the reply of dervish.

The man made another effort and asked: "then what do you wish?"

The dervish replied: "That which Allah wishes. What have I to do with wishing?"

The Sufi Sheikhs have uttered many sayings on satisfaction, which differ in phraseology but agree in two principles that have been mentioned. I have preferred brevity over unnecessary detail. It is appropriated now to mention the definitions of *hal* (state) and *maqam* (station) and distinction between them.

Maqam مقام (station) and Hal حال (state)

You must know that *maqam* مقام (station) and *hal* حال (state) are in common use both among *Sufis* and theologians, and it is necessary that the seekers of Truth should know their exact definitions. Although it will not be possible to provide proofs and elaborate their definitions in this section, however endeavor is there to discuss the needed details.

"*Maqam* مقام (station)" denotes one's stay in the Way of Allah, and his fulfillment of all rights and obligations pertaining to that "*maqam*" and his keeping it until he comprehends its perfection. It is beyond man's power to pass through a *maqam* without meeting its due obligations. There are following stations:

- the first station is repentance, (*tawba* توبه)
- the second station is conversion to Allah (*inabat* انابت),
- the third station is abstinence (*zuhd* زهد), and
- the fourth station is trust in Allah (*tawakul* توكل).

It is not permissible that one should pretend to conversion without repentance, or to abstinence without conversion, or to trust in Allah without abstinence.

وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ

(Those ranged in ranks say): "Not one of us but has a place appointed;" (Q 37:164).

"*Hal* حال (state)" is that state which descends from Allah into a man's heart. It is not attainable by efforts neither it can be repelled with efforts when it happens.

The term *maqam* (station) denotes, the way of the seeker of the Truth, progress in his diligence and efforts and acquisition of rank in the Court of Lord on the merit of one's excellence and efforts. The term *hal* (state) denotes that favor and grace of Allah which descends on man's heart without any mortification on his part.

Therefore, *maqam* (station) belongs to the category of acts and *hal* (state) is favor and grace of Lord. *Maqam* (station) is acquired through efforts whereas *hal* (state) is gifted. Hence the man of *maqam* (station) stands by his own self-mortification, whereas the man of *hal* (state) is dead to self and stands by a "state" which Allah creates for him.

Here the Sheikhs are at variance. Some hold that a state may be permanent, while other rejects this view. Harith Muhasibi maintained that state may be permanent. He argues that love and longing, and contraction and expansion are all states and if the states lack permanency then the lover would not be a lover and desirer would not be a desirer. And until a man's state becomes his attribute the name of that state is not properly applied to him. It is for this reason that he holds *rida* (satisfaction) to be one of the states, and the same view is indicated by the saying of Abu Uthman,

منذ اربعين سنة كما اقامني الله علي حال فذكره لله

for the last forty years I am satisfied in whatever state Allah kept me."

The other group denies that a state can be permanent. Junaid says:

الاحوال كالبروق فان بقيت فحديث النفس

“States are like flashes of lightning: their permanence is merely a suggestion of the lower soul.”

Another group has said:

الاحوال كاسمها يعني انها كما تحل بالقلب تزول

“States are like their name, as soon as they reveal on the heart they perish,”

and whatever remains behind is the attribute and the attribute subsists in an object which must be more perfect than the attribute itself. This is absurd. I have set forth the distinction between *hal* (state) and *maqam* (station) in order that wherever they occur in the phraseology of the *Sufis* or in the present work you may know what is signified by these terms.

This leads to know that satisfaction is the end of *maqamat* (stations) and the beginning of the *ahwal* (states). It is such a stage whose one side rests on acquisition and effort, and the other side on love and longing. There is no *maqam* (station) above it and at this point mortification ceases. Its beginning is through efforts and mortification and its end in on Divine's gift and blessing. It is likelihood that one who in the beginning keeps an eye on his *rida* (satisfaction) may consider it a *maqam* (station) and one who at the end see his *Rida* (satisfaction) through the Truth gives it the name of *hal* (state). This is the basis of the doctrine of Muhasibi as regards to the theory of Sufism.

As regards to practice, however, he made no difference, except that he used to warn his disciples against expressions and acts which might lead to error, though the expressions and devotions be very sound.

Once Abu Hamza Baghdadi one of his disciples and an ecstatic man, came to see him. Muhasibi had a cock with him who was habitual of uttering loud notes of and on. One day the crowing of the bird was loud and Abu Hamza gave a shriek. Harith rose up with a knife in his hand and cried on Hamza that he had committed an infidelity. He made an attempt to kill him but his disciples intervened and got saved the life of Hamza. Then he said to Abu Hamza, “Become a Muslim, O miscreant!”

The disciples exclaimed: “O Sheikh, we all know him to be one of the elect saints and Unitarians: why does the Sheikh regard him with suspicion?”

Harith replied: “I also do not suspect him. His heart is adorned with the vision of the Truth and he is a profound Unitarian, but why should he do something which resembles the actions of those who believe in incarnation or his action has the appearance similar to their? The bird is a senseless creature who by nature or habit crow randomly, why should he behave as though its note was the voice of the Truth? The Truth is indivisible, lovers have no rest without supplication to Him and He does not become incarnate, or united with phenomena or commingled with them.”

When Abu Hamza perceived the Sheikh's insight, he said: “O Sheikh, although I am right in theory, yet, since my action resembled the action of heretics, I repent and withdraw.”

There are so many similar anecdotes referred to him but we have chosen the concise path. His method is laudable, safe for the way of Truth and accomplished for attaining the degree of *sahw* (sobriety). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

من كان يؤمن بالله واليوم الآخر فلا يقض مواتع التهم

“Amongst you who have belief in Allah and Resurrection should refrain himself from imputation”

And I all the time pray to Allah that He may keep my conduct above suspicion! But this is impossible when one associates with worldly formalists whose enmity is aroused by anyone who does not submit to their hypocrisy and sin.

The Qassaris

They are the followers of Abu Saleh Hamdun b. Ahmad b. Umara al-Qassar, who was a celebrated divine and eminent Sufi. His doctrine was the manifestation and divulgation of *malamat* (blame). His discourses on ethical sciences are of immense value. He used to say:

“One have firm faith that Allah has more and better knowledge of them than the knowledge of mankind,” i.e. your dealing with Allah in private should be better than your dealings with men in public, for your preoccupation with men is the greatest veil between you and Allah. I have already given some account of Qassar in the chapter on Blame. From many strange tales named to his credit I for the brevity sake select the following one which he related as:

Once I was walking along Hira canal in Nishapur. Incidentally I came across Noah a known swindler. All the thieves and swindlers of the area were under his influence. He was famous for his courage and generosity. I asked him, “O Noah, what is generosity?” He said, “My generosity or yours?” I said, “Describe both.” He replied:

“My generosity is that I substitute my clothing with *Muraqqa* (patched frock) and practice the conduct appropriate to that garment, until I become a *Sufi* and refrain from sin because of the shame I may feel before people. Generosity on your part is that you put off the *Muraqqa* in order that you because of people or they because of you may not be affected with evils. Therefore, my generosity is formal observance of the *Shariat* (religious law), while your generosity is spiritual observance of the Truth.”

This is very sound principle.

The Tayfuris

They are the followers of Abu Yazid Tayfur b. Isa al-Bastami, a great and eminent Sheikh. His doctrine is *ghalabah* غلبه (rapture) and *sukr* سكر (intoxication). Rapture here refers to rapturous longing for Allah and intoxication of love does not belong to those things which can be acquired by human efforts. It is futile to claim, and ridiculous to imitate anything that lies beyond the range of acquisition. Intoxication is not an attribute of the sober, and man has no power of drawing it to himself. The intoxicated man is enraptured and pays no heed to created things. It does not happen that he should manifest a quality involving conscious effort. The *Sufi* Sheikhs are unanimous that one should only follow that man who is steadfast in his states and has passed through its ups and downs. But still there are some who consider it lawful if the way of rapture and intoxication is trodden with effort, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

ابكوفان لم تبكوفتبا كوا

“weep, or else appear like them!”

Now, to imitate others for the sake of pretension is clear polytheism, but if one imitates with an intention that Allah may raise him to the rank of those whom he has imitated, is in accordance with the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said,

من تشبه فهو منهم

“whoever makes himself like unto a people is one of them.”

The seeker should fulfill whatever purification he might come across in this way and keep hope that may Allah opens the doors of the way of Truth to him, as one of the Sheikhs have said,

المشاهدات مواهب الجاهدات

contemplations are the fruition and result of mortifications.”

My own view is that, mortifications are always excellent, but intoxication and rapture do not belong to the class of achievable by efforts hence, they cannot be induced by mortifications, which in themselves never become a cause of intoxication. Mortifications only take place in the state of sobriety and one who is sober never like to accept intoxication, it is obstinate.

I will now set forth the different opinions of the Sheikhs concerning the true nature of *sukr* (intoxication) and *sahw* (sobriety), in order that difficulties may be removed.

Sukr سكر (Intoxication) and Sahw صحو (Sobriety)

You must know that *sukr* سكر (intoxication) and *ghalabah* غلبه (rapture) are terms used by spiritualists to denote the rapture of love for Allah, while the term *sahw* صحو (sobriety) expresses the attainment of desire. They have deliberated this matter in length. One group prefer sobriety to intoxication and the other group hold the intoxication to be superior.

Abu Yazid and his followers prefer intoxication to sobriety. They say that sobriety involves the fixity and equilibrium of human attributes, which are the greatest veil between Allah and the man, whereas intoxication involves the diminish of catastrophe, blemishes of human attributes, and the annihilation of foresight and choice, so that only those faculties remains to act which are above humanity and these faculties are more perfect and accomplished. Thus David (may blessings of Allah be on him) was in the state of sobriety when an act proceeded from him which Allah attributed to him and said,

وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ

and David slew Goliath” (Q 2:251),

but Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was in the state of intoxication when an act proceeded from him which Allah attributed to Himself and said:

وَمَا مَرَمَيْتُ إِذْ مَرَمَيْتُ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ مَرَمَى

“When thou threwest (a handful of dust), it was not thy act, but Allah’s:” (Q 8:17).

How great is the difference between man to man!

Allah said to him who was dormant to himself and set to his own attributes that “you did it”, and to whom who was firm with the Truth and annihilated from his attributes said “whatever was done We did it”. The attribution of a man’s act to Allah is better than the attribution of Allah’s act to a man, for in the latter case the man stands by the attributes of humanity, while in the former case he stands through Allah because when man stands by human attributes his example is like this:

When David looked at where he was not supposed to look i.e. the wife of Adriya, in remand of that what happened with David, only he knew but when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) looked at, resultantly, that woman was forbidden for her husband. The David was in state of sobriety and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was dwelling at *maqam* (station) of intoxication.

Junaid and his followers prefer *sahw* صحو (sobriety) to *sukr* سكر (intoxication). They say that intoxication is a palace of misfortunes, because it involves the disturbance of one's normal state and loss of health and self-control. The desire of the seeker is to get to know the mystical meanings, may these be concerning to annihilation or subsistence, or of effacement or affirmation, and without being in right state how he can verify his quest. The hearts of the seekers of Truth should remain clear of all created and merely by closing eyes one is not free from the world and its motives and nor one is free from its tribulations. The attachment of creature with other things (save Allah) is because they are ignorant of their reality and had the reality be known to them they would have got escaped of them.

There are two ways to see the things correctly. He who looks at anything sees it either with the eye of subsistence (*baqa* بقا) or with the eye of annihilation (*fana* فنا). In the first case he perceives that the whole universe is imperfect in comparison with their own subsistence, for they in their subsistence are not subsistent to their own self. And if he looks with the eye of annihilation, he perceives that all created things are non-existent beside the subsistence of Allah. In either case he turns away from created things. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said in his prayer,

اللهم اربنا الاشياء كما هي

O Allah, show us things as they really are,

because, whoever truly perceives the reality, finds peace.

And this saying of Allah has also similar meaning:

فاعتبروا يا اولي الابصار

"Take warning, then, O ye with eyes (to see)! (Q 59:2).

Because until we see, how can we perceive warning. Such vision cannot be properly attained except in the state of sobriety, and the intoxicated have no knowledge thereof. Since Moses was in state of intoxication, therefore, he could not endure **when Allah manifested His glory, but fell down in a swoon (Q 7:143)**, but Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who was in state of sobriety, beheld the same glory continuously, all the way from Mecca until **he stood at the distance of two bow-lengths from the Divine presence (Q 53:9)** and his every moment was ever-increasing consciousness,

شربت الواح كأسا بعد كأس فما نفذ الشراب وما هويت

I took wine of His *Marifat* in abundance, but

Neither wine finished nor did I get satisfied.

My Sheikh, who followed the doctrine of Junaid, said:

"*Sukr* (intoxication) is child's play, but sobriety is the death field of men."

I, in agreement with my Sheikh say, that the perfection of the state of the intoxicated man is sobriety and the lowest stage of sobriety is the perception of powerlessness of human nature, therefore, even that sobriety which may leads to some injury is better than *sukr* (intoxication) because intoxication is a total catastrophe.

Uthman Maghrabi, in the earlier part of his life, spent twenty years in solitude, living in wilderness and deserts where he never heard the sound of a human voice. His body shriveled due to toil and diligence, his eyes became as small as the eye of a sack-needle and his facial features had hardly anything common with the human face. After twenty years he was commanded to associate with mankind. He resolved to begin with the friends of Allah and attendant of Kaba and left for Mecca. The Sheikhs of Mecca through insight were aware of his coming and went forth to meet him. Finding him so changed that he hardly seemed to be human creature, they said to him:

"O Abu Uthman, you have spent twenty years in such condition that sons of Adam are unable to perceive. Tell us.

Why did you dwell in wilderness?

What did you see there?

What all did you gain?

And now why have you come back?"

He relied: "I went because of intoxication, and I saw the wretchedness of intoxication. I have come back with humility and despair."

All the Sheikhs said in one voice: "O Abu Uthman, it is not lawful for anyone after you to explain the meaning of sobriety and intoxication, for you have done justice to the whole matter and have shown forth the evil of intoxication."

Hence, *sukr* (intoxication) is to erroneously consider self annihilation while the attributes really subsists and this is a veil. But *Sahw* (sobriety) on the other hand, is the vision of subsistence while the attributes of human nature are annihilated and this is actual revelation.

It is absurd for anyone to suppose that intoxication is nearer to annihilation (*fana*) than sobriety, for intoxication is such an aspect that adds to sobriety, and so long a man is thoughtful of increase in his attributes he remains ignorant and when attributes starts diminishing, the seekers of the Truth get hopeful. This is the limit and end state of seekers in *sahw* (sobriety) and *sukr* (intoxication).

Yahya b, Maud wrote to Abu Yazid: "What do you say of one who becomes intoxicated by just taking a single drop from the ocean of love?"

Bayazid wrote him in reply: "What do you say of one who drinks all the rivers of the world filled with wine of love and still cry for more to satisfy his thirst of love?"

People perceived as if Yahya was speaking of intoxication, and Bayazid of sobriety. But in fact the man of sobriety is he who is unable to drink even a single drop, and the man of intoxication is he who in his intoxicated state drinks all and still desires for more. The wine of love is an instrument of intoxication and demands what is homogeneous with itself and *sahw* (sobriety) is anti intoxication, therefore, sobriety has no relation with intoxication.

The *sukr* (intoxication) is of two kinds, i.e. with the wine of friendship and with the cup of affection.

The former is dependant on a cause i.e. it arises because of a benefit but the later has no cause, since it arises from the vision of the benefactor. He who regards the benefit sees through himself and therefore sees himself but he who regards the benefactor sees through Him and therefore does not see himself, so that, although he is in state of intoxication but his intoxication is sobriety.

The *Sahw* (sobriety) is also of two kinds, i.e. sobriety in heedlessness and sobriety in love.

The former is the greatest of veils, but the later is the clearest of revelations. The sobriety that is connected with heedlessness is actually intoxication, while that which is linked with love, although it is intoxication but is actually sobriety. When the origin is firmly established, sobriety and intoxication resemble one another, but when origin and base is missing, both are useless.

In short, sobriety and intoxication exist with difference of opinion amongst seekers of the Truth. If the Truth unveils its secrets, both sobriety and intoxication appear to be uninvited intruders as the boundaries of both are joined, and the end of the one is the beginning of the other, and beginning and end are terms that imply separation, which has only a relative existence. In union all separations are negated, as the poet says:

إذا طلع الصباح بنجم راح

تساوي فيه سكران وصاح

When the morning rises with the heart pleasing goblet of wine,

The drunkard and the sober are in similar state.

At Sarkhas there were two Sheikhs, namely, Luqman and Abu Fadl Hasan. One day Luqman came to Abu Fadl and found him searching something from the pieces of papers (of manuscript) in his hand. He asked him that what he was seeking in those papers. Abu Fadl replied, "the same thing which you are seeking by turning them away." Luqman said: "Then why this difference?" Abu Fadl answered:

"You see a difference when you ask me what I am seeking. Come to sobriety from intoxication and get disgusted of sobriety, in order that the difference may be removed from you and that you may know what you and I are in search of."

The Tayfuris has only this much difference with Junaidis which has been indicated. Their doctrine as regards to ethics consists in shunning companionship and choosing retirement from the world, and he enjoined all his disciples to do the same. If attained, this is a praiseworthy and laudable Path.

Junaidis

They are the followers of Abu al-Qasim al-Junaid b. Muhammad, who in his time was called the Peacock of the *Ulama*. He was the chief of the seekers of the Truth and the *Imam* of their *Imams*. In contrary to Tayfuris his doctrine is based on *sahw* صحو (sobriety). The difference between them has already been explained. It is the best known and most celebrated of all doctrines, and all of my Sheikhs were from this sect. Besides *sahw* صحو (sobriety) and *sukr* سكر (intoxication), Junaidis also have difference with other Sheikhs on matters pertaining to ethics and principles of Sufism. Want of space forbids me to discuss it further in this book. Those who wish to become better acquainted with it must seek information from other books as my aim for this book is to ensure brevity.

When Hussein b. Mansur (al-Hallaj) in his rapture state broke off all relations with Umru b. Uthman and came to Junaid, he asked him for what purpose he had come to him. Hussein said: "To get benefited from Sheikh's association." Junaid replied: "I do not accept insane in my association. Association demand sanity and if you join me with this affliction of insanity the result of such behavior will be same as it has been your association with Sahl b. Abdullah and Umru b. Uthman."

Hussein said,

ايها الشيخ الصحو والسكر صفتان للعبد وما دام العبد محجوبا عن ربه حتي في اوصافه

O Sheikh, sobriety and intoxication are two attributes of man, and man is veiled from his Lord until his attributes are annihilated."

Junaid replied, "O son of Mansur,

اخطاء في الصحو والسكر لان الصحو بلا خلاف عبارة عن صحة حال العبد مع الحق وذلك لا يدخل تحت صفة العبد واكتساب الخلق وانا اري

you are in error concerning sobriety and intoxication. The former without difference denotes soundness of one's spiritual state in relation to Allah, and this state does not fall in the class of ones attributes or attainable by efforts. O son of Mansur, your words are meaningless and absurd."

Nuris

They are the followers of Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. Muhammad Nuri who is one of the most eminent and illustrious *Sufi Ulama*. He is well known amongst the *Sufis* because of the clarity in wisdom and conclusiveness in proofs. His doctrine about Sufism is laudable and is based on excellent principles. In his doctrine *tasawwuf* تصوف (mysticism) has superiority over *faqr* (poverty), and in matters of conduct he is in accord with the doctrine of Junaid.

The peculiarity of his doctrine is that in companionship he prefers his companion's claim to his own, and considers companionship illegal without preference. He also holds that companionship is obligatory on part of dervishes, and that retirement from the world is not a praiseworthy act. It is obligatory for everyone to prefer his companion to himself. He said:

اياكم والعزلة فان العزلة مقارنة الشيطان وعليكم بالصحة فان في الصحة رضا الرحمن

"Beware of solitude! For it is nearness with Satan; and must you join companionship, for therein is the satisfaction of the Merciful Allah."

Now I will deliberate on the true nature of *ithar* (preference), and it will be fully explained in the chapter on companionship and solitude in order to make it more generally instructive.

Preference (ithar ايثار)

Allah said:

وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

“But give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot).” (Q 59:9).

This verse was particularly revealed concerning the poor among the companions.

The true nature of preference consists in maintaining the rights of the person with whom one associates, and even gives away his own share to him. One should bear trouble for the sake of promoting his happiness because preference is the rendering of help to others, and putting it into practice. Allah commanded the Prophet (peace be upon him):

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

“Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant.” (Q 7:199).

This will be explained in the chapter on the rules of companionship. Here the aim is to explain about preference only which falls under two categories, in companionship, as has been mentioned; and secondly, in love. Although there is a sort of trouble in preferring the claim of one's companion but in preferring the claim of one's beloved there is only pleasure and delight.

It is a well known tale that when Ghulam Khalil showed malice and started troubling the *Sufis* on different pretext, he got Nuri, Raqqam and Abu Hamza arrested. They were produced before the Caliph as a group of heretics. Ghulam Khalil convinced the Caliph that their death would eliminate the root of heretics, since they were their leaders. The Caliph immediately acted on his advice and gave orders for their execution. When the executioner approached Raqqam, Nuri rose and put his head under the sword with the utmost cheerfulness and submission. All the spectators were amazed. The executioner said: “O brave man, the sword is not a thing that people desire to meet as eagerly as you have welcomed it whereas your turn has not yet come.” Nuri answered:

“Yes; my doctrine is founded on preference. Life is the most precious thing in the world. I wish to sacrifice the few breaths left to me on my brethren's sake. In my opinion, one moment of this world is better than a thousand years of the next world, because this is the place of service and that is the place of proximity, and proximity is attained by service.”

The incident was immediately reported to the Caliph who got so astonished on the tenderness of Nuri and the fineness of his saying that he suspended their execution and later on they were handed over to chief *Qadi*, Abu al-Abbas b. Ali, to further inquire into the matter. The *Qadi* took them to his house and questioned them concerning *Shariat* (religious law) and the Truth. He found them perfect in all respects and he felt remorse for his ignorance and negligence about them. Nuri said:

“O *Qadi*, although you have asked all but still you have not asked anything to the point, for Allah has servants whose existence is through Him, drink through Him, sit through Him, live through Him, and abide in contemplation of Him. If they were cut off from contemplating Him they would cry out in anguish.”

The *Qadi* was amazed at the subtlety of his speech and soundness of his state and immediately he wrote to the Caliph that if those *Sufis* were heretics, then he was evidence to the fact and declared that there was none in the world a Unitarian. The Caliph called them to his presence and asked them to demand boon. They replied:

“The only thing we desire of you is that you should stop thinking about us, and neither take us as your favorites nor banish us from your court, for your favor and displeasure are alike to us.”

The Caliph wept and dismissed them with honor.

Nafi²¹ (may Allah be pleased with him) related:

Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) desired to eat fish. I sought through the town, but did not find. However after few days I happened to procure it. After cooking I presented it to him. I noticed an expression of joy on his face as he received it. In the mean time a beggar came to his door and asked for something. He ordered his servant to give that fish to the beggar. The servant pointed out, "O master, you have desired fish for several days, now you are giving it to the beggar." He suggested giving something else to the beggar but Ibn Umar replied, "this fish is unlawful to me, for I have put it out of my mind on account of a tradition which I heard from the Prophet (peace be upon him):

إيما امرئ يشتهي شهوة ففرد شهوته وأثر علي نفسه غفر له

"When a person meets his desire and then repel it and prefers other to himself, he shall be forgiven."

Once ten dervishes lost their way in the wilderness and were overtaken by thirst. They had very little water with them and everyone preferred the claim of the others, so that none of them would drink and they all died except one. The survivor drank that water and with its strength escaped death. Someone said to him that it would have been better had he also not drunk. He replied:

"O my brother, had I not drunk at that time according to religious law I would have committed suicide and on resurrection would have been punished on this account."

The other said: "Then did your friends kill themselves?"

The dervish said; "No, they refused to drink in order that their companions might drink, but when I alone survived I was legally obliged to drink."

At the time of *Hijra* (migration) when the infidels of Mecca had conspired to kill Prophet (peace be upon him), Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) slept on the bed of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who along with Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) had flown from Mecca and rested in a cave.

Allah called Gabriel and Mikhail and said to them that He had established brotherhood amongst them and had made longer one's life than other. Now tell Me who amongst you gives his life to his brother and get ready to meet death before him. Both of them desired for life. Allah said:

"Have you noticed the state of Ali that how much superiority he has over you? I established brotherhood between him and My Prophet. Ali accepted killing and death and slept on his bed and sacrificed his life on Muhammad. Now you go on earth and protect him from the enemies."

Both the angels came and one sat on the head part whereas second occupied the seat near Ali's feet. Gabriel said:

"O Ali, who can match you because today Allah has given you superiority over angels and you are enjoying your sleep."

And Allah revealed the following verse in honor of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him):

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

"And there is the type of man who gives his life to earn the pleasure of Allah; And Allah is full of kindness to (His) devotees. (Q 2:207).

In the battle of *Uhad* when Allah put the Muslims in trial, about that time an Ansari woman has narrated:

I went to the battle field to serve the injured. I saw one companion badly injured and counting his last breaths. He requested for some water. As soon as I gave him water, another injured shouted for water. The first injured without drinking returned the water and commanded me to serve the other injured first. As soon as I reached to him and gave him the water, another injured gave a call for water.

²¹ A well-known traditionalist died 120 A.H.

The second injured also acted like the first one and returned the water without taking any sip. The similar situation kept on occurring until when I reached to the seventh injured, he had already died. I thought to serve those who had called for water earlier but all of the six had also died before I could reach to them. So all seven died but everyone preferred other over his own thirst and Allah praised their act as:

وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

“But give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot).” (Q 59:9).

One day, a devotee from Israelites who had served Allah for four hundred years, said, “O Lord, if Thou had not created these mountains, excursion and traveling on earth would have been easier for Thy servants.” The Divine command came to the Apostle of that time to tell to the devotee:

“What business has you to interfere in My kingdom? Now, since you have interfered therefore I have removed your name from the register of the blessed and inscribe it in the register of the damned.”

On hearing this, the devotee shivered with joy and bowed to the ground in thanksgiving. The Apostle said: “O brother, why this thanks giving for damnation.” The devotee replied:

“My thanks giving are not for damnation, but for because my name is at least inscribed in one of His registers. Then he said, “O Apostle, I have a boon to ask”. The Apostle asked him to let him know his request. The devotee said:

“Say unto Allah, since Thou wilt send me to Hell, make me so large that I may take the place of all sinful Unitarians, and they all go to Paradise.”

Allah commanded the Apostle to tell the devotee that the probation which he had undergone was not for the purpose of humiliating him, but to reveal him to the people, and on the Day of Resurrection to whom he intercedes would enter in Paradise.

On my quest Ahmad Hammadi of Sarkhasi narrated this account about his repentance.

Once I along with my camels set out from Sarkhas and took abode in a jungle. I stayed there for a considerable time, during which I always desired to remain hungry and oblige others by giving my share of food in observance of Allah’s command,

وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot)” (Q 59:9).

I sincerely had devoted myself to such people possessing this quality.

One day a hungry lion came from desert and killed one of my camels. After that he occupied a place on higher ground and started roaring. In no time beasts of the jungle gathered around him. The lion came down to the dead camel and tore it into pieces and went back to the higher ground without having eaten anything. The beasts began to eat, and the lion waited until they had gone away after satisfying their hunger. Then he approached in order to eat a morsel, but seeing a lame fox in the distance he withdrew once more until the newcomer had eaten his fill. After that, he came and ate some of the camel’s meat. I was watching all this from a distance. As he intended to leave the hunting place, he spoke to me in an eloquent human voice and said:

“O Ahmad, to prefer others to one’s self in the matter of food is an act only worthy of dogs. The men on the way to Allah sacrifice their lives and souls.”

When I saw this clear demonstration I renounced all worldly occupations, and that was also the cause of my repentance.

Jafar Khuldi said that one day, when Abu al-Hasan Nuri was praying in solitude I went to overhear him, for he was very eloquent. In his supplication he was praying:

“O Lord, in Thy eternal knowledge and power and will Thou dost punish the people of Hell, whom Thou hast created; and if it be Thy unchangeable will to make Hell full of mankind. Thou art able to fill that Hell and all its limbos with me alone and send them to Paradise.”

I was amazed by this prayer, until some one came to me in my dream and said:

“Allah bids thee tell Abu al-Hasan that he has been forgiven on account of his compassion for Allah’s creature and his reverence for Him.”

He was called Nuri because whenever he discoursed in a dark house it used to be illuminated by the *Nur* (light) of his spirituality. And by the *Nur* (light) of the Truth he used to read the inner most thoughts of his disciples, so that Junaid had to say that Abu al-Hasan was the spy of men’s hearts. This is the peculiarity of his doctrine. It is on sound principle, and carries great importance in the eyes of those who have insight.

Nothing is harder to a man than to sacrifice his own precious life and things to whom he loves. Allah has made such sacrifice the key of all good deeds, as He said,

لَنْ تَكُونُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ

by no means shall ye attain righteousness unless ye give (freely) of that which ye love;” (Q 3:92).

Who is willing to sacrifice his life, what values him wealth and worldly assets? This is the foundation of Sufism. Some one came to Ruwaym and asked him for advice. Ruwaym said:

يا بني ليس هذا الامر غير بذل الروح ان قدرت علي ذلك والافلا تشتغل بترهات الصوفية

“O my son, the whole affair consists in sacrificing your own-self. It is well if you are able to do this, otherwise do not occupy yourself with the futilities of the *Sufis*,” i.e. all except this is futile;

Allah said:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْواتًا بَلْ أحياء عند ربهم يُرزقون

“Think not of those who are slain in Allah’s way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the Presence of their Lord;” (Q 3:169),

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْواتٌ بَلْ أحياء ولكن لا تشعرون

“And say not of those who are slain in the way of Allah: ‘They are dead,’ Nay, they are living, though ye perceive (it) not.” (Q 2:154).

Know that eternal life is attained by sacrifice of thyself and this blessing is gained by renunciation of self interest in fulfilling Allah’s commandments and by obedience to His friends. But from the standpoint of gnosis preference and free choice are all separation, and real preference consists in union with Allah, for the true basis of self interest is self abandonment.

So long as the seeker’s progress is connected with acquisition it is destructive, but when the attracting influence of the Truth manifests its dominion all his actions are confounded, and he loses all power of expression. Neither can any name be applied to him nor any description can be given of him or anything be imputed to him. On this Shibli says in verse:-

غبت عني فما احس بنفسي وتلاشت صفاتي الموصوفة

فانا اليوم غائب عن جميع ليس الا العبارة الملهوفة

“In your separation I am lost to myself and my attributes are annihilated.

Today, I am lost to all things: Naught remains but a forced expression.”

The Sahlis

They are the followers of Sahl b. Abdullah Tustari. He was a great and venerable *Sufi*, as has already been mentioned. There are many strange *Karamat* (miracles) vouchsafed to him which intellect fails to comprehend. His doctrine inculcates endeavor and self-mortification and ascetic training, and he used to bring his disciples to perfection through self-mortification.

It is well-known that once he said to one of his disciples to recite continuously Allah, Allah, Allah for the whole day. Next day and the following days he told the disciple to perform the same recitation until he became habituated to that *dikr*. Then he bade him to repeat the same performance at night, until the *dikr* became so familiar that he uttered them even during his sleep. Then he guided him not to repeat it any more, but let all his faculties be engaged in *dikr* (remembering Allah). The disciple did this, until he attained the state that he would always found absorbed in the *dikr* of Allah.

Some *Sufi* Sheikhs have said,

ذکر اللسان غفلة و ذکر القلب قربة

“*dikr* by tongue is cause of heedlessness and *dikr* by heart is cause of presence with the Truth”.

One day, when the disciple was sitting in his house, a piece of wood fell on his head and the injury caused bleeding. The drops of blood started trickling on the ground and drop which landed on the ground would demonstrate inscription الله, الله, الله (Allah, Allah, Allah).

The path of the Sahlis is to educate disciples by acts of self-mortification, and austerity and that of Humdunis (Qassaris) is to serve and honor dervishes. The path of Junaidis is to keep watch over one's spiritual state.

Self-mortification and devotion is the name of complete resistance to the *nafs* (lower soul), and until a man knows his lower soul his self-mortification and devotion are of no use to him. I will now explain the knowledge and true nature of the *nafs* (lower soul), so one should know what *nafs* (lower soul) is? And in the later part the doctrines of all sects concerning self-mortification and its principles would be elaborated, so that both are amply manifested to the seekers of the Truth.

The Reality of *nafs* (Lower Soul) and *hawa* (Passion)

You must know that *nafs* نفس (lower soul), etymologically is the essence and reality of anything, but in common use and writings it is used to denote many meanings, and even at times is used for contradictory meanings also. Some take its meaning as spirit whereas some call it manliness and still some refers it to as body and blood. But the theologians accept none of these meaning. However, they all unanimous on that it is the source of evil and wickedness. Some have the view that it is a substance which like *ruh* روح (spirit) has been entrusted to the heart while others hold it to be like life, an attribute of the heart.

But there is a general consensus that through it base qualities are manifested and that it is the immediate cause of blameworthy actions. The actions of *nafs* (lower soul) are of two kinds, namely,

- sins and disobedience of the command of Allah
- base qualities, i.e. pride, envy, avarice, anger, hatred, etc., which are not commendable in law and reason.

These qualities can be removed by self discipline: e.g. sins are removed by repentance, for acts of disobedience and sins are external attributes, whereas the base qualities are internal attributes. The self-discipline is an external act, and repentance is a quality of internal attributes. Therefore, base

qualities which appear inwardly can be purged by excellent outwardly attributes and those base qualities which appear outwardly are purged by laudable inwardly attributes.

Both the *nafs* نفس (lower soul) and the *ruh* روح (spirit) are subtle things and exist in the heart just as devils and angels and Paradise and Hell exist in the universe, but the one out of the two is the mansion of good, while the other is the mansion of evil, as eye is the mansion to sight, ear is the palace of hearing and tongue is the mansion of taste and similarly the other attributes which have been inculcated in the human body. Hence, the resistance to the *nafs* (lower soul) is the truth of all acts of devotion and the brilliance of all acts of self-mortification, and without it man can not find his way to Allah because submission to the lower soul is his destruction and resistance to it is his salvation. Allah has also commanded to resist the *nafs* (lower soul) and have praised those who oppose it and have condemned who submit to their *nafs* and follow its instructions. Allah says:

وَهِيَ النَّفْسُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ - فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

“And had restrained (their) souls (نفس) from lower desires, their abode will be the Garden. (Q 79:40-41),

أَفَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّمَّا لَا تَهْتَمُونَ بِأَنفُسِكُمْ أَنتُمْ كَارِهِونَ

“Is it that whenever there comes to you a Messenger with what ye yourselves desire not, ye are puffed up with pride?” (Q 2:87).

And Yusuf (may blessings of Allah be on him) speaks through Quran:

وَمَا أَتَّبِعُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا أَمَرَ حِمِّي

“Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul (نفس) is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy,” (Q 12:53).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

إذا أراد الله بعبده خيراً أبصره الله بعيوب نفسه

“When Allah wants to do good to a person, He makes him to know evils of his *nafs* (lower soul).”

Allah revealed to David:

يَا دَاوُدَ عَادَ نَفْسِكَ وَوَدَّيْ بِعَدَاوَتِهَا

“O David, consider your *nafs* (lower soul) thy enemy, thy friendship to Me is in its enmity.”

These all are attributes, and every attribute needs an object whereby it subsists, as attribute can not stand by itself and knowledge of that attribute, namely the *nafs* (lower soul), is not attainable save by unveiling its mystery, which knowledge in turn demands an explanation of the human nature and its qualities. People have talked a lot about the reality of humanity that this name implies to what. It is incumbent upon all seekers of the Truth to acquire its knowledge, because one who is ignorant of himself is yet more ignorant of others. Since man is bound to attain *marifat* (know Allah) therefore, he must first know himself, in order that by rightly perceiving his own temporality he may recognize the Eternity of Allah, and through his own annihilation may understand the Everlastingness of Allah. The following verse of Quran is witness to it:

وَمَنْ يَرْغَبْ عَنِ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَن سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ

“And who turns away from the religion of Abraham but such as debase their souls with folly.” (Q 2:130).

Some venerable elder said that who was ignorant of his self, was more ignorant of others.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه - اي من عرف نفسه بالفناء فقد عرف ربه بالبقاء

“He who knows himself already knows his Lord, i.e. he who understood the annihilation of his *nafs* (lower soul), he found the secret of everlastingness of his Lord.”

He also said:

من عرف نفسه بالذل فقد عرف ربه بالعز

“Who took his *nafs* (lower soul) as wretched; he perceived the true majesty of his Lord.”

He further said:

من عرف نفسه بالعبودية فقد عرف ربه بالربوبية

“Who apprehended the humility of his *nafs* (lower soul), he understood the lordship of his Lord.”

Who does not know himself, is ignorant of everything and this leads to knowledge of humanity where the people differ.

Among Muslims some assert that man is nothing but *ruh* روح (soul), of which this body is the cuirass and skeleton or residence and resting place, in order to preserve it from interference of natural disposition, and sensation and intelligence are its attributes. But this view is false, because a body which loses its *ruh* (soul) is still called a human being. This identification does not finish, as when a person is alive he is a living human being and when he is dead he is still called dead human being. Moreover, animals also have *ruh* (soul) in their bodies but they are not called human being. Had humanity been the name of *ruh* (soul) everything which possesses it should have been called human being. Since it is not like that, therefore, this assertion is wrong.

Some others have the view that the term is applicable to the soul and the body together, and that it no longer applies when one is separated from the other; e.g. when two colors, black and white, are combined on a horse, it is called piebald, whereas the same colors, apart from each other, are called black and white and the name piebald will no more exist. This assertion is also wrong because Allah has said:

هَلْ أُنِى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا مَّا دُكُوْرًا

“Has there not been over Man a long period of Time, when he was nothing – (not even) mentioned?” (Q 76:1).

Here Adam’s lifeless clay without soul (for the soul had not yet been joined to his body) is called Man.

Some others have the opinion that human being is such an ingredient which is undividable. Heart, which is the centre of all human attributes, is its resting place. This is also absurd, for if anyone is killed and his heart is taken out of his body he does not lose its identity as human being. Moreover, it is agreed that Adam’s body did not have heart before the *ruh* (soul).

Some pretenders to Sufism have fallen into error on this subject. They declare that human being is not that who eats and drinks and suffers decay, but a Divine mystery. This body is his clothing and Divine mystery lies in the interfusion of the natural humors and in the union of body and spirit. In reply to their view point I say that all intellectuals are unanimous that the name of “human being” belongs to all including mad, infidels, immoral and ignorant persons, in whom there is no such divine mystery and they also eat and drink and suffer decay. There is no sign in the body which might be named “human being” either while it exists or after it has ceased to exist. Almighty Allah has given the name of “human being” to the sum of the subsistence which He compounded in us, in spite of the fact that some human beings lack these senses.

Allah hath said:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ

ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَامًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ أَخْبَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

“Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay);

then We placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed;

then we made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (foetus) lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, the Best to create! (Q 23:12-14).

Therefore, according to the words of Allah, Who is the most veracious of all who speak the truth, from clay adopting to specified forms and after going through different changes what came into being is named as “human being.”

Hence, a group of *Sunnis* (orthodox Muslim) has the opinion that human being is a living creature, whose form has been created on such countenance that death does not deprive him of this name, and that he is endowed with a definite physiognomy and a distinct organ both externally and internally. By “a definite physiognomy” they mean that he has either good or ill health, and by “a distinct organ” that he is either mad or sane. It is a general consensus that the more sound a thing is the more perfect it is in constitution.

You must know that in the opinion of theologians of mystic path the most perfect composition of human being includes three elements, i.e. spirit, soul, and body and that each of these has an attribute which subsists therein, the attribute of spirit being intelligence, of soul, passion, and of body, sensation.

Human being is like a prototype of the whole universe. The universe is the name of the two worlds, and in human being signs of both are found. The signs of this world are four elements, viz. water, earth, air and fire, correspond to the phlegm, blood, bile, and melancholy which constitute the human body. The signs of the other world are Paradise, Hell and place of Resurrection. Soul (*jan*) being subtle corresponds with Paradise, *nafs* (lower soul) being evil and grief corresponds with Hell and body corresponds to the place of Resurrection. Paradise is the reward of Allah’s satisfaction, and Hell is the result of His anger. Similarly, the spirit of the true believer reflects the delight of knowledge of the Truth, and his lower soul reflects profligacy and depravity which veils him from Allah. The believer, until and unless is released from the Hell, will not be permitted entry in Paradise and he will neither attain the vision of Allah nor purity of love.

Similarly, in this world until and unless Man escapes himself from the evils of his *nafs* (lower soul) he cannot attain the truth of his devotion, as his essence is spirit and is denied the proximity (of Allah) and gnosis. Hence, whoever knows Him in this world and turns away from all evils and follows the *Shariat* (religious law), at the Resurrection he will be safe from the bridge *Sirat* and Hell.

In short, the spirit of the believer continues to calls him to Paradise, of which it is a type in this world, and his *nafs* (lower soul) calls him to Hell, of which it is a type in this world. The counselor of spirit is intelligence and guide of the *nafs* (lower soul) is erring greed. One guides to righteousness and other to faults. Therefore it behooves on seekers of the Truth to resist their *nafs* (lower soul), in order that thereby they may reinforce their spirit and the intelligence, which are the palaces of the Divine mystery. Dhu al-Nun says:

أشد الحجاب روية النفس وتدبيرها

“Vision of the *nafs* (lower soul) and its deceitfulness is the worst of veils,”

because, submission to *nafs* is to oppose Allah's will, and disobedience of Truth is the source of all veils.

Abu Yazid Bastami says:

النفس صفة لا تسكن الا بالباطل

"The *nafs* (lower soul) is an attribute which never rests save in falsehood," i.e. it never let to seek the Truth.

Muhammad b. Ali al-Tirmidhi says:

تريد ان تعرف الحق مع بقاء نفسك ولا تعرف نفسك فكيف تعرف غيرها

"You wish to know the Truth while your *nafs* (lower soul) subsists in you, although your *nafs* is incapable to know itself, how would it know the other?"

Junaid says:

اساس الكفر قيامك علي مراد نفسك

"To fulfill the desires of your *nafs* (lower soul) is the origin of infidelity," because the *nafs* has no concern with the subtlety of Islam, therefore, it always keeps striving to remain away from it. It turns away from Islam and denies it and who denies, is always a stranger.

Abu Suleiman Durani says:

النفس خاء نته ما نعتته و افضل الاعمال خلافتها

"The *nafs* (lower soul) is treacherous and an impediment to seek pleasure (of the Truth) and resistance to it is the best of actions," because dishonesty with trust is otherness, while abandonment of *rida* (acquiescence) is a deviation.

There are many more sayings of *Sufis* on the subject but now I turn to my main purpose, which is to set forth the doctrine of Sahl concerning the mortification and discipline of the *nafs* (lower soul), and to explain its true nature.

Mortification of the *nafs* نفس (Lower Soul)

Allah hath said:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

"And those who strive in Our (cause) – We will certainly guide them to Our path:" (Q 29:69).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

المجاهد من جاهد نفسه في الله

"The *Mujahid* (striver) is he who diligently struggles against his *nafs* (lower soul) for the sake of Allah."

And he also said:

رجعنا من الجهاد الاصغر الي الجهاد الاكبر

"We have returned from smaller holy war to the greater holy war."

On being asked that what the greater holy war was, he replied,

الاهي بجاهدة النفس

listen carefully! it is the struggle against one's *nafs* (lower soul).”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) pronounced that the mortification of *nafs* (lower soul) was superior to the holy war because there is more affliction and distress in struggle against *nafs* than holy war. It is a great accomplishment to go up against desires and crush the ills of *nafs* (lower soul).

The purgation of *nafs* (lower soul) and its methods are plain and manifest and have been laudable in all the religions and nations, and this subject is particularly observed and practiced by the *Sufis*. Although both nobles and common people have spoken about it but signs and sayings of the *Sufi* Sheikhs are too many. Sahl b. Abdullah Tustari was too exaggerated about mortification and he has very sound sayings and hints on the subject. He had made a habit to have food after fifteen days and with that little feed he lived long life.

All mystics have affirmed the need of mortification, and have declared it to be mean of attaining contemplation. Sahl emphasizes mortification as cause of the contemplation and believe it to be a powerful tool in attaining the objective. He even regarded the present life, spent in mortification and search, as superior to that life of next world which one strive to attain through arduous efforts in this world. He says fruition lies in mortification, one who would serve divinity in this world would be rewarded with the proximity in the next world. Since proximity is not attainable without devotion, therefore, it becomes incumbent on man to follow the root, path and cause which leads him to the nearness of the Truth and that is the mortification as much as he can endure. He said,

المشاهدات مواريث المجاهدات

“the contemplation is the result and fruition of mortification.”

Some others have the view that mortification can not be the cause and means of attainment of the Truth. Whosoever has found access to the Truth, it is only through grace and kindness of the Divine which is independent of human actions. The object of mortification is for the refinement of the *nafs* (lower soul), and not to attain real proximity. To turn towards mortification is the act of man, while contemplation is referred to Allah, therefore, it is impossible that mortification be cause of contemplation or contemplation be result of mortification. Sahl strengthen his argument by the words of Quran:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

“And those who strive in Our (cause) – We will certainly guide them to Our path:” (Q 29:69),

i.e. Whoever mortifies himself, attains contemplation.

Furthermore, he contends that the enforcement of *Shariat* (religious laws), Commandments of Allah in the shape of books revealed to the Prophets, and all religious ordinances imposed on mankind invoke mortification. Those all must be false and vain if mortification were not the cause of contemplation. Again, both in this and the next world, everything is connected with commandments and causes. One who makes excuses in complying to commandments and denies the causes thereof, he does away with *Shariat* (religious law) and customs which leads to end of all law and order and under such condition neither can religious obligations be justified nor will food be the cause of repletion and clothes the cause of warmth and everything will become useless and get to standstill.

Thus, to look causes in acts is *tawhid* (unification) and its repulsion is cessation. Its proofs are manifest and their denial is denying the existence of contemplation and absurd reasoning.

Are you not aware that how the qualities of a wild horse are altered by taming and replaced with human qualities so that it picks up a whip from the ground and gives it to his master, or roll a ball with its feet? In the same way, a child of foreign race can learn to speak Arabic by training and take a new language in exchange for his mother tongue. Similarly savage beast is trained to such an extent that

they work according to the command given to them. They go away when leave is given and come back when they are called, thus preferring captivity to freedom. By imparting training to impure dogs, it gains such perfection where its hunted game becomes legal but if an ignorant man slaughter an animal without fulfilling the *Shariat* requirements it becomes illegal. This indicates that *Shariat* (religious law) and habit depend on devotion and mortification.

Prophet (peace be upon him) who had attained his object, proximity of the Truth, peace for the next life and being free from evils, still mortified him through long hungriness, regular fasting and sleeplessness. So much so that Allah commanded,

مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَىٰ

We have not sent down the Quran to thee to be (An occasion) for thy distress, (Q 20:2).

Abu Huraira relates that during the construction of mosque I saw Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) transporting the bricks and observed that he was feeling some problem in carrying them. I suggested him that I might carry his bricks. He said O Abu Huraira!

خذ غيرها فإنه لا عيش إلا عيش الآخرة

you carry other bricks, this world is place of affliction, peace only rests in the next world.

Hayyan b. Kharja asked Abdullah b. Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) about his views on *Jihad* (holy war). Abdullah replied:

ابدأ بنفسك فجاهدها وابدأ بنفسك فأغزها

فإنك ان قتلت فأجزأو بعثك الله فأجزأوان قتلت مرأياً بعثك الله مرأياً وان قتلت صابراً محتسباً بعثك الله صابراً محتسباً

“Start your struggle against your *nafs* (lower soul), and from the same place start your war. If you are slain during the fight, Allah will raise you in the same condition and if you are killed in wickedness, on Resurrection day you will be raised as such and if you are slain in a state of patience and thankfulness, Allah will raise you as patient and thankful.”

Therefore, as diction and composition are necessary for the elucidation of ideas, similarly mechanism and compilation of mortification are must to elucidate its reality. As a statement does not make any sense without proper composition, similarly access to the object of Truth without mortification is not possible. Who claims it to be such, is wrong because to accept universe as created is proof of *Marifat* (knowledge of Allah). The knowledge of lower soul and mortification of *nafs* are the signs of proximity to Allah.

Those who do not accept mortification as cause of the proximity refer their argument to the following verse of Quran:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

“And those who strive in Our (cause) – We will certainly guide them to Our path:” (Q 29:69).

They maintain that the verse cited above and referred by Sahl is to be read from end to beginning

وَالَّذِينَ هَدَيْتَهُمْ سُبُلَنَا جَاهَدُوا فِينَا

and that the meaning of it is, “those whom we guide into Our way strive to the utmost for Our sake.”

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

لن ينجوا احدكم بعمله

“not one of you shall obtain deliverance by his deeds.”

The companions questioned: "O Prophet, not even you?"

He said:

"Not even I obtain deliverance because of my deeds, unless Allah encompasses me with His mercy."

So, mortification is man's act, and his act cannot possibly become the cause of his salvation, which depends on the Divine Will, as Allah hath said:

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا

"Those whom Allah (in His Plan) willeth to guide – He openeth their breast to Islam; Those whom He willeth to leave straying – He maketh their breast close and constricted," (Q 6:125),

تُؤْتِي الْمَلِكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمَلِكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ

"Thou givest power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest," (Q 3:26).

By affirming His will, Allah denies the obligations of all in the universe. If mortification were the cause of union Iblis would not have been damned and if neglect of mortification were the cause of damnation Adam would never have been blessed. The result hangs on predestined grace, not on abundance of mortification and devotion. That's why the one who exerts the most is also not free of fear but the one who has more blessings and grace is more near to Allah. A monk worshipping in cell of a cathedral may be far from Allah, and another in spite of committed to sinful life may be near to Him.

The noblest of all things is faith. A child who is not yet old enough to be entrusted with the religious command is considered amongst the faithful and a madman also falls in the same category. When the noblest of all gifts i.e. faith, is not dependent on any mortification and devotion then how things inferior to faith should be result of mortification.

I, Ali b. Uthman al-Jullabi, say that when this appear as words and expression is wrong but it is true in their meanings and sense, as some say,

من طلب وجد

"he who seeks shall find,"

and the other says,

من وجد طلب

he who finds shall seek."

For some seeking is the cause of finding, and for some finding is the cause of seeking. One practices mortification for the purpose of attaining contemplation, and the other practices contemplation for purpose of attaining mortification. The fact is that contemplation in mortification is due to the blessing of Divine in worshipping and this is a gift of Allah. As obedience is impossible without Divine blessing, so it is also impossible to seek Divine blessing without devotion, and as there can be no mortification without contemplation, so there can be no contemplation without mortification. Therefore, only one splendor of the Divine Beauty is needed to incite the man for devotion and mortification and when it will be the cause of contemplation, the Divine guidance will gain excellence over devotion and mortification.

In reply to the argument of Sahl and his followers that who denies mortification are also denying the Prophets, the Books revealed on them and the Divine Laws because struggle and efforts depend on mortification, it would have been better if they had depended on the guidance of the Truth for their efforts and struggle. The acts of mortification serve only to affirm the proofs of arguments, not to affect real union with Allah.

Allah hath said:

وَلَوْ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَى وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا كَانُوا إِلَيْهِمْ يُشَاءُ اللَّهَ

“Even if We did send unto them angels, and the dead did speak unto them, and We gathered together all things before their very eyes, they are not the ones to believe, unless it is in Allah’s Plan.” (Q 6:111),

for the cause of belief is My will, not the evidences or mortification and He further said:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

“And to those who reject Faith, it is same to them whether thou warn them or do not warn them: They will not believe.” (Q 2:6).

The revelations of the Prophets and the ordinances of religion are means but not causes of attaining the object. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) as regards to being entrusted with Divine Commands was in the same position as Abu Jahl, but Abu Bakr, having justice attained grace, whereas Abu Jahl, having justice deprived of grace. Therefore the cause of attainment is attainment itself, not the act of seeking attainment, for if the seeker and the object were one, then the seeker is successful and when he has achieved his object, he is no more a seeker. He who has attained is at rest, whereas rest is not allowed to a seeker. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

من استوي يومًا فهو مغبون

the one whose two days are similar is at loss,”

and

استقيموا ولن تحصوا

be steadfast but not in one state.”

Here mortification has been based on cause and to affirm the argument cause is affirmed and in attainment of the place of Divinity cause has been denied.

In reference to their argument that the qualities of a horse are altered by mortification and discipline, in this respect you must know that mortification is only a means of bringing out qualities that are already latent in the horse but do not appear until he has been put through mortification and discipline. Since donkey does not have such attributes, therefore, it can never be like a horse and neither horse can be a donkey with struggle and effort and nor a donkey be a horse with mortification because it is the reality of the soul. Therefore, that thing which cannot change the nature and reality how it can be affirmed being present with the Truth.

Sahl used to be prevailed so much with mortification that he would become independent of it and while in reality he was in that state, he was unable to express it in words. He was not like those who have made it their religion to talk about mortification without practicing it. It is not possible to interpret such matters in words.

In short, amongst *Sufis* both mortification and self-discipline exist but its interpretation while in that state and dependence on it is not free of tribulations. Hence, those who deny mortification do not mean to deny its reality, but only to deny its imagination and desire its contradiction, that is to say, not to get pleased with own actions in the place of Holiness. It is so because the mortification is the act of man, while contemplation is a state in which one is kept by Allah, and until and unless there are blessings of Allah, man’s action would remain unrealistic.

By my life! Your soul is not free from your ownself, that’s why you are engaged in self adornments. You do not look towards the grace of Lord rather seek pleasure by booting your own actions. The mortification of the lovers of Allah is the work of Allah in them without any choice on their part. Their mortification is overwhelming love of Allah and melting away with its burning which is gift of the Divine.

The mortification of ignorant is their own work by their own choice and such people do not gain anything from mortification except anxiety and distress. Therefore, restrain yourself the maximum to disclose your actions and deeds and under no circumstances follow your *nafs* (lower soul), for it is your phenomenal being that veils you from the Truth. It is possible that one action may become cause of veil which may be unveiled by another action but since your whole being is a veil, how can you become worthy of subsistence until you are wholly annihilated.

As it is said that:

لان النفس كلب باع و جلد الكلب لا يطهر الا بالديباغ

“The *nafs* (lower soul) is a wild dog, and its leather does not get purity without tanning.”

It is related that Hussein b. Mansur was staying in the house of Muhammad b. al-Hussein at Kufa. Incidentally Ibrahim Khawwas also came to Kufa at that time and having heard of Mansur, went to see him. Mansur asked him, “O Ibrahim, during your forty years affiliation with Sufism, in which area of it have you excelled?”

Ibrahim answered: “I have struggled a lot in *tawakul* (trust in Allah).” Mansur said:

ضيعت عمرك في عمران باطنك ف أين انقضاء في التوحيد

“You have wasted your life in cultivating your spiritual nature: what has become of annihilation in Unification?”

i.e. *tawakul* (trust in Allah) is a term denoting your conduct towards Allah and spiritual purification is denoted in relying on Him. If a man spends his whole life in remedying his spiritual nature, he will need another life for remedying his outward nature, and his life will be lost before he has found a trace of the Truth.

Sheikh Abu Ali Siyah narrated that once he happened to see his *nafs* (lower soul) in a form resembling to his own. Some one who had seized it by its hair handed him over to him. He tied it to a tree and was about to destroy it, when it cried out, “O Abu Ali, do not be harsh. I am from the army of Allah; you cannot reduce me to naught.”

Muhammad b. Ulyan Nasvi, an eminent companion of Junaid, related that at the early stage of his novitiate, when he had become aware of the evils of the *nafs* (lower soul) and acquainted with its places of ambush, he developed hatredness for it in his heart. One day something like a young fox came forth from his throat, and Allah caused him to know that it was his *nafs*. He immediately started casting it under his feet, and at every kick which he gave, it grew bigger in size. He questioned it that how comes other things were destroyed by pain and blows but you instead had enlarged in size. It replied, “because I was created perverse, what causes pain to other things is pleasure to me, and their pleasure is my pain.”

Sheikh Abu al-Abbas Ashqani, Imam of his time, narrated that one day when he entered into his house he found a dog asleep there. He thought it had come from neighborhood and when he was about to turn him out, the dog crept under his garments and vanished.

Sheikh Abu al-Qasim Gurgani, who is the *Qutb* of time, related that he during his novitiate saw his *nafs* (lower soul) in the shape of a snake.

A Dervish related that he saw his *nafs* in the shape of a mouse and on his quest it replied:

“I am the cause of destruction for the heedless; for I urge them to wickedness and evil, and the salvation of the lovers of Allah, for if I were not in their company with my wickedness they would be arrogant by their acts and proud by their purity. When they see their steadfastness in their acts e.g. purity of hearts, inward spirituality, and devotion, they are engulfed with self-conceit and when they realize me among them, they feel free from such thoughts. ”

All these stories prove that the *nafs* (lower soul) is real in subsistence and not a mere attribute and that it has attributes which we clearly perceive.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

اعدي عدوك نفسك التي بين جانبيك

your worst enemy is your *nafs* (lower soul), which is between your two sides.”

When you have obtained the knowledge of *nafs* (lower soul), you appreciate that it can be controlled by discipline, but its essence and subsistence can not be annihilated. If the seeker rightly perceives it, he would rule over it and would feel no fear in its existence as it is said,

ان النفس كلب نباح وامسك الكلب بعد الرياضة مباح

“*nafs* (lower soul) is a barking dog, and it is legal to keep a dog which has been trained and tamed.”

Hence, the attributes of *nafs* (lower soul) can be destroyed by mortification, but its reality cannot be annihilated.

Sheikhs of Sufism have talked in length about it but I content without further prolonging it. Now I will discuss the true nature of passion and renunciation of lusts.

The True Nature of *Hawa* هوى (Passion)

You must know that according to the opinion of some, *hawa* هوى (passion) is a quality of the attributes of the *nafs* (lower soul), and to the opinion of others, *hawa* (passion) is that natural volition whereby the lower soul is controlled and directed, just as the spirit is controlled by the intelligence. Every spirit which is devoid of the ability of intelligence is imperfect. Similarly *nafs* (lower soul) which is devoid of the ability of passion is also imperfect. Therefore the imperfection of the spirit is the loss of proximity and imperfection of the *nafs* (lower soul) is entire proximity.

Everyone is lured in contrary ways by intelligence and passion. One who accepts the call of intelligence, he is celebrated with *Tawhid* (Unification) and Faith and the one who is attracted by the call of passion, falls into error and infidelity. Therefore passion is a veil for the lovers of Allah and a place of abhorrence for the seekers of the Truth and man is commanded to resist it. He has been restrained to undertake it because whosoever followed the passion got destroyed and who opposed it, he survived. Allah says:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَهَيَّئِ النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ

“And for such as had entertained the fear of standing before their Lord's (tribunal) and had restrained (their) souls from lower Desires,” (Q 79:40).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

اخوف ما اخاف علي امتي اتباع الهوي وطول الامل

“I fear of my *Ummah* the most is of they being led by their desires and keeping prolonged hopes.”

Ibn Abbas (may blessings of Allah be on him) while explaining the verse “أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ” then seest thou such a one as takes as his god his own vain desire?” (Q 45:23) said:

“Here *إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ* is referred to “إله” i.e. woe to him who made desires his god and is in its devotion day and night.”

The passion is of two kinds, i.e. desire of pleasure and lust, and desire of worldly honor and authority.

He who follows pleasure and lust, is found in taverns and mankind remains safe from his mischief, but he who desires honor and authority is a constant threat for mankind may he dwell in mosques,

churches or in populated areas. He not only himself has lost the right path but also leads others into error. We seek Allah's protection from being led by the desires. One who's every act depends on passion and finds satisfaction in following it, is far from Allah although he be with you in a mosque. But one who is free of desires and refuses to be led by them is near to Allah although he be in church.

Ibrahim Khawwas related that he heard about a monk that he for the sake of Priesthood was in the monastery for the last seventy years. It was strange for me as monastic vow term was forty years and I was forced to think that under what compulsions and state the monk had exceeded the vow. I went to see him. When I reached there and approached him, he opened a window and said to me:

"O Ibrahim, I know why you have come. I have not stayed here for seventy years because of monastic vows, neither is I a monk but I have a dog foul with passion, and I am watching it and preventing it from doing harm to others."

When I heard him saying that I exclaimed, O Lord, Thou are able to bestow righteousness on a man even though he be involved in sheer error. Then the monk addressed to me:

"O Ibrahim, for how long will you seek men? Go and seek yourself, and when you have found yourself keep watch over yourself, for passion clothes itself everyday in three hundred and sixty diverse garments of godhead and leads men astray."

In short, the Satan cannot have access in man's heart until he is not led by one's desires. When the passion originates as desires the Satan immediately takes over, adorns them and cast the man's heart with its natural affects. These are the temptations of Satan. That means, it takes its origins from man's own passion and that who commences oppression or evil is the real oppressor. When Iblis (Satan) pledged with Allah to seduce all mankind, saying

فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

by Thy Power, I will put them all in the wrong," (Q 38:82),

Allah in reply referring to this sense said,

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ

for over My servants no authority shalt thou have," (Q 15:42).

Therefore, in reality, Satan is nothing else but man's own *nafs* (lower soul) and its passions. Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

ما من احد الا وقد غلبه شيطانه الا عمر فانه غلب شيطانه

"There is no one whom his Satan (his passion) has not subdued except Umar, for he has subdued his Satan (his passion)."

Passion is mingled as an ingredient in the clay of Adam and it is a source of tranquility for him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الهوى والشهوة معجونة بطينته ادم

"passions and lust is mingled in the clay of Adam."

The renunciation of passion makes a man independent and its adoption makes him captive. Therefore, Zulaikha a rich lady, by subduing before her passions became captive, whereas Yusuf (may blessings of Allah be on him) who was a captive by renouncing the passions attained liberty.

Junaid was asked: "ما الوصل! What is union (with Allah)?"

He replied: "ترك ارتكاب الهوى to renounce passion,"

The one who wants that he is honored by the proximity of the Truth, should oppose the sensual desires because no devotion is more superior than opposing the self sensual desires which is harder to digging a mountain with nails.

Dhu al-Nun related that he saw a man flying through the air, and on asking that how had he attained that degree, he answered, "I treaded over my passion and started flying in the air."

Muhammad b. Fadl al-Balkhi said:

"I wonder at one who goes with his passion into Allah's house and visits Him. Why does not he step on his passion that he may find His proximity and have His vision?"

The most manifest quality of the *nafs* is lust. It is the name of that thing which is dispersed in all parts of the human body, and is served by all the senses. Man is entrusted to guard and is answerable for all their acts. The lust of:

- the eye is sight,
- of ear is listening,
- of nose is smell,
- of tongue is speech,
- of palate is taste,
- of body is touch, and
- of the mind is thought.

Therefore, it is incumbent on the seeker of the Truth to be a ruler and guardian of his ownself and spend his time in guarding them, so that causes of passions which develop in the senses get eliminated at their own, and to pray Allah that He inculcates in him such quality which guards his inward nature from incursion of passions and evil thoughts. One who is entrapped in the whirlpool of lust is veiled from all spiritual realities and if he tries to repel it by his own exertions, his task would be long and painful. One must safeguard against lust, so that he might attain proximity of the Truth.

It is related about Abu Ali Siyah that once when he was at a bath place and busy in shaving hair from his lower private parts, in accordance with *Sunnah*, he passed through a thought that he might amputate his penis which was the source of all lusts and afflictions. A voice in his heart whispered:

"O Abu Ali, you interfere in Our kingdom? No limb has superiority over other. If you do this, I swear by My Glory that I will put hundredfold lust and passion in your every hair."

Although man has no power over his basic structural constitution but he can get an attribute changed by Divine aid and by resigning himself to Allah's will and by his own efforts and strength. When man surrenders to His command, he is taken care of by Allah, and he gets nearer to the chastity of the Truth by protection of Allah and annihilation of the evil, than by self-mortification because it is easy to drive away flies with broom than with a stick. Hence, Divine protection is the remedy of all the evils of the *nafs* and cure of all the diseases. The man has no partnership in any of His attributes except those in which He Himself permitted and similarly interference in His kingdom is also not permissible. Unless Divine protection is predestined to a man, he cannot save himself from anything as his efforts are only rewarded by the blessing of Allah. Unless aid of Allah is not with him, his efforts are of no use. The object of all acts of efforts is, either to avert the predestination of Allah or to acquire something in spite of predestination; and both these objects are not permissible.

Once, Shibli fell sick. The physician advised him to observe abstinence. In reply Shibli said, "From what shall I abstain? From that which Allah bestows upon me, or from that which He does not bestow? It is impossible to abstain from the former, and the latter is not in my hands, as *لان المشاهد ريجاهد*" man of contemplation does not go through the rigger of mortification."

I will discuss this question carefully at another occasion.

Hakimis

They are the followers of Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Ali al-Hakim Tirmidhi, who was the *Imam* of his time and the author of many works on every branch of exoteric and esoteric sciences. His doctrine was based on *walayat* وِلايَة (saintship), and he used to explain the true nature of saintship and the degrees of the saints and the observance of the proper arrangement of their ranks. He in himself was a boundless ocean which possessed numerous marvels.

To understand his doctrine, you must know that Allah has given superiority to *Auliya* اولياء (friends) on whole of mankind. He has withdrawn them from worldly ties and delivered them from sensual temptations. He has placed each of them in a particular stage and has opened unto them the door of His mysteries. This topic is much in length, therefore, I must first briefly set forth several points of capital importance which may help in understanding the subject.

Saintship (*walayat* وِلايَة)

You must know that the principle and foundation of Sufism and *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) rests on *walayat* وِلايَة (saintship) and its authenticity. The reality of saintship is unanimously affirmed by all the Sheikhs, though everyone has expressed himself in different way. Muhammad b. Ali al-Hakim has a peculiar way of using this term particularly its manifestation to Sufism.

Walayat وِلايَة entomologically means, power to dispose and help and *wilayat* وِلايَة means circumstantial evidence. *Walayat* also means lordship; hence Allah hath said,

هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ

there, the (only) protection comes from Allah, the True One. (Q 18:44),

i.e. the unbelievers at Resurrection will seek His protection and turning unto Him would renounce their idols. And *walayat* also means love. And this is also possible that *wali* ولي may be in the form of an agent refers to an accusative case, as Allah have said,

وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى الصَّالِحِينَ

and He will choose (يَتَوَلَّى) and befriend the righteous” (Q 7:196),

for Allah does not leave His servant to his own actions and attributes, but keeps him under His protection. And *wali* ولي may be the form of *faa'il*, equivalent to an agent, with an intensive force, because man takes care to obey Allah and remains constant to fulfill the obligations that he owes to Him and refrains from His others. Thus *wali* in the active meanings is *Murid* مرید (desirer), while in the passive meaning it denotes *Murad* مراد (intended). All these meanings, whether they signify the relation of Allah to man or that of man to Allah, are allowable, for Allah may be the protector and helper of His friends as He has promised to protect His friends. He addressed to the companions of His beloved Muhammad (peace be upon him):

أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ

“Ah! Verily, the help of Allah is (always) near!” (Q 2:214),

and,

أَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ

“but those who reject Allah have no protector.” (Q 47:11).

When unbelievers have no protector and helper, it implies that Allah is the protector and helper of believers. He helps them and their intellect and perception seek proofs from the signs and symbols of nature and realities are revealed to their hearts. The signs and proofs unveil themselves to them inwardly and He helps them also in their being refrain from passions and evils of *nafs* (lower soul). He protects them from following the *Satan* and *nafs* (lower soul), and also keeps them away from the place of enmity by choosing them to His friendship, as He hath said,

يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحْيِيهِمْ

whom He will love as they will love Him,” (Q 5:54).

So they love Him because of His friendship and they turn away from mankind. This makes Him to be their *Wali* ولي (friend) and they become His *Auliya* اولياء (friends) and then He may confer on one *walayat* ولايت (guardianship) that enables him to persevere in obedience to Him, and refrain from disobeying Him and not allow any satanic thought to pass through his mind. And He may confer His *walayat* ولايت on another one in such a way that He empowers him with full authority, and makes his prayers answered and his aspirations effectual. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

رب اشعث اغبر ذي طمرين لا يعاب به لو اقسام علي الله لا يبره قسمه

“There are many men with dirty hair and clad in dust-stained old garments, which people never pay any heed but if they were to swear by Allah, Allah honors their words.”

It is a well known incident that during the rule of Caliph Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) the river Nile, in accordance with its regular routine got dry. In the time of Paganism there was a tradition to throw a maiden into the river every year as a sacrifice so the river might continue its flow. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) wrote on a piece of paper, “O water, if you have dried up at your own, be remain as but if your act is command of Allah Umar bids you to flow.” When this paper was thrown in the Nile, it resumed its course. And this was the real saintship.

My purpose in discussing saintship and affirming its reality is to make you understand that the name *wali* ولي (saint) is properly applied to those in whom the above mentioned qualities are actually present.

The matter of Umar (may blessings of Allah be on him) referred above speaks of his *hal* حال (state) which was not merely a *qal* قال (repute).

The Sheikhs of the Path have formerly written a lot on this subject. I too had their writings but unfortunately these have been lost by a friend. Therefore, now I will entrust to you the explanation given by Abu Abdullah Hakim Tirmidhi, the venerable spiritual director who is the author of the doctrine – for my own belief in him is greater – in order that much instruction may be gained, not only by yourself, but also by every seeker of the Path who may have the good fortune to read this book.

You must know that the word *wali* ولي is current among the people, and Quran and *Sunnah* (the Prophet's Traditions) are also witness and speak of it. Allah hath said:

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“Behold! verily, on the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve; (Q 10:62),

and

نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ

“We are your protectors in this life and in the Hereafter: (Q 41:38),

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

“Allah is the protector of those who have faith:“ (Q 2:257).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

ان من عباد الله لعباداً ليعبدهم الانبياء والشهداء

“Among the servants of Allah there are some whom the prophets and martyrs envy.”

He was asked: “Who are they?”

Describe them to us that perchance we may love them.

He replied:

قوم تحابوا بروح الله من غير اموال ولا اكناب وجوههم نور علي منابر من نور لا يخافون اذا خاف الناس ولا يحزنون اذا حزن الناس

“Those who love one another, through Allah’s mercy, without wealth and without seeking a livelihood: their faces are luminous, and they sit on thrones of light; they are not afraid, nor do they grieve when men grieve.”

Then he recited,

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Behold! Verily, on the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve; (Q 10:62).

Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that Allah commanded:

من اذى لي وليا فقد ائتمل محاربي

“He who hurts a *wali* (saint) has allowed himself to make war on Me.”

The object of this discussion is to make it amply clear that *auliya* (saints) of Allah are those to whom He has specially distinguished by His friendship and *walayat* (sainthood). They are His deputies in His kingdom and have been marked out to manifest His actions. They have been blessed with diverse kinds of virtues and *karamat* (miracles). Allah has purged them of their natural corruptions and has delivered them from subjugation to their lower soul and passion, and now their liberality and thoughts are only of Him and their intimacy is with Him alone. Such friends of Allah have been in the past; they are now also and shall be hereafter until the Day of Resurrection.

Allah has exalted the *Ummah* of Muhammad (peace be upon him) above all others and has promised to preserve the religion of Muhammad by Himself. Therefore, through Divine plan for the perseverance of *Shariat* as the traditional and intellectual proofs of this religion are to be found among the *Ulama*, similarly the visible proofs and evidences are to be found among the Saints and Elects of Allah.

Here we have dispute with two groups, namely, the *Mutazilites* and the rank and file of the *Hashwiyya* sect. The *Mutazilites* deny the superiority of any Muslim over other Muslim. But if you deny the peculiarity of a saint, then particularization of the Prophets is also denied and this is infidelity. As regards to the common *Hashwiyya*, they agree on the peculiarity of the saints, but assert that such elects no longer exist, although they did exist in the past. To deny either past or future is the denial of both since one side of denial is no better than another.

Allah has kept the prophetic evidence alive to the present day, and has made the Saints the means whereby it is manifested, in order that the signs of the Truth and the proof of Muhammad's veracity may continue to be clearly seen. He has made the Saints ruler of the universe and now they have become entirely devoted to His business, and have ceased to follow their sensual affections. Through their blessing the rain falls from heaven, and through the purity of their lives the plants spring up from the earth, and through their spiritual influence the Muslims gain victories over the unbelievers.

Among them there are four thousand who remain hidden from mankind and even do not recognize each other and are not aware of the excellence of their states. They under all circumstances remain hidden from themselves and from mankind. The traditions and the sayings of the Saints are evidence and proclaim the truth to this fact, and I myself (Allah be praised!) have had ocular experience of this matter.

But of those who have absolute power to loose and bind and the chosen of the Divine Court are:

- *Qutb* قطب or *Ghuth* غوث one
- *Naqba* نقباء three
- *Autad* اوتاد four
- *Abrar* ابرار seven
- *Abdal* ابدال forty
- *Akhyar* اخیار three hundred

All of them know each other and cannot act save by mutual consent. The traditions are evident to this fact and *Sunnis* (orthodox Muslims) agree on their validity. The further detail is not the object here.

Here the people may object on that they know each other to be saints, therefore if such is the case, they must be secure as to their fate in the next world. It is absurd to suppose that knowledge of saintship involves peace and security. It is a recognized fact that a true believer may have knowledge of his faith and yet not be secure, similarly why should not the same hold good to a saint who has knowledge of his saintship? This is also possible that Allah, because of the state of spiritual soundness, refraining from disobedience and detestation of *nafs* (lower soul), cause the saint to know his security and peace in regard to the life of next world. The Sheikhs differ on this question for the reason which I have explained. About those four thousands saints who remain hidden, some have the view that they do not know about their sainthood but some have the contrary view. Similar view is held by the theologians also.

Abu Ishaq Isfrahani and some of the ancients hold that a saint is ignorant of his saintship, while Abu Bake b. Furaq and others among the ancients hold that he is conscious of his sainthood. I say what loss or evil a saint suffers by knowing his own state. Such people think that if one knows about his sainthood he might get indulged into self-conceit and arrogance. I answer that Divine protection is a necessary condition of saintship, and one who is protected from evil cannot fall into self-conceit. It is an absurd and bizarre notion that a saint to whom extraordinary *karamat* (miracles) are continually vouchsafed, does not know himself to be a saint or these *karamat* to be miracles.

Some people are the followers of later and some of former, but their opinion is of no account. The *Mutazilites* totally deny peculiarity and miracles, which constitute the essence of saintship. They affirm that all Muslims when they are obedient to Allah are *auliya* اولياء (friends) of Him. And that anyone who fulfils the ordinances of the faith and denies the attributes and vision of Allah and have faith that believers to be eternally damned in Hell and acknowledges only such obligations as are imposed by reason, without regard to Revelation of Divine Books and arrival of Prophets, is a *wali* (friend). No doubt people also acknowledge him *wali*, but *wali* (friend) of *Satan*.

The *Mutazilites* also maintain that, if saintship involves miracles, all believers must have miracles vouchsafed to them, as both are at par in faith and when they share the fundamental (faith) they must

likewise share in what is derivative. They further maintain that miracles may be vouchsafed both to believers and to infidels, e.g. when anyone is hungry on a journey, suddenly he finds some host or if he is fatigued may find some ride. If it were possible, they add, for anyone to traverse a great distance in one night, the Prophet (peace be upon him) during his travel of Mecca must have been that man to avail the facility, although Allah says,

وَيَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا بِالْغَيْهِ إِلَّا يَشِقُّ الْإِنْفُسَ

and they carry your heavy loads to lands that you could not (otherwise) reach except with souls distressed:” (Q 16:7).

But I say that their arguments are worthless, for Allah said,

مُبِحَّانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَىٰ

Glory to (Allah) Who did take His Servant for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque,” (Q 17:1).

This shows that miracles are exceptional, not common but it would have been a common instance if all the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been miraculously conveyed to Mecca, which would have destroyed all the principles of faith in the Unseen. Faith is a general term, applicable to both righteous and wicked alike, whereas saintship is a distinctive state. Where Allah issued a common decree, there He included His Prophet with the companions to share their loads but when the time for special decree came, Allah conveyed him in one night from Mecca to Jerusalem and thence to a space of two bow-lengths from the Divine presence and showed to His beloved each and every nook and corner of the Universe and when Prophet (peace be upon him) returned ere the night was far spent.

In short, the command of faith implies on commons and command of *karamat* (miracles) imply on elects. Again, to deny special privileges is manifestly unreasonable, as in the king’s court there are chamberlains, janitors, grooms, and viziers, who being royal servants are all equal, but everyone is distinguished with a different rank. Similarly, all the believers are equal in respect of their faith, but some are obedient, some wise, some pious, and some ignorant i.e. to deny a quality is denial of the object.

In respect to the true meanings of *walayat* (saintship) there are many hints and sayings of *Sufi* Sheikhs. Now I will bring together as many of these selected hints and sayings as possible.

Abu Ali Jurjani says:

الولي هو الفاني في حاله الباقي في مشاهدته الحق لم يكن له عن نفسه اخبار ولا مع غير الله قرار

“The wali (saint) is one who is annihilated in his own state and subsistent in the contemplation of the Truth. It is beyond him to talk anything concerning himself, or gain rest with anyone except Allah,”

The reason is that to talk about self is to disseminate the knowledge of own state and when his states are annihilated he cannot tell anything about himself. Besides, to communicate one’s hidden state to another is to reveal the secret of the Beloved, which cannot be revealed before others. Moreover, when in contemplation it is impossible to regard aught and while under such state, how can he be at rest with mankind?

Junaid said:

من صفة الولي ان لا يكون له خوف لان الخوف ترقب مكروه يجعل في المستقبل او انتظار محبوب يفوت في المستأنف والولي ابن وقته ليس له مستقبل

فخاف شيئا, و كما لا خوف له لا رجاء له, لان الرجاء انتظار محبوب يحصل او مكروه يكشف وذلك في الثاني من الوقت.

و كذلك لا يحزن لان الحزن من حزنه الوقت, من كان في ضياء الرضا وروضة الموافقة فابن يكون له حزن كما

“The saint is one who has no fear because fear is the expectation either of some future calamity or of the eventual loss of some object of desire or fear to lose what is already with him. The saint is a time-server; he has no fear that anything would frighten him.

As the saint has no fear so he has no hope, since hope is the expectation either of gaining an object of desire at some future time or of being relieved from a misfortune.

He does not have any grief, because it arises from the rigor of time, One who occupies the place of satisfaction or is in conformity with the Divine decree, how can he grieve?”

Allah says,

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Behold! verily, on the friends of Allah there is no fear, Nor shall they grieve; (Q 10:62).

The common people have a notion that as the saint feels neither fear nor hope nor grief, he must be in peace. Whereas, he does not have peace also, for security arises from not seeing that which is hidden, and from turning ones back on time. This characteristic is held by those who pay no regard to their humanity and are not contented with attributes. Fear and hope and security and grief all refer to the interests of the *nafs* (lower soul), and when these are annihilated satisfaction (*rida*) becomes an attribute of man, and when satisfaction has been attained his states become steadfast in vision of the Truth, and he turns away from all other states. Then *walayat* (saintship) is revealed to *wali* and is manifested to him inwardly.

Abu Uthman Maghrabi says:

الولي قد يكون مشهوراً ولا يكون مفتوناً

“The saint is sometimes celebrated but he does not become captive of the world,”

And another says:

الولي قد يكون مستوراً ولا يكون مشهوراً

“The saint is hidden, but he is not celebrated.”

Wali refrains from celebration because it may leads to sedition. Abu Uthman considers it legal, subject to that it might not lead to sedition because seduction consists in falsehood. *Wali* is veracious in his *walayat* (saintship), then how word of *walayat* can be applicable on a liar. It is impossible for a liar to perform *karamat* (miracles) as its performance would become cause of sedition which follows that the saint is incapable of being seduced.

These two sayings refer to the controversy whether the saint knows himself to be such. If he knows, he is celebrated, and if he does not know, he is fascinated but the explanation of this is tedious and lengthy.

Ibrahim b. Adham asked a man whether he desired to be one of Allah’s saints, and on his affirmed reply he said:

لا ترغب في شيء من الدنيا والآخرة وفرغ نفسك لله واقبل بوجهك عليه

“Do not incline to anything of this or the next world, and devote yourself and turn to Allah entirely and whole heartedly.”

Free yourself from the desire of this or the next world because for the sake of that which is transitory, and in case of next world which is everlasting, you are turning away from Allah. Because that which is transitory perishes and its renunciation becomes naught, but that which is everlasting cannot perish, hence its renunciation also is imperishable, therefore, free yourself from both the worlds and prepare yourself for the friendship of the Truth. Do not let this and the next world to sneak in your heart, turn

whole heartedly to Allah. Once you acquire these qualities, *walayat* (saintship), will not be far off from you.

On a question that who was a saint, Abu Yazid replied:

الولي هو الصابر تحت الامر والنهي

“*Wali* is that who remains patient to the command and prohibition of Allah,”

because the more a man loves Allah the more does his heart revere to what He commands and the farther is his body from what He forbids.

Abu Yazid narrated that once he was told of a saint living in another town. He went to see him and when he arrived at his mosque, incidentally the saint also came forth from his chamber and spat on the floor of the mosque. He turned back without saluting him, and said to himself:

“A saint must keep the *Shariat* (religious law) in order that Allah may protect him in his spiritual state. Had this man been a saint his respect for the mosque would have prevented him from spitting on its floor, or Allah would have preserved him from committing such act.”

Abu Yazid further narrated that the same night he dreamed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him,

“O Abu Yazid, the blessing of that which you have done has come to you.”

The next day he attained the degree which we behold.

A man who came to visit Sheikh Abu Said entered the mosque with his left foot foremost. The Sheikh gave orders that he should be dismissed, saying, “He who does not know how to enter the house of the Beloved is not suitable for us.”

A group of heretics who have adopted Sufism assert that service (devotion) of Allah is necessary only while one is asserting for saintship, but that after one has become a saint service is annulled. This is clearly a deviation as there is no *maqam* (station) on the way to the Truth where devotion or any obligation of service is abolished. I will explain this matter fully in its proper place.

Miracles (*Karamat* كرامات)

You must know that *Karamat* كرامات (miracles) may be vouchsafed to a saint so long as he does not violate the obligations of the *Shariat* (religious law). The orthodox Muslims agree on this point, as intellectually it is also not impossible, because such things are predestined by Allah, and their manifestation does not contradict any principle of the *Shariat*, nor is it disgusting to the mind to conceive them.

A *karamat* كرامت (miracle) is a sign of saint’s veracity, and it cannot be manifested to an imposter except as a sign that his pretensions are false. It is an extraordinary act performed while *wali* ولي (saint) is still subject to religious obligations, and whoever is able, through knowledge given to him by Allah, to distinguish by the method of deduction what is true from what is false, he is also a *wali* (saint).

A group of *Sunnis* maintain that *karamat* كرامات (Miracles) are established, but not to the degree of an evidentiary *Mujiza* معجزة (miracle), for example, that prayers may be answered or fulfillment of some desire contrary to custom, and so forth.

We ask, after all what’s wrong in it if a true saint while he remains under religious obligations perform an extraordinary act? If they say that *Karamat* كرامت (Miracle) is not a type of that which is predestined by Allah, this is erroneous; and if they say that it is a type of that which is predestined, but its

performance by a true *wali* (saint) involves the annulment of prophesy and the denial of special privileges to the prophets, this assertion is also inadmissible, since the *Wali* (saint) is distinguished by *karamat* (miracles) and the prophet by evidentiary *Mujizat* معجزات (miracles). *Mujiza* معجزه (miracle) itself does not render one powerless, rather its acquisition make one powerless. It is conditional with the claim of Prophethood, therefore, *Mujizat* (miracles) are particularized with Prophets and *karamat* كرامات (miracles) with *auliya* اولياء (saints).

Thus, the saint is a saint and the prophet is a prophet, there is no similarity between them to which one should guard against. It should be clear that the prominence of the prophets depends on their exalted rank and on their being preserved from the corruption of sin, not on miracles or evidentiary miracles of acts which violate custom. And they are equal so far as they all have the power of working such miracles, but some are superior to others in degree and excellence.

As it has been established that inspite of the equality in performance of miracles the Prophets have excellence over one another, similarly why *karamat* (miracles) which violate customs vouchsafed also to the saints, but of lesser degree as compared to Prophets is not lawful. As, in the case of prophet, *mujizat* (miracles) do not cause one of them to be more exalted or more privileged than another, so, in the case of the saints, a similar act does not causes a saint to be more privileged than a prophet, i.e. the saints cannot be like prophets. This should be a sufficient argument for a sensible person to keep him away from any doubt.

Now, if somebody supposes that when the *karamat* (miracles) of a saint are extraordinary acts which violate custom, should he not claim to be a prophet? I reply that this is impossible, because saintship involves veracity, and he who tells a falsehood is not a saint. Moreover, a saint who pretends to prophesy casts an imputation on (the genuineness of) evidentiary miracles, which is infidelity. *Karamat* (miracle) is vouchsafed only to a pious believer, and falsehood is not obedience, rather sinfulness. Therefore, *karamat* (miracle) of the saint is a proof and evidence of the Prophethood of a Prophet. There is no difficulty in reconciling between *mujiza* (miracle) and *karamat* (miracle). The Prophet establishes his prophesy by establishing the reality of evidentiary miracles, while the *wali* (saint), by the *karamat* (miracles) which he performs, establishes both the prophecy of the Prophet and his own saintship. Therefore, the veracious saints say the same thing as the veracious prophet and his *karamat* (miracles) are with the evidentiary miracles of the Prophet. A believer, seeing the *karamat* (miracles) of a saint, has more faith in the veracity of the prophet, not that it puts him in any doubt as he finds no contradiction between the claims made by them and claim of one is an evidence for other's claim. Therefore, in law, when a number of heirs are agreed in their claim, if one of them establishes his claim the claim of the others is established but not so if their claims are contradictory. Hence, prophet adduces evidentiary miracles as evidence that his prophecy is genuine, and a saint confirms his claim, therefore, it is impossible that any difficulty should arise.

Difference between *Mujiza* معجزه and *Karamat* كرامت

As it has been proved that *mujizat* معجزات (miracles) and *Karamat* كرامات (miracles) can not be wrought by an imposter, it becomes necessary to distinguish more clearly between them. The *mujiza* involves publicity and beauty of *karamat* lies in its secrecy, because the benefit of *mujiza* معجزه reaches to others, while the fruition of *karamat* كرامت is peculiar to the performer. Again, the performer of *mujiza* is quite sure of his miracle, whereas the performer of the *karamat* cannot be sure whether he has really performed a *karamat* or is deceived insensibly. He who perform *mujiza* has authority over the *Shariat* (Religious law) and in arranging it he denies or affirms, as Allah commands him. On the other hand, he who performs *karamat* has no choice but to resign himself (to Allah's will) and to accept the ordinances that are laid upon him, because the *karamat* of a saint is never in anyway incompatible with the *Shariat* of the prophet.

It may be said that if miracle is the proof of the prophet's veracity, then it may not be lawful for others as it would become ordinary events; therefore your proof of the reality of *mujizat* annuls your argument establishing the reality of *karamat*. I in reply say that it is not the case. The *karamat* of a saint is identical with, and displays the same evidence as the *mujiza* of a prophet. The exclusivity of *mujiza* exhibited in one instance does not impair the same in the other instance. When the infidels were to put Khubaib (may Allah be pleased with him) on the gallows at Mecca, the Prophet (peace be upon him) seated in the mosque at Medina was seeing and telling to the companions what was going on with Khubaib. Allah also lifted the veils from the eyes of Khubaib, so that he saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) and saluted him, and Allah caused the Prophet (peace be upon him) to hear his salutation, and Khubaib to hear the Prophet's answer. The Prophet prayed for Khubaib and his face turned towards *Qibla*.

Now, seeing of Khubaib by Prophet (peace be upon him) from Medina while he was at Mecca, was an act of violation of custom and an extraordinary act on his part and to see an hidden is a violation to established customs and there is no difference between absence in time and absence in space. Therefore, to see Prophet (peace be upon him) by Khubaib (may Allah be pleased with him) from such a distance was a *karamat* of absence in space and the *karamat* of later were wrought by those who were absent from the Apostle in time. This is a clear distinction and a manifest proof that *karamat* cannot possibly be in contradiction with *mujiza* (miracle performed by a prophet). *Karamat* is nothing but testimony to the truth of one who has performed a *mujiza*, and they are not vouchsafed except to a pious believer who bears such testimony. *Karamat* of Muslims are an extraordinary *mujizat* (miracles) of the Prophet (peace be upon him), for as his *Shariat* is permanent so must his proof also be permanent. Therefore, the saints are witness to the truth of the Prophet's mission, and it is impossible that a *karamat* should be wrought by an unbeliever.

Ibrahim Khawwas related that once as per his usual state of detachment from worldly things went into solitude in wilderness. After he had gone for some distance a man appeared and made a plea for his companionship. When he looked at him, he felt conscious of a feeling of revulsion which he failed to reconcile. In the mean time that man spoke out and said, "O Ibrahim, do not be vexed. I am a Christian monk, and have come from the confines of Rome in the hope of being thy companion." When Ibrahim came to know that he was an unbeliever, he regained his composure, and felt comfortable to take him as his companion and to fulfill his obligations towards him. He told the monk that he had no eatables with him and feared that their absence might hurt the monk in that wilderness. The monk said, "O Ibrahim, your fame in the world is so great, and you are still concerned about bread and butter?" Ibrahim wondered at his frankness. After spending seven days in the wilderness they were overtaken by thirst. The monk stopped and said, "O Ibrahim, they trumpet your praise throughout the world, now let me see what you possess. The reason for being impatient is that I have been over taken by thirst and can not endure it any more." Ibrahim laid his head on the earth and prayed, "O Lord, do not disgrace me as he although unbeliever, still thought good of me and whatever he has perceived of me, accomplish that." When he raised his head he saw a dish with two loaves of bread and two cups of water. They ate that feast and continued on their way. After another seven days had passed Ibrahim resolved to test the monk ere he could again put him to the proof and said to him, "O monk, now it is your turn. Let me see the fruits of your mortification." The monk laid his head on the ground and muttered something. Immediately a dish appeared containing four loaves and four cups of water. Ibrahim was amazed and grieved, and got despaired to his state and made up his mind that since the feast had appeared for the sake of an unbeliever, therefore, he would not eat anything from it. The monk bade Ibrahim to eat but he refused and said, "You are not worthy of *karamat*, and it is not in harmony with your spiritual condition. I am amazed about you, if I regard it as *karamat*, it is not vouchsafed to unbelievers and if I regard it as a contribution from thee, I must suspect thee of being an imposter." The monk said,

"O Ibrahim! Eat, and I give you joy of two things. Firstly, I convert to Islam and say

أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له وأشهد أن محمداً عبده ورسوله

and secondly, of the great honor in which you are held by Allah."

Ibrahim asked him that how it was so?

He said:

“I had no miraculous powers, but my shame on account of you made me lay my head on the ground and beg Allah to give me two loaves, and two cups of water if the religion of Muhammad (peace be upon him) is true, and two more loaves and cups if Ibrahim Khawwas is one of Thy saints. And when I lifted my head I found this tray before me.”

Then Ibrahim had that food, and the monk rose to eminence in Islam. This *karamat* through saint is identical with the evidentiary miracles which are wrought by Prophets and it is a rare event that in absence Prophet shows miracles to others or in the presence of *wali*, other than him is benefited from the *karamat*.

In fact, the one who has attained accomplishment in sainthood cannot be recognized by anyone except the beginner of this path. That monk was like Pharaoh's magicians one of the hidden (saints). Ibrahim confirmed the Prophet's power to violate custom, and the monk also desired to witness the truthfulness of Prophethood and excellence of sainthood and Allah in His Eternal Providence fulfilled his purpose. Therefore, difference between *miracle* and *karamat* is evident. This discussion is very lengthy, for which space in this book does not permit. The manifestation of *karamat* (miracles) to the saints is another *karamat*, as they ought to be kept secret, not intentionally reveal.

My Sheikh used to say that if a saint reveals his saintship and claims to be a saint, the soundness of his spiritual state is not impaired thereby, but if he takes pains to obtain publicity he is led astray by self conceit.

Performance of Miracles by Pretenders to Godhead

The Sheikhs of Sufism and all orthodox Muslims are unanimous that an extraordinary act resembling a prophetic miracle may be performed by an unbeliever, but such act would have no resemblance with miracle and *karamat* and there would be no doubt to believe the performer as an imposter, rather his act would itself be evidence to his falsehood. Thus, for example, Pharaoh lived four hundred years without even once fell sick and when he climbed any high ground the water followed him, and stopped when he stopped, and moved when he moved, yet, no intelligent man has any doubt that he was a liar in his claim to godhead and was an imposter, for they acknowledge that Allah is not incarnate and composite. Had there been more extraordinary acts taken place through Pharaoh still they would have had no doubt to deny his false claim. The wondrous acts of *Shaddad*, the lord of *Iram* and Nimrod should also be judged with the same analogy.

Similarly, we are told on trustworthy authority of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that in the last days *Dajjal* will appear and claim godhead, and two mountains, one on his left and other on his right, will move with him. The mountain on his right will be the place of felicity, and the mountain on his left will be the place of torment and he will call the people to take him as their god and punish those who will refuse to join him. Allah because of his infidelity will kill people and then will give life to them. His command will be complied with all over the world. But though he should perform a hundredfold amount of such extraordinary acts, no intelligent person would doubt the falsity of his claim, for neither Allah sits on an ass and nor any sort of change can be attributed to Him. Such things fall under the principle of Divine deception.

Again, this is also possible that one who pretends to be a prophet may perform an extraordinary act but his act itself will be evidence to his falsehood, just as a similar act performed by a true Prophet proves him genuine. But no such act can be performed if there be any possibility of doubt or any difficulty in distinguishing the true claimant from the imposter, for in that case the principle of allegiance would be nullified

Moreover it is possible, that a pretender to saintship may perform something of the same kind as *karamat*, and which is in accord with *Shariat* although his own conduct is not praiseworthy. By that

miraculous act he confirms the truth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and manifests the grace of Allah vouchsafed to him and does not attribute the act in question to his own power. One who is truthful in his faith without any *karamat*, he according to his belief, will be recognized a *wali* in all his states, although his acts might not be according to belief. The apparent fault of his acts does not deny him from his sainthood, as it does not deny him from his faith. In fact, *karamat* and sainthood are Divine gifts, not things acquired by man. The human efforts and actions cannot become the cause of Divine guidance.

I have already mentioned that the saints are not preserved from sin, and neither is it a prerequisite to become a saint, but they are protected from any evil that involves the denial of their sainthood. According to the doctrine of Muhammad b. Ali Hakim, the sainthood can loose hand but not due to sin. Junaid, Hasan Nuri, Harith Muhasibi and other mystics are also of the same opinion. But those who attach importance to conduct like Sahl b. Abdullah, Abu Suleiman Durani, Abu Hamdun Qassar and others, maintain that sainthood involves unceasing obedience, and one is disposed off from the sainthood if he commits a grievous sin.

As I have mentioned before, there is a consensus of opinion among the Muslims that by committing a great sin one does not become unbeliever and no sainthood is better than another. Therefore, since the sainthood of *marifat* (knowledge of Allah), which is the foundation of all nobility and excellence, is not lost due to sin or disobedience, then how is it possible that *walayat* of lesser magnitude should disappear because of sin. The controversy among the Sheikhs on this matter has run to great, and I do not intend to record it here. The most important thing is that you should know with certainty that in what state the miraculous grace is manifested to the saint; in sobriety or intoxication, in rapture or composure. I have already explained the meaning of intoxication and sobriety in my account of the doctrine of Abu Yazid.

Abu Yazid, Dhu al-Nun, Muhammad b. Khafif, Hussein b. Mansur, Yahya b. Maud Razi and one of the groups of Sufism hold that *karamat* (miracles) are not vouchsafed to a saint except when he is in the state of intoxication, whereas the miracles of the prophets are wrought in the state of sobriety. Hence, according to their doctrine, this is the distinction between miracle and *karamat*. Since *Karamat* is vouchsafed to *wali* (saint) when he is enraptured and he does not make any claim for his *karamat*, while the miracle is vouchsafed to Prophet in the state of sobriety, and challenges the people to rival what he has done. Moreover, the prophet has the choice to manifest or conceal his extraordinary powers where and whenever he desires, but the saints have no such choice, as sometimes a *karamat* is not granted to them when they desire it, and sometimes it is bestowed when they do not desire it; for the saint is not a preacher, that his attributes should be subsistent, but he is hidden and his state is praised with annihilated attributes.

Therefore, the prophet is a man of *Sharia* (law) and the saint is a man of inwardly feeling. Accordingly, a *karamat* will not be manifested to a saint unless he is in a state of bewilderment and absence from himself, and fully subjugated to Divine Command. And when he is under such state, his every act is guided by the Truth, for the reformation of humanity attributes is needed to those who remain busy in amusement, or in heedlessness or who are independent of Allah. The Prophets are never busy in amusement, or in a state of heedlessness, and, there is none other than the Prophets who are the friends of Allah in its most true sense. Therefore, instead of steadfastness and fixity, they are left with anxiety and unstable state. The saints while in their state of humanity are veiled, but when the veil is lifted they are bewildered and amazed though realizing the bounties of Allah and *karamat* cannot be manifested except in the state of *kashf* (revelation) because this is the degree of proximity; and here for him gold and stone stand equal and valueless. And amongst the human beings, this state is only endowed to Prophets, and beside them if it is ever endowed to a person, it is temporary and in the state of intoxication. Thus, one day, Haritha (may Allah be pleased with him) while cut off from this world, was revealed the next world to him and he said,

عرفت نفسي عن الدنيا فاستوي عندي حجرها وزهبتها وفضتها ومدنها

I have got the knowledge of my *nafs* (lower soul) in relation to the world, so that its stones, gold, silver and its clay are all one and the same to me.” Next day he was seen working in a date orchard and on

being asked what he was doing, he said that he was busy in earning his livelihood, as there was no remedy without that. His earlier moments were bearer of his that state and his present moments were suitable for this act.

Thus, the state of *sahw* صحو (sobriety) is common with the saints, and *sukr* سكر (intoxication) is the state of Prophets and when the saints return to themselves, they consider themselves as ordinary men, and when they are absent from themselves and attentive to the Truth, their *sukr* (intoxication) is decent, and their readiness and decency is only for Allah and the whole universe becomes like gold unto them. Shibli says,

ذهب أينما ذهبنا ودر حيث درنا وفضة في الفضاء

gold wherever we go, and pearl wherever we turn, and silver in the atmosphere.”

Imam Abu al-Qasim Qushayri said that once he asked Tabrani about the beginning of his spiritual experience. He told him that on one occasion he needed a stone. Whichever stone he picked up from the river-bed at Sarkhas that would turn into a gem and he threw them all away. This was because stones and gems were the same to him or rather gems were of less value since he had no desire for them.

While I was at Sarkhas, Khawaja Imam Hazami related a tale of his experience to me which is as follow:

In my boyhood I went to a place to get mulberry leaves for silkworms. I climbed a tree and started shaking its branches. Meanwhile, Sheikh Abu al-Fadl b. al-Hasan passed by, but he did not see me, and I had no doubt that he was absent from himself and was wholeheartedly present with Allah. Suddenly he raised his head and spoke with the boldness of intimacy, “O Lord, it is more than a year since Thou hast not given me a small piece of silver that I might have my hair cut. Is this the way to treat Thy friends?”

Imam Hazami said that no sooner had he spoken I saw whole the tree turned to gold. Seeing this, Sheikh Abu al-Fadl exclaimed:

“How strange, even my least hint has become cause of petition; it is against etiquettes to talk frankly in Thy Court.”

Once, Shibli threw four hundred dinars into the Tigris. When asked what he had done, he replied, “Stones are to be thrown in the water.” They suggested that he might have distributed them among the people. Shibli replied, “Glory to Allah! What plea can I urge before Him if I remove the veil from my own heart only to place it on the hearts of my brother Muslims? It is against the norms of the religion to consider others lesser than oneself.”

All these relate to the state of intoxication, which I have already explained and the object here is only to establish the validity of *karamat*.

On the other hand, Junaid, and Abu al-Abbas Sayyari, Abu Bakr Wasti and Muhammad b. Ali Tirmidhi, the author of the doctrine, hold that *karamat* كرامات (miracles) are manifested in the state of sobriety (*sahw* صحو) and composure (*tamkin* تمكين), not in the state of intoxication (*sukr* سكر). They argue that saints of Allah are the governors of His kingdom and the overseers of the universe, which Allah has committed absolutely to their charge, therefore their judgments must be soundest of all, and their hearts are most tenderly disposed of towards Allah’s creature, for they have already attained their objective. The states of agitation (*talwin* تلوين) and intoxication are the marks of the beginning and when they attain their object agitation is transmuted into composure (*tamkin*) and it is only then that they are blessed with *walayat* (sainthood) and their *Karamat* are genuine.

It is well known among *Sufis* that every night the *Autad* اوتاد must go round the whole universe. If there should be any place on which their eyes do not fall and some imperfection appears there, they must

then inform the *Qutb* قطب, in order that he may fix his attention on the weak spot, and that by his blessing the imperfection may be removed.

As regards to claim that gold and dust are same to the saint, this is a degree of deficiency in want of *Marifat* (knowledge of Allah) and intoxication and it carries no excellence. More excellent is the man of true sight and sound perception, to whom gold is gold and dust is dust, but he must be aware of their evils and blemishes and should say,

ياصفراءيابيضاءغريغري

O gold! O silver! beguile some one else, for I am aware of your corruptness.”

He who sees the corruptness of gold and silver perceives them to be a veil, and Allah will reward him for having renounced them. But he to whom gold is even as dust, how can he influence someone to renounce dust.

Haritha (may Allah be pleased with him), being in state of intoxication, declared stones and gold were alike to him, but Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), being in state of sobriety, perceived the evil of laying hands on worldly wealth, and knew that Allah would reward him for rejecting it. Therefore he had renounced it to such an extent that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him what he had left for his family, he answered, “Allah and His Prophet.”

Abu Bakr Warraq Tirmidhi related the following:

One day Muhammad b. Ali (al-Hakim) said that he would take me somewhere. I replied that it was for the Sheikh to command. Soon after we set out and reached in a jungle. I saw there a golden throne placed under a green tree on the bank of a fountain. A person clad in beautiful raiment was seated on the throne. When Muhammad b. Ali approached him, he saluted Ali. The man got up from his seat and bade Muhammad b. Ali to sit with him on the throne. After a while, people came from every side until forty were gathered. Then the man waved his hand towards the sky, and suddenly food appeared which all of us feasted. Then Muhammad b. Ali asked a question from him, and he in reply made a long discourse of which I did not understand a single word. After some time the Sheikh begged leave and took his departure, saying to me: “Lucky, you have been blessed for ever.” On our return to Tirmidh, I asked him what was that place and who was that man. He told me that the place was Jungle of the Israelites and the man was the *Qutb* on whom the order of the universe depends. I asked him, O Sheikh how did we reach the Desert of Israelites from Tirmidh in such a brief time? He answered, “O Abu Bakr, it is thy business to arrive, not ask questions and seek about state.”

This is a mark of sanity, and not of intoxication.

Now I round up this discussion and mention some miracles and stories of *Sufis* as proofs, so that seekers may gain knowledge, *Ulama* have comfort, Researchers have some assets and people are assured in their faith so that no doubt is left in their mind.

Proofs and Arguments on *Karamat* كرامات (Miracles)

Since the reality of *Karamat* كرامات (miracles) have been established by rational and logical arguments, it will be appropriate now to verify their credibility though traditional evidences. A lot has been mentioned in the Hadith (Traditions of Prophet) and Quran and *Sunnah* also proclaims the manifestations of *Karamat* (miracles) and extraordinary acts wrought by *auliya* اولياء (saints) and their denial is to refute the whole manifestations of Quran. For example Allah hath said:

وَوَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَى

“And We gave you the shade of clouds and sent down to you *Manna* and quails,” (Q 2:57).

The clouds used to shade them and every night *Manna* and quails were descended on them. If any skeptic should assert that this was an evidentiary miracle of Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him), I raise no objection, because we also say the same that all the miracles of the saints are as evidentiary miracles of Muhammad (peace be upon him). And if someone says that these *Karamat* (miracles) were wrought in the absence, how can these be miracles of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) because his miracles were only those which were manifested in his life time. In reply to this I say that when Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him) was away from his people and went to Mount Sinai, the miracle of *Manna* and quails remained there even in his absence, therefore, for miracle there is no difference between being absent in time and being absent in space. In case of Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him) if the manifestation of miracle can be right in his absence, then the same principle holds good in the case of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that manifestation of miracle is also right being absent in space.

Allah has mentioned about the miracle of Asif b. Barkhia as when Suleman (may blessings of Allah be on him) desired to get the throne of Bilqis before her arrival to him. Allah wanted to reveal the excellence of Asif and by manifestation of Asif's *karamat* He showed the people of the time that manifestation of *karamat* by saints was admissible. Suleman (may blessings of Allah be on him) asked that who could get the throne of Bilqis before her arrival there. In the words of Quran,

قَالَ عَفْرَيْتُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ

said an *Ifrit*, (powerful Jinn) of the Jinn, `I will bring it to thee before thou rise from thy council:’ (Q 27:39).

Suleman (may blessings of Allah be on him) said “No”, and desired the throne to be brought earlier than that. Asif said (in the words of Quran),

أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ

I will bring it to thee within the twinkling of any eye” (Q 27:40).

From this proposal neither Suleman (may blessings of Allah be on him) got astonished nor did he refuse as he did not see it an impossible act. It cannot be called a *mujiza* معجزة (miracle) as Asif was not a Prophet, and had it been a *mujiza*, it must have been wrought by Suleman (may blessings of Allah be on him), therefore it was a *karamat* كرامت (miracle).

Besides, Allah has mentioned in the Quran about Mary (may blessings of Allah be on her) that whenever Zakariya (may blessings of Allah be on him) went into her chamber he found winter fruits in summer and summer fruits in winter, so that he asked Mary (Verse of Quran):

أَتَىٰ لَكَ هَذَا

whence (comes) this to you?”

She answered

وَمِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ

from Allah.” (Q 3:37).

Everyone has a unanimous opinion that Mary was not a Prophet. And Allah also mentioned about her in clear words that,

وَهَرِّي إِلَيْكَ بِجِدْعِ النَّخْلِ وَسَاتِرَ عَلَيْكَ رُمْطًا حَرِيًّا

and shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm tree; it will let fall fresh ripe dates upon thee. (Q 19:25).

Likewise, we have the story of the men of the cave that how their dog spoke to them, their long slumber and changing sides during sleep. Allah said,

وَنُقَلِّبُ لَهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَكَلَّبْنَاهُمْ نَاجِئَهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ

and We turned them on their right and on their left sides: their dog stretching forth his two forelegs on the threshold:” (Q 18:18).

All these were extraordinary acts, and since they certainly were not *mujizat*, they must have been *karamat*. And this is also permissible that such *karamat* may be the answering of prayers i.e. through the accomplishment of wishes conceived by one who is subject to *Shariat* or the traversing of great distance in a short time, or the appearance of food from an unexpected place, or reading the thoughts of others, etc.

Once, the Companions of the Prophet requested him to relate to them some marvelous tale of the adherents of the ancient Prophets. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

In the olden days three persons were going together somewhere. When night fell they took shelter in a cave, and while they were asleep a rock fell from the mountain and blocked the mouth of the cave. All three were shocked and apprehended that their escape was impossible. They decided to implore Allah through presenting their best ever deeds before Him as intercessor. The first of them began:

“My father and mother were alive and I had no worldly goods excepts one goat, whose milk I used to give to them and every day I used to gather a bundle of firewood from the jungle and sell it and spend the money in providing food to ourselves. One night I returned home late, and before I could milk the goat and soak their bread in the milk they fell asleep. I without having eaten anything held the bowl in my hand and stood next to their feet, until morning, when they awoke and had their food and I also felt relieved. After this he prayed, `O Lord, if I speak the truth, send us deliverance and come to our aid!”

The Apostle (peace be upon him) said that thereupon the rock moved a little and a gap appeared. The second man said:

“I had a beautiful cousin, with whom I was deeply in love, but she would not pay any heed to my demand. One day I sent to her a hundred and twenty dinars with a promise that she should keep the money if she spent a night with me. When she came, my heart was overtaken by the fear of Allah. I turned away from her and let her keep the money. Then he said, `O Lord! if my this act has acceptance in Thy court, then deliver us from this cave!”

The Apostle (peace be upon him) said that then the rock moved a little further and the crevice widened, but not that enough to let them escape. The third man said:

“I had some laborers working for me. When the work was done I gave them their wages except one, who had disappeared. I bought a sheep with his wages. First year its strength increased to two and which became four in the second year and in the next few years it became a large flock. After several years the laborer returned and asked me for his wages. I said to him that he might take the whole flock as that was his property. He thought as if I was making fun of him, but I assured him that it was true, and he went off with the whole flock. Then he pleaded to Allah, `O Lord, if I speak the truth, deliver us from this calamity!”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that he had barely finished his supplication when the rock moved away from the mouth of the cave and let the three men came forth. This act is also violation of the established customs.

A well known tradition narrated by Abu Huraira that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

There have been only three men who talked while still in childhood cradle. The one Jesus about whom every one is aware. The second is related to an Israelites monk namely, Jareeh. He was a pious devotee and his mother a house lady was also pious. Once she came to him when he was busy in his devotion and did not open the door of his cell. This happened with the woman continuously for few days and ultimately she cursed his son to be disgraced. Incidentally there was a characterless woman. She told the people that she could wicked the monk and with that intention went to his worship place.

Jareeh did not pay any heed to her, and she dejectedly while on her way back met her carnal desire with a herdsman and got pregnant. She made it common in the village that the cause of her pregnancy was Jareeh. She bore a boy. People got retaliated and took the Jareeh to the court of the king. Jareeh facing towards the boy asked him who his father was. The child said that his mother was propagating false accusation against him and his father was so and so herdsman

The third such incident is that of a woman who along with child in her lap was sitting at the door of her house. Incidentally a handsome well dressed rider passed from there. The woman said: "O Lord! Make my son also like him." The boy spoke out and said: "O Lord! Do not make me like him." After a little while a woman of ill repute passed from there. The kid's mother prayed: "O God! Do not make my son like her." The boy immediately said: "O Lord, make me like that woman." The woman surprised on her son's remarks and asked him that why he had said so. The child replied: "That man is an oppressor, whereas that woman is pious and people needlessly talk ill about her."

There is tradition about Zaidah, housemaid of Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) that one day when she came to Prophet (peace be upon him) and saluted him, he asked her that why she was so casual in her visits, for she was faithful and Prophet (peace be upon him) hold her dear. She said, O Prophet of Allah, I came across a wondrous thing today. On his inquiry she narrated that in the morning she had gone to fetch firewood and after collecting and making a bundle, she put it on a big stone so that it might be convenient for her to lift. In the meantime she saw a rider landing on the ground from the sky. He saluted me and introduced himself as Ridwan the Doorkeeper of Paradise. He asked her to deliver his greetings and following message to you.

"Blessed be you! Paradise has been divided into three sections for your *Ummah*, the first section is of those who would enter Paradise without any accounting, the second section is for those whose accounting would be very lenient, and the third section is for those who would be delivered through your intercession."

After saying this, he rose towards the sky and when he was in between the earth and the heaven, he saw her feeling difficulty in picking up the wood bundle. He asked her to place the bundle back on the stone and commanded the stone to take the bundle to the door of Umar's house which it obeyed. After hearing it the Prophet (peace be upon him) along with his companions visited the Umar's house and saw the arrival and departure marks of the stone. Then he said:

"Praise to Allah! Allah has not raised me from this world until Ridwan has not conveyed me the blessed news about my *Ummah's* admission to Paradise and Allah by manifesting this *karamat* through a women, has bestowed upon her the rank of Mary."

In another tradition it is narrated that when Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Ulai b. al-Hadrimi (may Allah be pleased with him) on an expedition, he came across a big river bed. He and his fellow warriors waded through the river and when they had crossed it, none had even his feet wet.

Once Abdullah b. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) while on his way to some destination saw a crowd. They told him that a lion had blocked their way. He addressed the lion, "O dog! If you have been commanded by Allah, obey Him otherwise let us pass through." The lion got up and moved to his way.

There is a tradition about Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him) that he saw a man suspended in the air. He inquired from him that how had he gained that degree. The man replied that it was a normal thing as he had renounced the world and submitted himself to Allah's command. Then he was asked of his desire, to which he asked for his abode in the air so that he might remain separate from the creature.

A non-Arab young man came to Medina with an intention to assassinate the Caliph Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). He found the Caliph in wilderness sleeping on the ground and his whip was under his head. He got amazed to see the carefree style of a man due to whom the whole world was facing affliction. He with an evil thought that it was the best opportunity to assassinate him drew his sword. Suddenly he perceived that two lions had appeared and attacked him. He shouted for help. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) got up. He narrated the whole story to him and converted to the faith.

During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, Khalid b. Walid (may Allah be pleased with them) was sent on an expedition in Iraq. There he was presented with gifts, among which there was a small box which had very deadly poison in it. Khalid, taking the name of Allah chucked it into his mouth and swallowed it. People got astonished with his act and many took the right path.

Hasan Basri narrated that there was black man in Abadan whose dwelling was normally in wilderness. One day Hasan purchased few eatables from the bazaar and took them to that man. He inquired about it. Hasan told him that those were eatables which he had brought for him. The man laughed and made a sign with his hand. Hasan said that he saw that everything i.e. stones, lumps, walls etc, in that wilderness became gold. He feeling ashamed of his act and shocked ran away from there.

Ibrahim Adham related

Once I came across a herdsman and asked some water from him. He told me that he had both milk and water with him. I told him that I only desired water. He got up and struck his staff on a stone. The most pleasant and clean water started flowing out from the stone. Observing me in a state of astonishment, he said, "There is nothing to get astonished, for when man is faithful to Allah, then whole of the universe becomes obedient to him."

Abu Darda and Salman ((may Allah be pleased with them) were eating together and clearly heard the food utensils praising Allah.

Abu Said Kharraz narrated that he used to have food once after every third day. Once when he was traveling in the desert and on the third day he felt weak because of hunger and habitually his body desired for food. He was unable to control over his weakness and hunger, and sat down on the ground. Suddenly he heard a voice calling him:

"Abu Said! Do you prefer food that quiets your lower nature, or an expedient that enables you to overcome your weakness without food?"

Abu Said pleaded to Allah, to give him strength and then he rose and traveled twelve stages without meat or drink.

It is well known that the house of Sahl b. Abdullah at Tustar is called the House of the Wild Beasts and the people of Tustar are agreed that many wild beasts used to come to him, and that he fed and tended them, although Tustar had a big population.

Abu al-Qasim Mervasi was walking on the sea shore with Abu Said Kharraz. They saw a youth clad in a *muraqqa* (patched frock) and carrying a leather water bucket to which an ink-bottle was fastened. Abu Said observed that youth's face was illuminated and he looked to be in high state and accomplished but his appearance dictated him to be a student. Both of them got anxious to know about him and with that aim approached him. Abu Said asked the youth that what the way to Allah was. The youth replied:

"There are two ways to Allah, the way of the common people and the way of the elects. You have no knowledge of the way of elects, but are following the way of the commons, which you pursue to regard your own actions as the cause of attaining to Allah, and consider that an ink bottle is one of the things that interfere with attainment."

Dhu al-Nun Narrated:

Once I embarked a ship voyaging from Egypt to Jeddah. Among the passengers was a youth wearing a patched frock. I desired to have his association but he inspired me with such awe that I even could not talk to him. He was a unique rare personality of exalted spiritual state who constantly kept himself engaged in devotion. One day a man lost his small purse of jewels, and accused that the youth had stolen it. The passengers thought to maltreat him but I reconciled them and sought their permission to talk to the youth. I told him that he was suspected of theft and that I had saved him from maltreatment. I asked his opinion about the theft. The youth looked towards Heaven and uttered some words. The fishes in the sea came to its surface, each with a jewel in its mouth. He took a jewel and gave it to the

man who had lost his purse. Then he set his foot on the water and waded away. Thereupon the real thief returned the purse, and the people in the ship repented.

Ibrahim Raqqi²² related that in his novitiate he set out to visit Muslim Maghrabi. He found him in his mosque, leading the prayer. He pronounced *al-hamd* الحمد incorrectly. I thought that I took unnecessary trouble to visit him. I spent the night there and in the morning while on my way to river Euphrates to perform *wadu* (ablution), I saw a lion asleep on the road. I turned back, and was faced by another lion which had been following me. I cried aloud with fear. Muslim came forth from his cell. When the lion saw him they humbled themselves before him. He twisted the ear of each one and rebuked them, "O dogs of Allah! Did I not forbid you not to interfere with my guests?" Then he said to me:

"O Abu Ishaq, you have busied yourself with correcting your outward for the sake of creature; hence you are afraid of them. But we are busy to correct ourselves inwardly for the sake of Allah; hence His creatures are afraid of us."

One day my Sheikh set out from Bayt al-Jinn to Damascus. On our way we came across heavy rain and I was walking with lot of difficulty in the slush. When I looked towards the Sheikh, I noticed that his shoes and clothes were perfectly dry. On my observation he said:

"Yes; Allah has preserved me from all kinds of quagmire ever since I put unquestioning trust in Him and guarded my heart from the desolation of cupidity."

Once I got involved into an intricacy and was unable to solve it. I with an intention to meet Sheikh Abu al-Qasim Gurgani set out for Tus. When I reached there I found him alone in the mosque of his house, and he was expounding precisely the same difficulty to a pillar. I asked the Sheikh that with whom was he talking. He answered, "O son, Allah caused this pillar to speak and ask me this question."

An old man lived in a village Ashlatak of Farghana, who is one of the *Autad* of earth. He was renowned as Bab Umar. An old woman called Fatima also lived with him. I went from Uzskand to meet him. When I entered his presence he asked that how I had come. I replied that I wanted to meet him and seek blessings from him. He said:

"O son! I have been seeing you since such and such day, and I continue to see you as long as you are not removed from my sight."

When I computed the days and years, it was the very day on which my conversion began. Then the Sheikh said:

"To traverse distance is child's play. Make this visit an occasion of spiritual progress, for man of the way of Truth never commit himself to an act which is not the cause of progress of his spiritual state."

Then he bade Fatima to bring something to eat. She brought a dish of fresh grapes and dates, although it was not the season of grapes and to procure dates in Farghana was also impossible.

On another occasion, when I was committed to secluded devotion at the tomb of Sheikh Abu Said at Minha, I saw a white pigeon came and hid itself under the cloth covering of the sepulcher. I supposed that the bird had escaped from its owner, but when I looked under the cloth nothing was to be seen. The same event took place the next day and also on the subsequent day. I was lost in amazement, until one night I dreamed of the saint and asked him about that mystery. He answered, "That pigeon is my good conduct which comes every day for my companionship."

Abu Bakr Warraq relates that once Muhammad b. Ali handed him over some of his writings with the instructions that those were to be thrown in river Oxus. Since he had not the heart to do so, therefore, he kept them at his house and lied to Sheikh that he had obeyed his instructions. Sheikh asked him if he had observed anything at the time of obeying his instruction. He had no answer except to say that he had observed nothing. Then the Sheikh said, "You have not obeyed me; go back and throw them into the river."

²² Died in 326 A.H.

Overwhelmed with Sheikh's insight, he went back and threw the papers into the river. Suddenly, the water parted and a chest with its lid open appeared, As soon as the papers fell into it, the lid closed and the water joined again and the chest vanished. He went back to him and told him what had occurred. He answered, "Now you have thrown them in."

On his request to unveil the mystery the Sheikh said:

"I composed a work on theology and mysticism which could hardly be comprehended by the intellect. My brother Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him) desired it of me, and Allah bade the waters bring it to him."

I might adduce many more of these tales without exhausting them, but my purpose in this book is to establish the principles of Sufism. As regards derivatives and matters of conduct books have been compiled by the traditionalists, and these topics are also disseminated from the pulpit by preachers. Now I will give, in one or two sections, an adequate account of certain points bearing on the present discussion, in order that I may not have to return to it again.

Superiority of the Prophets over Saints

Sheikhs of Sufism have unanimous opinion that the saints at all times and in all circumstances are followers of the prophets, and confirm their mission. The prophets are superior to the saints, because the end of saintship is only beginning of Prophethood. Every prophet is a saint, but none is a prophet among the saints. The human attributes of the prophets are non-existent with them, while the saints attain this state temporarily. The short-lived state of the saints is the permanent *maqam* (station) of the prophets and which to the saints is a *maqam* that is a veil to the prophets.

The *Sunni Ulama* and the *Sufi* mystics are unanimous on this view, but a small group of *Hashwiyya* which is known as *Mujasima* (Image) of Khurasan who talk in a self-contradictory manner concerning the principles of *Tawhid* (Unification). Although they do not know the fundamental doctrine of Sufism, but pretend to be saints. Saints they are indeed, but the saints of the Devil. They maintain that the saints are superior to the prophets, and it is a sufficient proof of their error that they declare an ignorant to be more excellent than Muhammad (peace be upon him), the Chosen of Allah.

The similar opinion is held by another likened sect who pretend to be *Sufis*, and admit the doctrines of the incarnation of Allah and His descent (into human body) by transmigration and the division of His essence. It is one of the two reprobated sects about whom I have promised to give detail account. Both these sects claim to be Muslims, but they agree with the Brahmans in denying special privileges to the prophets. Whoever denies the excellence and superiority of Prophets, is an infidel. Moreover, the prophets are preacher of the Truth and Imams, and the saints are their faithful followers, and it is absurd to suppose that the follower of an Imam is superior to the Imam himself. The truth is that the degrees and ranks, experiences, and spiritual powers of all the saints together would appear as nothing compared with one act of a true prophet, because the saints are seekers and devotees, whereas the prophets are accomplished and have attained their object. They are commanded to preach and guide the people to the way of Truth.

If anyone of heretics should urge that an ambassador sent is usually inferior to the person to whom he is sent, as e.g. Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) is inferior to the Prophets, in reply I say that their presumption is wrong, as when a king sends his ambassador to someone, he ensures that the recipient is better than the ambassador, therefore, Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) was sent to the Prophets and all the Prophets are superior to him. But if an ambassador is sent to a group of people or to a nation, then it is mandatory that he should be superior to them. Since Prophets came to their people as ambassadors and they were superior to them, about which no sensible person has any doubt, nor does any ambiguity arises in his heart. Therefore, one moment of the prophets is better than the whole life of the saints, because the saints when they attain their goal only then talk of their contemplation and while still being human, their humanity is annihilated. On the other hand, contemplation is the first step of the Prophets; and since the Prophet's starting stage is the saint's goal, hence, they cannot be judged by the same standard.

Among the *Sufis*, all the seekers of the Truth are unanimous that excellence of *walayat* lies in Union and at this *maqam* (station) man attains such a degree of rapturous love that his wisdom is enraptured in gazing upon the acts and in his longing for the actual Agent. He regards the whole universe as Agent and sees nothing but His manifestations. Thus Abu Ali Rudbari says, "لوزالت عنا رويته ما عبدناه" were the vision of that which we serve to vanish from us, we should lose the name of servanthship," for we derive the glory of worship solely from vision of Him.

This is the beginning state of the prophets, inasmuch as separation is inconceivable in their states. They are entirely in the essence of union, whether they affirm or deny, whether they approach or turn away, whether they are at the beginning or at the end. Abraham, in the beginning of his state, looked on the stars and moon and said

هَذَا رَبِّي

"this is my Lord," and when he looked on the sun he said

هَذَا رَبِّي

"this is my Lord" (Q 6: 76-78), because his heart was overwhelmed by the Truth, he was united in the essence of union and did not see else or if he had seen aught else he saw it with the eye of union and in the reality of that vision he disavowed his own and said

لَأُحِبُّ الْآفِلِينَ

"I love not those that set" (Q 6: 76).

As he began with union, so he ended with union. Saintship has a beginning and an end, but Prophethood has no beginning or end. The prophets were prophets from the beginning, and shall remain so till the last, and before they existed they were prophets in the knowledge and will of Allah.

Abu Yazid when asked about the state of the prophets, he replied:

"May Allah forbid! We have no power to raise an opinion on them, and in our notions of them we are wholly ourselves. Allah has placed their denial and affirmation in such an exalted degree that human vision cannot reach unto it."

Accordingly, as the rank of the saints is hidden from the perception of mankind, so the ranks of the prophets are hidden from the judgment of the saints. Abu Yazid was a unique incredible personality of his age. He says:

My spirit was taken to the heavens. It looked at nothing and gave no heed, though Paradise and Hell were displayed to it. Then it was passed through creature and veils but it paid no heed. Then I became a bird, and flying in the air of the Absolute until I passed into the sphere of purification and gazed upon the field of Eternity and beheld there the tree of Oneness. When I looked at the tree I myself was all that. I cried, "O Lord, Thou art with me, but I cannot attain to Thee, and I cannot escape from the veil of my selfhood. What am I to do?" Allah spoke:

"O Abu Yazid, thou must win release from thy `thou-ness` by following My beloved (Muhammad (peace be upon him)). Smear thine eyes with the dust of his feet and follow him continually."

This is a long narrative. The *Sufis* call it the ascension of Bayazid. The term "ascension" denotes proximity to Allah and the ascension of prophets takes place outwardly and in the body, whereas that of saints takes place inwardly and in the spirit. The body of an Apostle resembles the heart and spirit of a saint in purity and nearness to Allah. This is a manifest superiority. And this is so because saint is enraptured and intoxicated in his state so much that he is withdrawn from himself and in that state his human attributes are annihilated and he is adorned with the gift of proximity with the Truth. When he returns to the state of sobriety all those evidences have taken shape in his mind and he has gained knowledge of them. Accordingly, there is a great difference between one who is carried thither in person and one who is carried thither only in imagination and thought.

Superiority of Prophets and Saints over Angels

The whole community of *Sunnis* (orthodox Muslims) and all the *Sufi* Sheikhs agree that the prophets and such of the saints as are guarded from sin are superior to the angels. The *Mutazilites* differs with this view, and declares that the angels are superior to the prophets. They say angels being of more exalted rank, of subtle constitution, and the most obedient to Allah, qualify them for their superiority over all creatures.

We say that the reality is contrary to their view. The body obedience, an exalted rank, and a subtle constitution are not the cause of Allah's kindness, for excellence lies where Allah wills. All these qualities of angels were possessed by *Iblis* (Satan), yet he is universally acknowledged to have become accursed. Hence, superior is he whom Allah blesses with His grace and makes him His chosen one.

The superiority of the prophets is evident by the fact that Allah commanded the angels to prostrate Adam; for the state of one who is prostrated is higher than the state of who prostrates. It may be argued that, just as a true believer is superior to the Kaba, an inanimate mass of stones, although he bows down before it, so the angels may be superior to Adam, although they bowed down before him. In reply I assert that no one says that a believer bows down to a house or an altar or a wall but all say that he bows down to Allah, whereas everyone admits that the angels bowed down to Adam. Allah said, "اسجدوا لآدم" **bow down to Adam**" (Q 2:32), i.e. We said and commanded the angels to bow down to

Adam, whereas when believers were commanded to bow down, Allah said, "وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ" **prostrate yourselves, and adore your Lord.**" (Q 22:77) i.e. prostrates to Allah and commit yourself to His devotion. Therefore, Kaba cannot be compared to Adam. A traveler may worship Allah while on his ride, and he is excused may the ride be not facing the direction of Kaba, and in like manner, one who has lost his bearing and is unable to determine the direction of the Kaba, will have done his duty in whatever direction he may turn to pray. The angels had no excuse or compulsion to bow down to Adam and the one who made an excuse for himself became accursed. These are clear proofs to any person of insight.

Again, this also may be in consideration that in one respect angels are under compulsion to have *marifat* (knowledge of Allah), for they are free of every lust, covetousness, and evil. Their nature is devoid of hypocrisy and guile, and obedience is their food and their drink is the abode of the Commands of Allah. Whereas lust is an impediment in human nature which is ever inclined to commit sins and be impressed by the vanities of this world. Satan has so much power over human bodies that he circulates with the blood in their veins and the *nafs* (lower soul) which is the cause of all wickedness is closely attached to him.

Therefore, one whose nature has all these qualities and who, inspite of the violence of his lust, refrains from immorality, and notwithstanding his covetousness renounces this world, and though his heart is still tempted by the devilish thoughts, turns back from sin and averts his face from sensual depravity in order to occupy himself with devotion and persevere in piety and mortify his *nafs* (lower soul) and contend against the Satan. So in reality, such creature is superior and of higher rank to angels who are not pitched against lust, and are devoid of food and pleasure, and has no care for wife and child and kinfolk, and need not have recourse to means and instruments and are not absorbed in corrupt ambitions.

By my Lord! I am surprised on that man who keeps an eye on excellence of an act or considers beauty and elegance an honor or recognizes property and profit as dignity and nobility. These apparent delights may be taken away at any time, then why does not he aspire for the grace and bounties of the Lord of the Universe, so it remains with him and his heart be satisfied and delighted both in this and the next world.

Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him), who worshiped Allah many thousands of years in the hope of gaining a robe of honor, and the honor bestowed on him was that of acting as Muhammad's groom

on the night of the ascension. How could he be superior to one who disciplined and mortified his *nafs* (lower soul) by day and night in this world, until Allah looked on him with favor and granted him the grace of His vision and delivered him from all hazards?

When the pride of the angels passed all bounds and every one of them boasted the purity of his conduct as evidence and spoke ill of mankind, Allah resolved to show them their real state. He therefore bade them to choose three of the chiefs among them, in whom they had confidence, to go to the earth and be its governors. They were commanded to reform its people and to establish justice among them. So three angels were chosen, but before they came to the earth one of them perceived its corruption and begged Allah to let him return. When the other two arrived on the earth Allah changed their nature so that they felt a desire for food and drink and were inclined to lust, and Allah punished them on that account, and the angels recognized the excellence and superiority of mankind to themselves.

In short, the elects among the true believers are superior to the elects among the angels, and the ordinary believers are superior to the ordinary angels. Accordingly, those men who are preserved and protected from sin are more excellent than Gabriel and Michael (may blessings of Allah be on them), and those who are not thus preserved are better than Recording Angels.

There are lot many sayings on this subject as every Sheikh has talked something. Allah awards superiority to whom He pleases, over whom He pleases. This is curtailed but complete narration of the Hakimis sect about Sufism, discussion on subjects linked up with their doctrine and the disagreement among the *Sufis* in reference to their doctrine.

You must know that saintship is a Divine mystery which is revealed only through conduct. A saint is known only to a saint. If this matter could be made plain to all reasonable men it would be impossible to distinguish the friend from the foe or the spiritual adept from the heedless. Therefore Allah so willed that the pearl of His love should be set in the shell of popular contempt and be cast into the sea of affliction, in order that those who seek it may hazard their lives on account of its preciousness and dive to the bottom of this ocean of death, where they will either win their desire or bring their mortal state to an end.

I wanted to give more detail but fearing the reader's tiredness and inattentiveness, I have followed the brevity path which should be enough for the seekers of the Path.

The Kharrazis

They are the followers of Abu Said Kharraz, who wrote brilliant works on Sufism and attained a high degree in detachment from the world. He was the first to explain the state of annihilation and subsistence, and his whole doctrine is recounted in these two terms. Now I will explain their meaning and will elucidate that how and where people erred in understanding this doctrine, in order that you may know exactly what this sect is and how their spokesmen misunderstood its objectives.

Subsistence (baqa بقاء) and Annihilation (fana فنا)

Allah hath said:

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَبْغُذُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ

“What is with you must vanish: what is with Allah will endure:” (Q 16:96), and:

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَىهَا فَانٍ - وَيَبْقَى وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ دُونَ الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

“All that is on earth will perish: But will abide (forever) the Face of Thy Lord – full of Majesty, Bounty and Honor.” (Q 55:26-27)

You must know that *fana* فنا (annihilation) and *baqa* بقاء (subsistence) carries different expressions both in reference to dictionary and culturally. The formalists are more puzzled by these words than by any other technical terms of the *Sufis*. Etymologically *baqa* بقاء (subsistence) has three meanings:

- The first kind of *baqa* (subsistence) is that begins and ends in annihilation, e.g. this world, which had a beginning and will have an end, and is now subsistent;
- The second kind of *baqa* is that subsistence which came into being and will never be annihilated, viz. Paradise and Hell and the next world and its inhabitants;
- The third kind of *baqa* is that subsistence which always was and always will be, viz. the subsistence of Allah and His eternal attributes.

Accordingly, knowledge of *fana* فنا (annihilation) lies in your knowing that this world is perishable, and knowledge of subsistence lies in your knowledge that the next world is everlasting. Allah says:

وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَثَقَىٰ

“But the Hereafter is better and more enduring.” (Q 87:17),

Here *أَثَقَىٰ* has been used in exaggeration, for the life of the next world is such subsistence which has no annihilation.

But in reference to a state (*hal* حال) the meaning of annihilation (*fana*) and subsistence (*baqa*) are:

- Ignorance perishes and knowledge subsists:
- Disobedience perishes and obedience subsists:

When a man is obedient and acquire knowledge, due to subsistence of *dikr* ذكر (remembrance of Allah) his forgetfulness is annihilated, i.e. when anyone gains knowledge of Allah and subsists in knowledge of Him, the ignorance is annihilated from him, and when he is annihilated from forgetfulness he becomes subsistent in remembrance of Him, and this is to efface an evil quality through good attribute.

But the elects among the *Sufis* attach different meaning to the terms in question, as they do not refer these expressions to knowledge or to state (*hal*), but apply them solely to the degree of perfection attained by the saints and they are those people who have become free from the pains of mortification and have escaped from the prison of *maqamat* (stations) and arisen high from the change of states. Their struggles have succeeded in attainment of their object, so that they have seen all things visible, and have assimilated all they heard. They have fully grasped the knowledge of their hearts and are aware of the secrets therein. And after attaining such degree, recognizing the worthlessness of their achievements, they got annihilated in the object of desire, and in the very essence of desire have lost all desires of their own. The *karamat* (miracles) becomes veil for them and *maqamat* (stations) are damaging for them. Their states are dressed in clad of wretchedness and while with the object, are objectless. They are free from all and have no affection left for intimated things. Allah said:

لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَن بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَىٰ مَنْ حَيَّيْنَا عَن بَيِّنَةٍ

“That those who died might die after a clear Sign (had been given), and those who lived might live after a Clear Sign (had been given).” (Q 8:42).

And I have personally contributed to this fact:

فَنَيْتُ فَنَاءِي بِفَقْدِ هَوَائِي فَصَارَ هَوَائِي فِي الْأُمُورِ هَوَاكُ

“I annihilated my annihilation by annihilating my desires;

Now on all matters my desire is sacrificed on your will.

When one is annihilated from his attributes, he becomes subsistent, i.e. when one in the presence of attributes, gets annihilated from the evils of his attributes, then he in the annihilation of desires subsists with the subsistence of desire, then he is neither near nor far, neither stranger nor intimate and similarly he is neither sober nor intoxicated, neither separated nor united, neither he is affected by destruction nor by non-existence. He is left with no name, sign, mark or record. As some elder venerable has said:

وطاح مقامه والرسوم كلاهما فلصت ابري في الوقت ولا بعداً

فكنت به عني فبان لي الهدي فهذا اظهور الحق عند الفناء قصداً

“My *maqam* (station) and forms both are vanished, and now there is no proximity or farness for me;

When I got annihilated from my self, it opened the way for my guidance, and manifestation of the Truth depends on the intention of annihilation.”

In short, real annihilation from anything involves consciousness of its imperfection and absence of desire for it. One who thinks that annihilation of something can be corrected by being veiled from it, he is wrong. It is not like that a man when he loves a thing should say, that he is subsistent therein or when he dislikes it, he says that he is annihilated there from, for these qualities are the characteristic of one who is still seeking. There is no love or hate in annihilation, and neither there is consciousness of union or separation in subsistence. Some wrongly imagined that annihilation signifies loss of essence and destruction of personality, and that subsistence indicates the subsistence of the Truth in man; both these notions are absurd.

In India I met with a man who claimed to be a preacher and versed in exegesis of Quran and theology. He debated with me on annihilation and subsistence. I found that he knew nothing of annihilation and subsistence, and neither could he distinguish the eternal from the phenomenal. Similarly, there are many ignorant *Sufis*, who consider that total annihilation is possible, but this is a manifest error, for annihilation and separation of the different parts of a material subsistence can never take place. I ask these ignorant that what they mean by this kind of annihilation. If they say that it is annihilation of substance, which is impossible. And if they say that it is annihilation of attributes, which is only possible in so far as one attribute, may be annihilated through the subsistence of another attribute. Both these attributes are present in man. It is absurd to suppose that anyone can subsist through the attributes of another individual.

The Nestorians and the Christians hold this belief and say that Mary (may blessings of Allah be on her) annihilated all the attributes of humanity by self mortification and that the Divine subsistence became attached to her, so that she was made subsistent through the subsistence of God, and that Jesus was a result and fruition of that and was not originally composed of the stuff of humanity, because his subsistence is produced by realization of the subsistence of God. Therefore, Jesus, his mother and God are all subsistent through one subsistent, which is Eternal and an attribute of Allah.

All this agrees with the doctrine of the sects of the *Hashwiyya*, i.e. *Mujasima* مجسمة and *Mushabah* مشبهه, who maintain that the Divine essence is a locus of phenomena and that the Eternal may have phenomenal attributes. I ask all who proclaim such tenets that, can phenomenal be the locus of the Eternal or can the Eternal be the locus of the phenomenal or can the phenomenal be an attribute of Eternal, or can the Eternal be an attribute of phenomenal? Such doctrine is the religion of atheist. They refute the proofs of the phenomenal nature of the universe and if we agree to it, this compels us to say that both the Creator and His creation are eternal or that both are phenomenal, i.e. what is created may be commingled with what is uncreated, or that what is uncreated may descend into what is created. This profligacy suits to the atheist, for when Eternal is called locus of phenomenal or phenomenal is called locus of Eternal then Creator and creation would also be called Eternal. Similarly when it is evident from the argument that creature is phenomenal, then it is must to call Eternal also phenomenal, the locus of a thing is like its substance and when locus is phenomenal so the state would also be phenomenal. For them, whether they call phenomenal as Eternal or Eternal as phenomenal, both lead them to the path of deviation.

In fine, when one thing is linked, united and commingled with another, both things are in principle as one. Accordingly, our subsistence and annihilation are attributes of ourselves, and in the characteristics of our attributes our annihilation is like our subsistence and our subsistence is like our annihilation. Therefore, annihilation is such an attribute which exists with the subsistence of another attribute.

One may speak, however, of an annihilation that is independent of subsistence, and also of a subsistence that is independent of annihilation, in that case annihilation means,

“annihilation of all remembrance of other,”

and subsistence means,

“subsistence of the remembrance of Allah.”

As

من فني من المراد بقبي بالمراد

whoever is annihilated from his own will subsist in the will of Allah,”

because your will is perishable and the will of Allah is everlasting. When man stands by his own will his object of desire will be annihilated and he will stand by annihilation, but when he is controlled by the will of Allah his desire of object will subsist and he will stand by subsistence. It is similar to the power of fire which transmutes anything that falls into it to its own quality. If the heat and overwhelming power of fire can change the attributes of a thing then why cannot the overwhelming power of Allah's shall change the attributes and surely the power of Allah's will is greater than that of fire. But remember fire affects only the quality of iron without changing its substance, for iron can never become fire.

All the Sheikhs have given subtle indications on this subject. Abu Said Kharraz, the author of the doctrine, says:

الفناء فناء العبد عن روية العبودية والبقاء بقاء العبد بشاهد الالهية

“Annihilation is to get annihilated from one's own humility and subsistence is to subsist in the contemplation of Allah.” i.e. it is an imperfection to be conscious in one's actions, and one attains its real spirit when he ignores his acts but is annihilated so as not to see them, and becomes subsistent through beholding the Grace of Allah. Hence all one's actions are referred to Allah, not to one's self, because so far man's actions are connected to him, he is wholly imperfect, and he becomes accomplished when possessed by Allah. Therefore, when one becomes annihilated from things on which he depends, he becomes subsistent through the beauty of Godhead.

Abu Yaqub Nahrajuri says:

صحة العبودية في الفناء والبقاء

“A man's true servanthship lies in annihilation and subsistence,” because no one is capable of serving Allah with sincerity until renounces all self-interest. Therefore, to renounce humanity is annihilation, and to be sincere in servanthship is subsistence.

And Ibrahim b. Shaiban says:

علم الفناء والبقاء يدور علي الاخلاص الوحدانية وصحة العبودية وما كان غير هذا فهو المغالط والزندقة

“The knowledge of annihilation and subsistence depends on sincerity, unity and true servanthship; all else is error and heresy.”

When one acknowledges the unity of Allah he finds himself overpowered by the Omnipotence of Allah, and one who is overpowered is annihilated in the might of his vanquisher. When he is absolutely annihilated, he confesses his weakness and sees no other resources except to serve Allah, and he

gets access to the court of satisfaction. And whoever explains these terms otherwise, i.e. annihilation as annihilation of substance and subsistence as meaning subsistence of God (in man) are deviating from the right path, and this is religion of Christian, as has been stated earlier.

To my opinion, all these sayings are near to each other in meanings, although they differ in expression and wordings. The real gist of all is that the annihilation in a man takes place through vision of the Majesty of Allah, so that in the overwhelming sense of His Majesty this world and the next world are obliterated from his mind, and states and stations appear contemptible in the sight of his aspiring thought. The *karamat* vanishes from his states and his senses and *nafs* (lower soul) are annihilated and then his annihilation also gets annihilated and his tongue proclaims the Truth, and his mind and body are humble and abased, as in the beginning when Adam's posterity were drawn forth from his loins without admixture of evil and took the pledge of servanthship to Allah. As some elder has said:

لا كنت ان كنت ادري كيف السبيل اليكا افنتني عن جميعي فصرت ابكي عليك

“Had I attained the path leading to Thyself, I would not have subsisted.

Thou have annihilated me from every thing and now I am crying in Thy remembrance.”

Another has also said:

ففي فناءي فناء فناءي وفي فناءي وجدت انت
محوت اسمي ورسر جسمي ساءلت عني فقلت انت

“Annihilation is annihilated in my annihilation and I have found Thy in my annihilation;

I have removed my name and body sign. When I was asked of me, I talked of Thou.”

Such are the principles of annihilation and subsistence. Wherever these terms occur in the present work they bear the meaning which I have explained. The foundation and doctrine of the Kharrazi sect and their Imam Sheikh Abu Said is based on annihilation and subsistence and it is in reality a good foundation. That separation and anxiety which is the guarantee of union is never baseless and it is laudable among the seekers of the Path.

The Khafifis

They are the followers of Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Khafif of Shiraz, an eminent mystic of his time and the author of celebrated treatises on various branches of Sufism. His virtues and literary attainments are unaccountable. He was a man of great spiritual influence, and had totally renounced the lusts of the *nafs* (lower soul). I have heard that he had four hundred marriages. This was due to the fact that he was of royal descent, and after his conversion the people of Shiraz paid great court to him, and the daughters of royal families and nobles desired to marry him for the sake of the blessing which would occur to them. He used to comply with their wishes, and then divorce them before consummation of the marriage. But in the course of his life forty wives, who also remained strangers to him, two or three at a time, used to serve him. One of them the daughter of a vizier lived with him for forty years.

Abu al-Hasan Ali Bakran Shirazi related that one day several women who on different occasions had been his wives gathered together, and each one narrated some story about him. They all agreed that even in privacy none of them had seen the Sheikh possessing any carnal desire. Hitherto each of them had believed that she was peculiarly treated in this respect, and when they learned that the Sheikh's behavior was the same towards them all, they were astonished and doubted whether such was truly the case. Then they thought that since the daughter of the vizier had long association with the Sheikh and who also loved her the most, might be aware of the secrets of Sheikh's carnal desires. Accordingly, they sent two amongst them to question the vizier's daughter. She told them that when Sheikh wedded her and she was informed that he would visit her that night, she prepared a fine repast

and adorned herself assiduously. When he came and the food was brought in, he called her to him and looked for a while first at her and then at the food. Then he took her hand and drew it into his sleeve. She saw that from his breast to his navel there were fifteen knots growing out of his belly. He said, "O daughter of vizier! Ask me what these are." So she asked him and he replied, "These are the knots made by the passions and anguish of my abstinence in renouncing a face like this and food like these." He said no more, but departed, and that is all her intimacy with him.

The form of his doctrine in Sufism is *ghaybat* غيب (absence) and *hudur* حضور (presence). I will explain it as far as possible.

Absence (*ghaybat* غيب) and Presence (*hudur* حضور)

The terms, although apparently opposed to each other, express the same meaning while referring to the real essence of the object. These terms are commonly in use among the theologians. The *hudur* حضور (presence) is presence of the heart with intuitive faith so that what is hidden from it has the same force as what is visible to it. The *ghaybat* غيب (absence) is absence of the heart from all things except Allah to such an extent that it becomes absent from self and absent even from its absence, so that it no longer be able to regard its own absence and its sign is withdrawal from all formal customs, as a prophet is divinely preserved from what is unlawful. Hence, absence from one's self is presence with Allah, and presence with Allah is absence from self. So who is absent from self, would be present with the Truth and who is present with the Truth would be absent from self. Allah is the Lord of the human heart. When divine rapture overpowers the heart of the seeker, the absence becomes like presence (with Allah) for his heart and partnership and division disappear. The self identity finishes, as an elder has said:

ولي فواد وانت مالكة بلا شريك فكيف ينقسم

"Thou are the Lord of my heart, without any partner: how, can it be divided?"

As there is no one except He the sole Lord of the heart, He has absolute power to keep it absent or present as He wills. In reality this is the whole argument and basis for the doctrine and *Sufi* Sheikhs also agree to it. But where dispute has arisen, the Sheikhs have different opinions on the subject. One group prefers presence over absence and the other declares that absence is superior to presence. It is the same sort of controversy as that concerning sobriety and intoxication. The sobriety and intoxication refers to subsistence of human attributes, whereas absence and presence convey about the annihilation of the human attributes. Therefore, absence and presence are in reality more sublime.

Ibn Ata, Hussein b. Mansur, Abu Bakr Shibli, Bundar b. al-Hussein, Abu Hamza Baghdadi, and Sumnun Muhibb and a group of Iraqi Sheikhs are amongst those who consider absence superior to presence and they say:

"You yourself are the greatest of all veils on the path of Truth. When you have become absent from yourself, the evil contained in thy being are annihilated in you, and your inward state undergoes a fundamental change. The *maqamat* (station) of novices become a veil to you, and the states of the seekers of the Path become a source of calamity to you. The secrets of the nature are manifest and the existing things look contemptible and wretched before your liberality. Your eye is closed to itself and to all other than Allah, and your human attributes are consumed by the flame of proximity to Allah. This is the same state of absence in which Allah created you from the loins of Adam, and made you to hear His exalted words, and distinguished you by the honorary robe of Unification and the garment of contemplation. As long as you were absent from yourself, you were present with Allah unveiled, but when you became present with your own attributes, you got absent from your proximity to Allah. Therefore your *hudur* حضور (presence) is the cause of your perdition. These are the meaning of the following words of Allah,

“And behold! Ye come to us bare and alone as we created you for the first time:” (Q 6:94).

On the other hand, Harith Muhasibi, Junaid, Sahl b. Abdullah, Abu Hafs Haddad, Abu Hamdun, Abu Muhammad Jurairi, Husri, Muhammad b. Khafif, (the author of the doctrine), and others hold that *hudur* حضور (presence) is superior to *ghaybat* غيب (absence). They argue that all excellences are connected with presence. The absence from one's self is a way leading to presence with Allah, and when the presence is attained, the way becomes a calamity. Hence, one who is absent to himself, certainly he is present with the Truth. Presence is the fruit of absence. Absence without presence is insanity or subjugation and destruction. Therefore, it is must to renounce heedlessness in order that the object of absence i.e. presence is achieved, and when the object has been achieved, the means loses its worth. It is said:

“The absent one is not he who is absent from his country, but one who is absent from attaining desire. The present one is not he, who has no desire but he who has no heart which could harbor object.”

Another elder has said:

من لم يكن بك فانياً عن نفسه وعن الهوى بالانس والاحباب
فكانه بين المراتب واقف لمنال حظ او الحسن ماب!

“The one who is not annihilated from his *nafs* (lower soul), love of people and friends; He, for the attainment of human lusts and desire of better ending, is struck up between the degrees.”

It is a well-known story that one of disciples of Dhu al-Nun set out to pay visit to Abu Yazid. When he came to Abu Yazid's worship cell and knocked at the door, Abu Yazid asked, “Who are you, and whom do you wish to see?” The disciple answered: “I want to see Abu Yazid.” Abu Yazid said: “Who is Abu Yazid, and where does he live, and what is he? I have been seeking Abu Yazid since long, but I have not found him.” When the disciple returned to Dhu al-Nun and told him what had passed, Dhu al-Nun said: “My brother Abu Yazid is lost with those who are lost in Allah.”

Somebody requested Junaid to be present with him as he wanted to talk to him. Junaid answered, “O my brother, you have demanded that thing of me that I have long been seeking. For many years I have desired to remain present with the Truth for a moment, but I cannot. How, then, can I become present with you just now?”

Absence involves the sorrow of being veiled, while presence involves the joy of revelation, and under no circumstances the revelation can be equal to veil.

Sheikh Abu Said says:

تتشع فيما الهجر عن قمر الحب والاسفر نور الصباح عن ظلمة الغيب

“The clouds of separation have been cleared away from the moon of love, and the light of morning has shone forth from the darkness of the unseen.”

The distinction made by the Sheikhs between these two terms is mystical, and on the surface just verbal, for they seem to be approximately the same, as it may be presence with the Truth or absence from self. One who is not absent from himself, is not present with the Truth, and who is present with Him, is absent from self.

The grief of Ayub (may blessings of Allah be on him) in his affliction did not proceed from himself as he was absent from himself in that state. Therefore, Allah did not distinguish his grief from patience, and when he cried,

أَيُّ مَسْنِي

truly distress has seized me” (Q 21:83), and Allah said,

إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا

truly We found him full of patience and constancy.” (Q 38:44).

The same is also evident from the following narrated by Junaid:

“There was a time when the inhabitants of heaven and earth wept over my bewilderment, then came a time when I wept over their absence and now my state is such that I have no knowledge either of them or of myself.” This is an excellent indication of presence.

I have briefly explained the meaning of presence and absence in order that you may be acquainted with the doctrine of the Khafifis, and may also know in what sense these terms are used by the *Sufis*.

The Sayyaris

They are the followers of Abu al-Abbas Sayyari, the Imam of Merv. He was learned in all the sciences and associated with Abu Bakr Wasti. Even today he has many companions and followers in Nasa and Merv. None of the sects of Sufism is in its original form except his, because Nasa and Merv have never been without the leadership of this sect and are religiously maintaining the doctrine of their founder. His disciples and followers from Nasa and Merv carried out interesting discussion through correspondence and I have seen part of it at Merv; it is very fine. Their common topic was *jama* جمع (union) and *tafriq* تفریق (separation). These words are common to all scientists and are in use in every branch of learning. Every group uses these words as means of rendering their explanations indelible, but in each case they bear different meanings. Thus, in arithmetic *jama* denotes addition and *tafriq* subtraction of numbers. In grammar *jama* is the agreement of words in derivation. Similarly, the Islamic jurisprudent takes the meanings of *jama* as analogy and of *tafriq* they mean text or *jama* is the text and *tafriq* is analogy. In divinity *jama* denotes the essential and the formal attributes of Allah. But the *Sufis* do not use these terms in any of the significations which I have mentioned. Now, I will explain the meaning attached to them by *Sufis* and the various opinions of the Sheikhs on this subject.

Union (*jama* جمع) and Separation (*tafriq* تفریق)

Allah combined all mankind in His call, as He says:

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ

“But Allah doth call to the home of Peace.” (Q 10:25).

Then He separated them in respect of Divine guidance, and said:

وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“He doth guide whom He pleaseth to a Way that is straight.” (Q 10:25).

He invited everyone in His call, and selected a group out of them to manifest His will. He gathered them all and gave a command, and then separated them. Then He separated them in such a way that He banished a group with indignity and accepted other with His Grace. And then again in His negative command He united them all but separated some in their affairs, giving to some immunity from sin and to others a propensity towards evil.

Accordingly the real mystery of union is the knowledge and will of the Truth, while separation is the manifestation of that which He commands and forbids. For example he commanded Abraham to behead Ismail, but willed that he should not do so, and He commanded Iblis to prostrate to Adam, but He willed the contrary, and Iblis did not prostrate and He commanded Adam not to eat the corn, but willed that he should eat it, and so forth. Hence,

الجمع ما جمع بأوصافه والتفرقة ما فرق بأفعاله

“Union is that which He unites by His attributes, and separation is that which He separates by His acts.”

All this involves cessation of human volition and affirmation of the Divine will so as to exclude all personal initiatives.

As regards what has been said above on union and separation, all the *Sunnis* and *Sufi* Sheikhs except the *Mutazilites*, are in agreement. However, they have some differences in use of these terms.

- One group applies it to *tawhid* توحيد (Divine unity),
- the other group links these terms to Divine attributes,
- the third group links it to the Divine acts.

Those who refer to *tawhid* (Divine unity) say that there are two degrees of union, one in the attributes of the Truth and the other in the attributes of man. The former is the mystery of *tawhid* (Unification), in which human actions have no part whatsoever, and the latter denotes acknowledgement of the Divine Unity with sincere conviction and unflinching resolution. This is the opinion of Abu Ali Rudbari.

Those, who refer these terms to the Divine attributes, say that union is an attribute of the Truth, and separation is His act in which man's efforts are not involved, for no one is partner to Him in His Godhead.

Therefore union is His substance and attributes, for

الجمع التسويته في الاصل

union is equality in the fundamental matter”

and no two things are equal in respect of Eternity except His substance and His attributes. This means that Allah has eternal attributes, which are peculiar to Him and subsist through Him, and that He and His attributes are not two, for His Unity does not admit difference and number. Therefore, *jama* (union) is not applicable to Him except in the sense indicated above.

There is a separation in the acts of Allah as regards to His commandment, for there is a verdict of being for one and not being to other, but a not being that is capable of being. Similarly, one is commanded for annihilation and other for subsistence.

There is another group who refers these terms to knowledge and say,

الجمع علم التوحيد والتفرقة علم الاحكام

union is knowledge of the *Tawhid* (Divine Unity), and separation is the knowledge of the Divine ordinances.”

Similarly, an elder venerable has said:

الجمع ما اجتمع عليه اهل العلم والفرق ما اختلفوا فيه

“Union is that on which theologians are agreed upon, and separation is that on which they differ.”

All the *Sufi* mystics, whenever they use the term separation in the course of their expositions and indications, refer it to voluntary human actions e.g. self-mortification and by union they signify divine gifts e.g. contemplation. Hence, whatever a man gains by means of mortification is separation and whatever he gets through Divine grace and favor is union. Man's glory is this that while his actions exist and mortification is possible, he should escape with the aid of Magnificence of Truth from the imperfection of his own actions, and should consider his actions as wonder of the bounties of Allah. And in regard to righteousness, he should not pay any heed to mortification, so that he depends entirely on Allah and commits all his attributes to His charge and refers all his actions to Him and none to himself, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us the mandate of Allah:

لا يزال عبدي يتقرب إلي بالنوافل حتى أحبه
فإذا أحببته كنت له سمعاً وبصراً ويداؤاً وفواؤاً ولساناً في يسمع وبي يبصر وبي ينطق وبي يطش

“When My servant seeks proximity to Me by means of works of supererogation, I take him to My friendship and annihilate him in his self, so his acts are not of his own. And when I love him, I am his ear, his eye, his hand, his heart, and his tongue: through Me he hears, sees, speaks and grasps.”

He in remembering Me is enraptured by the *dikr* (remembrance) of Me, and his own effort is annihilated and he gets fully absorbed in my *dikr*, so as to have no part in his remembrance, and My remembrance overpowers his remembrance, and the relationship of humanity is entirely removed from his remembrance; then My remembrance is his remembrance, and in his rapture he is praised with that attribute about which Abu Yazid while in similar state said,

سبحاني! سبحاني! ما اعظم شاني!

Glory to me! Glory to me! How great is my majesty!”

These words were the outward sign of his speech, but the speaker was Allah. Similarly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

الحق ينطق علي لسان عمر

“Allah speaks by the tongue of Umar.”

The fact is that when the Divine Omnipotence fully dominates His superiority over the man, He annihilates the man from his existence, so that his speech becomes the speech of Allah, in spite of the fact that it is impossible that Allah should mingle or make union with created beings or become incarnate in things. He is exalted far above that, and that which the heretics ascribe to Him. It may happen, that Allah's love holds absolute sway over the heart of His servant, and that his wisdom and natural faculties are too weak to sustain its rapture and intensity, and that he loses all control over his self to act. And this state is called *jama* (union). As Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) while absorbed in the love of the Truth and overwhelmed by it, when performed some act, Allah referred his act to Himself and said, although this act appeared through your hand but in reality it was not your act, it was Mine.

وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ

“When thou threwest (a handful of dust), it was not thy act, but Allah's:” (Q 8:17).

But when a similar act was committed by David and about whom it was said:

كَفَلَّ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ

“David slew Goliath” (Q 2:251).

Here the act has been referred to David because he was in the state of separation. There is a difference between the two states, as the union of one's act is referred to himself while he is

phenomenal and Allah refer the other's act to Himself while He is Eternal and all Omnipotent. When someone performs such an act which is not the type of human acts, perforce, its causer has to be Allah. The extraordinary miracles and acts of miraculous grace belong to the similar category.

All ordinary actions are separation, and all acts which violate custom are union. As ascension of Muhammad (peace be upon him) all the way from Mecca, until he stood at the distance of two bow-lengths from the Divine presence, was not an ordinary act, therefore, there is no other way out except to acknowledge it as Allah's act. Similarly, not burning of somebody in the fire, whose act it can be except Allah? Allah bestows these miracles on His prophets and saints, and refers His actions to them and theirs to Himself. Therefore, the acts of His friends are referred to be as His acts, oath of allegiance to them is oath of allegiance to Him and obedience to them is referred as His obedience. As He hath said:

إِنَّ الدِّينَ يُبَايَعُونَكَ إِتْمَانًا يُبَايَعُونَ اللَّهَ

“Verily those who plight their fealty to thee do not less than plight their fealty to Allah:” (Q 48:10),

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ

“He who obeys the Messenger, obeys Allah;” (Q 4:80).

Accordingly, His saints are united by their inwardly feelings and separated by their outwardly behavior. The love of Allah is strengthened by internal union, and the right fulfillment of their duty as servants of Allah is assured by their external separation. As regards to state of union, a Sheikh says:

قد تحققت بسري فتناجاك لساني فاجتمعنا لمعان وافترقنا لمعاني
فلعن غيبك التعظيم عن لحظ عياني ولقد صبرك الوجد من الاجساد راني

“When Thou settled in my inward and my tongue secretly conversed with Thee,
We are united in one respect, but separate in another.

Although awe has hidden Thee from the glances of mine eye.

Ecstasy has made Thee near to my inmost parts.”

The state of being inwardly united he calls union, and the conversation of the tongue he calls separation. Then he indicates that both union and separation are in his self, and attributes the basis of them to himself. This is very subtle.

The controversy between us and those who maintain that the manifestation of union is the denial of separation, for the two terms contradict each other. When the Divine guidance absolutely sways one, his power to act ceases and he is mortified to himself. This opinion and doctrine is wrong, for a man must never cease to practice devotion and mortify himself as long as he has the possibility and power of doing so. Moreover, union is not apart from separation, as light from sun, accident from substance, and attribute from object are not apart. Similarly, self-mortification from Divine guidance, *Shariat* (religious law) from the Truth, and requirement from demand are not apart. But it is possible that mortification may precede or follow Divine guidance. When the mortification precede the man's tribulation is increased because he is in a state of absence, while in the later case he has no trouble or pain because he is in presence. Those to whom negation is the source of actions, to them it seem to be the substance of action, thus they commit a grave error. And this is also allowable that a man may attain such a degree that he regards all his qualities as faulty and defective, for when he sees his praiseworthy qualities as malicious and imperfect, his blameworthy qualities will necessarily appear more hateful.

I have adduced these considerations because some ignorant, who have fallen into error which is closely akin to infidelity, say that no result whatsoever depends on our exertion, and that our actions and devotions are faulty and it is better not to do mortifications than doing it imperfectly. I say that all of our deeds agreeably are our actions and actions are referred to cause and source of evils and not to

do something is also an act. When both are acts, and act is the centre of cause and evil, then how not to act is better than to act? This is a plain error and a clear deviation and an excellent criterion to distinguish the believer from the infidel. Both believers and infidels agree that their deeds are inherently defective, but the believer, in accordance with Allah's command, thinks a thing done is better than a thing left undone. Thus, *jama* (union) is that although the imperfection of separation is recognized, its authority should not be considered annulled, and *tafriq* (separation) involves that in the veil of union, one considers separation also union. In this context Muzayin Kabir²³ (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

الجمع الحصري والتفرقة العبودية موصول أحدهما بالآخر غير مفصول عنه

“Union is the state of peculiarity and servanthip is the state of separation, and both these states are inseparable from man.”

Since the mark of peculiarity is to guard servanthip, therefore, when a claimant of some thing is not meeting the prerequisites of that thing, he is a liar in his claim. It is possible that the tediousness and painfulness of self-mortification and personal effort may be made easy on man but it is impossible that the substance of self-mortification and religious obligation should be removed from anyone, unless he has an evident excuse that is generally acknowledged by the *Shariat*.

I will explain this matter now in order that you may better understand it. Union is of two kinds, healthy union and broken union.

Healthy union is that which takes place in a man when he is in the state of rapture and ecstasy. In such state, the man is under direct watch of Allah Who causes him to receive and fulfill His commandments and adorns him with mortification. Sahl b. Abdullah, Abu Hafs, Abu al-Abbas Sayyari (the author of the doctrine), Abu Yazid, Shibli, Abu al-Hasan Husri, and a number of great Sheikhs used to be continually under such state until the hour of prayer arrived; then they returned to consciousness, and after performing their prayers became enraptured again. This is to say that as long as you are in the state of separation, you are you, who would be fulfilling the command of Allah, but when Allah draws you to Himself, He has the best right to see that you perform His command, and for two reasons He keeps watch over you:

- firstly, in order that the sign of servanthip is firm with you,
- secondly, in order that He may keep His promise that He will never let the *Shariat* of Muhammad (peace be upon him) be abrogated.

In broken union one gets so much absorbed in following the Divine command that he becomes distressed and bewildered, so that he falls into the class of lunatic. Then he is either excused from performing his religious obligations or rewarded for performing them, and the state of him who is rewarded is sounder than the one who is excused.

In short, there is no particular *maqam* (station) or any peculiar state for *jama* (union), as it is the concentration of one's thoughts upon the object of one's desire. Some include it to *maqamat* (stations) and some refer it to part of states and in either case the desire of the united person is attained by negating his desire,

لان التفرقة فصل والجمع وصل

separation is parting and union is unification,”

and this holds good in everything. As Jacob concentrated his thoughts of Yusuf, so that he had no thought but of him or Majnun concentrated his thoughts on Laila, so that he saw only her in the whole world, and all created things assumed the form of Laila in his eyes. There are many such examples.

One day, when Abu Yazid was in his cell, some one came and asked that was Abu Yazid there. Abu Yazid answered, “There is none except Allah in the cell.”

²³ Abu al-Hassan Ali b. Muhammad al-Muzayin al-Baghdadi, died 328 A.H.

Some Sheikh related that a dervish came to Mecca and remained in contemplation of the Kaba for a whole year. During that time he neither ate nor drank, neither slept, nor cleansed himself. The contemplation of that house which Allah has referred to Himself became the food of his body and the drink of his soul.

The reality in all these cases is the same, viz. that Allah divided the one substance of His love and bestowed a particle thereof, as a peculiar gift, upon every one of His friends in proportion to their love with Him. Then He lets down upon that particle the shrouds of humanity, the dress of nature, curtain of temperament and veil of spirit, in order that by its powerful working it may transmute to its own quality all the particles that are attached to it. Accordingly lover is raised to the status of beloved and his all acts reflect the same. This state is named *jama* union alike by those who regard the inwardly meaning and those who regard the outwardly expression. Hussein b. Mansur (al-Hallaj) says in this sense:

لبيك لبيك يا سيدي ومولاي لبيك لبيك يا مقصدي ومعنأي
يا عين عين وجودي منتهي همتي يا منطقي وإشاراتي وأنبيأي
يا كل كلي ويا سمعي ويا بصري يا جملي وتبا عيضي وأجزاءي

"I am there in Thy service! O my Lord and Master!
I am there in Thy service! O my Beloved and object!
O star of my being, O goal of my desire
O pivot of my speech, my hints and my gestures!
O all of my all, O my hearing and my sight,
O my whole, my element and my particles!"

Therefore, it is not praiseworthy for one to affirm his existence when he has borrowed qualities, and an act of dualism to pay any heed to the phenomenal universe. Both the worlds are despicable to his soaring thought.

Some have been led by their dialectical subtlety and their admiration of phraseology to speak of "the union of union". This is good expression, but if you consider the meaning, it is better not to affirm "union of union" because there should be separation first; only then application of union would be correct and when there is union, it would be out of the result of separation, therefore, one union cannot be imposed on another union. The expression, therefore, is liable to be misunderstood, because one who is "united" does not look forth from himself to what is above or to what is below him and even independent of self also. At the time of ascension when the whole universe was displayed to Prophet (peace be upon him) he did not pay heed to anything because he was at *maqam* (station) of "union of union" and one who is united does not contemplate separation. Hence Allah said,

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى

"(His) sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong!" (Q 53:17).

In my early days I composed a book on this subject and entitled it "*Kitab al-bayan lahal al-iyān* (The book of Exposition for Persons of intuition)", and I have also discussed the matter at length in the book "*Bahr al-qulub* (The Sea of Hearts)". For the sake of brevity, enough is what has been said.

Among *Sufis* this is the doctrine of Sayyaris which I have explained and this is among those doctrines which are popular and approved by them.

I now turn to the opinions of those heretics who have connected themselves with the *Sufism* and have adopted their phraseology as a mean of disseminating their heresy and are busy in hiding their indignity and falsehood in the cover of the names of Sheikhs. My aim by mentioning them is to expose their errors in order that novices may not be deceived by their pretensions and may guard themselves from mischief.

The Hululis

Allah has said:

فَمَا ذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلَالُ

“Apart from Truth, what (remains) but error? (Q 10:32).

There are two reprobate sects who claim their alliance to Sufism and notwithstanding their moral corruptions erroneously exhaust themselves in their friendship.

One sect refers them to Abu Hulman of Damascus and the traditions which his followers relate of him do not agree with what is written about him in the books of *Sufi* Sheikhs. The *Sufis* regard Abu Hulman as one of them but these heretics attribute to him the doctrines of incarnation, union, and transmigration of spirits. I have seen criticism on them in the book of Muqadmi, and the theologians also have the same opinion of them. Allah knows what the reality is.

The other sect refers their doctrine to Faris, who pretends to have derived it from Hussein b. Mansur (al-Hallaj). None of the followers of Hallaj except this group holds such tenets. I saw Abu Jafar Sadlani with four thousand men, who all were followers of Hallaj and they all cursed Faris on account of this doctrine. Moreover, in the writings of Hallaj there is nothing but profound theosophy.

I say that we need not to know who Faris and Abu Hulman were or what they said, but anyone who holds a doctrine conflicting with *Tawhid* (Unification) and true theosophy has no part in religion at all. If the religion, which is the root and essence, is not firmly based, Sufism which is the branch and offspring of religion, how could it be sound and safe, for revelation, miracles and evidences are only manifested to Unitarians and religious persons.

The adherents of these doctrines have erred in regard to *ruh* روح (spirit), therefore, now I will explain its nature and principles according to the laws of *Sunnah* and in the course of my explanation I will bring forth the sayings, misgivings and erroneous opinions of the heretics in order that your faith may be strengthened, as the subject is relatively complicated.

Spirit (ruh روح)

The knowledge of the existence of *ruh* روح (spirit) is obligatory but the intellect is helpless to apprehend its nature. Every Muslim divine and sage has expressed some conjectural opinion in this regard. This was also debated by the unbelievers. Therefore, when the unbelievers of Quraish on the prompting of Jews sent Nadir b. al-Harith to question the Prophet (peace be upon him) concerning the nature and essence of the spirit, Allah in the first place affirmed its substance and said,

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ

they ask thee concerning the Spirit (of inspiration)“ then He denied its eternity, saying,

قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي

say: The Spirit (cometh) by command of my Lord:” (Q 17:85).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

الارواح جنود مجنونة فاما تعارف منها ائتلف واما تناكر منها اختلف

“The spirits are a gathered force: those who are acquainted love one another, and those not, remain aloof to one another.”

There are many similar proofs which without touching the nature of the spirit confirm its existence.

Some say that the spirit is that life through which the body lives. This view is also held by a group of scholastic philosophers. According to this view the spirit is such a form which at Allah's command keeps the body alive, and this is from the class which proceeds conjunction, motion, cohesion and this is similar forms by which the body is transported from one state to another.

The opinion of another group is that the spirit is something other than life but life exists through it, just as the spirit does not exist without body, and that the two are never found apart, because they are inseparable, like pain and the knowledge of pain which cannot be separated from each other. According to this view the spirit like life is also a form.

However, *Sufi* Sheikhs and most of *Sunni Ulama* hold that the spirit is a substance, and not an attribute; for so long as it remains in the corporeal body, it continually creates life in the body, and the life of man is an attribute by which he lives, but the spirit is trusted to his body. It is possible that at sometime, spirit may be separated from him while he is still living, as in the state of dream spirit leaves but the life remains. It is impossible that when spirit leaves, the intelligence and knowledge still remain with the body.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said that the spirits of martyrs remains in the form of big birds, therefore, it must be a substance and further said that *الارواح جنود مجندة* the spirits are a arrayed force, and no doubt force is subsistent. As it is not possible for any form or quality to subsist, similarly form does not stand by itself. Hence, the spirit is a subtle body which comes and goes by the command of Allah.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that on the night of the ascension, he saw Adam, Yusuf, Moses, Aaron, Jesus, and Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on them) in Heaven. Definitely those were their spirits that he saw. If the spirits were form and attribute, it would not stand by themselves so as to become visible, for it would need a locus in substances, and the substances are composed of dense and fine body. When it is lawful to see the spirits, accordingly it is also lawful that they may be in the form of birds or an arrayed force and they move to and fro. Therefore, Hadith and traditions are witness to this and speak on their movements by the command of Allah, as He says,

قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي

say: the spirit (cometh) by command of my Lord:" (Q 17:85).

Here we are at variance with the heretics, who assert that the spirit is eternal and they worship it, and regard it as the sole agent and prudent of things, and call it the spirit of god, and claim that it passes from one body to another. The acceptance of this doctrine is widely spread and is also held by the Christians, though they express it in terms that appear to be in conflict with it. Similarly the Indians, Tibetans, and Chinese, follow this doctrine and is also supported by the Shiites, *Qarmathians*, and *Batiniyan*, and is embraced by the two false sects above mentioned.

As regards to the eternity of spirit all these sects base their belief on certain propositions and bring forward proofs in support of their assertion. I ask them that what they mean by eternity. Do they mean the pre-existence of a non-eternal thing, or an eternal thing that never came into being? If they mean the pre-existence of non-eternal thing, then there is no difference between us, for we too say that the spirit is non-eternal and that it existed before the body, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

ان الله تعالى خلق الارواح قبل الاجساد

"Allah created the spirits before the bodies."

When it is established that bodies are creatures and similarly what is attached to them would also be a creature. The spirit is one of Allah's creatures, which He joins to another sort of His creatures, and in joining them together He creates life through His predestination, i.e. in creativity, spirit is an article and body another different article, when predestination of Allah's wills to give life to something, it commands the spirit to join with the body, so it appear in a living body as life. Certainly to consider the

movement of the *ruh* (spirit) from body to body is not right by any means, because, just as a body cannot have two types of life, so it is not possible for a spirit to transport itself in two bodies. Had these facts not been affirmed in Hadith and by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) whose truthfulness is beyond any doubt, and if the matter was considered purely from the standpoint of a reasonable intelligence, then the spirit would have been considered nothing else but life, and that would have been an attribute, not a substance.

If they say that the spirit is an eternal thing that never came into being. In this case, I ask that whether it exists by itself or by something else. If they say that it exists by itself then we ask them, is it the god of the universe. If they answer that it is not god of the universe, then they affirm the existence of two eternal beings, which is totally absurd, for the eternal is infinite, and essence of one eternal being would limit the other. But if they answer that it is the god of the universe, then I say that it is eternal and its creatures are non-eternal. It is impossible that the non-eternal should commingle with the eternal or become one with it, or transmigrate in it, or that the non-eternal should take the place of the eternal or that anything associated with eternal should also become eternal. The union and separation is for non-eternal, therefore, these are homogeneous and Allah be praised He is above of all. And if they say that the spirit does not exist by itself, but by something else, then it must be either an attribute or a form. If it is a form, it must either be in a locus or not. If it is in a locus, its locus must be like itself, and under such condition neither can be called eternal, and to say that it has no locus is absurd, for a form cannot stand by itself.

And if still they argue that the spirit is an eternal attribute (this is the doctrine of the *Hululis* and those who believe in transmigration) and call it an attribute of the Truth. It is impossible that an eternal attribute of Allah becomes an attribute of His creatures, for, if it is lawful that His life could become the attribute of His creature, similarly this will also be lawful that His power could become their power, and an attribute stands by its object, and in such condition attribute will be eternal and object non-eternal. Therefore, it is established that the eternal has no connection with the non-eternal, and the doctrine of the heretics who affirm this is false.

The spirit is a creature and is created by Allah's command. Anyone who holds another belief is in open error and cannot distinguish between eternal and non-eternal. It is not possible that a saint in his sainthood be ignorant of the attributes of Allah. All praises to Allah Who has kept us safe from heresies and dangers, and have bestowed on us intelligence to examine and refute them by arguments, and have blessed us with faith in order that we may know Him. Therefore, such praise for Him which has no limit, for limited praise comparing the unlimited grace carries no value.

When people who saw only the exterior, heard stories of this kind from theologians, they imagined that this was the doctrine of all aspirants to Sufism. Therefore, because of their misapprehension and shortsightedness, remain ignorant of the beauty and excellence of actual truth and to the loveliness of Divine saintship and to the flashes of spiritual illumination, for they denied the eminent Sheikhs and saints. But this does not make any difference, for eminent *Sufis* regard popular applause and popular censure with equal indifference.

One of the Sheikhs says:

الرواح في الجسد كالنار في الحطب فالنار مخلوقة والحطب مضموعة

“The spirit in the body is like fire in the coal. The fire is created and the coal is fabricated.”

Nothing is lawful to be described as eternal except the essence and attributes of Allah.

Abu Bakr Wasti has discoursed on the spirit more than any of the *Sufi* Sheikhs. He said that there are ten *maqamat* (stations) of spirits:

- The spirits of sinners which are imprisoned in darkness and know not what will befall them;
- The spirits of the pious which are in the heaven rejoice in the fruits of their actions and take pleasure in devotions, and walk thereof by the strength of their obedience;

- The spirits of disciples, which are in the fourth heaven and dwell with the angels in the delights of veracity, and in the shadows of their good works;
- The spirits of the beneficent which are in the lamps of light hung with the Throne of Allah, and their food is mercy, and their drink is favor and proximity;
- The spirits of the faithful which thrill with joy in the veil of purity and the station of erectness (*istifa*);
- The spirits of martyrs which are in Paradise in the form of birds, and go where they will in its gardens;
- The spirits of the ardent which stand on the carpet of respect clad in the luminous veils of the Divine attributes;
- The spirits of Gnostics which, in the precincts of holiness, listen at morn and eve to the words of Allah and see their places in Paradise and in this world;
- The spirits of friends which have become absorbed in contemplation of the Divine beauty and the *maqam* (station) of revelation and perceive nothing but Allah and rest content with no other thing;
- The spirits of dervishes, which have found favors with Allah in the abode of annihilation, and have suffered a transformation of quality and a change of state.

It is related concerning the Sheikhs of Sufism that they see the spirit in different shapes, and this may well be, because, as it has been said, spirits exists, and a subtle body is must to make it visible. Allah when wills, manifests the spirit to His servants.

I declare that our life is from Allah, and its stability is through Him, and keeping our being alive is the act of Allah in us, and we live through His creation, not through His essence and attributes. The doctrine of the animists is entirely false. Belief in the eternity of the spirit is one of the grave errors which prevail among the people, although being expressed in different ways. Some have named it as soul and shapeless substance, while the other call it light and darkness, and *Sufi* impostors speak of annihilation and subsistence or union and separation and have adopted similar phrases to mask their infidelity. But the *Sufis* abjure these heretics, for they hold that saintship and true love of Allah depend on knowledge of Him, and one who does not distinguish eternal from the non-eternal is ignorant in what he says. The intellects pay no heed to what the ignorant say.

The two reprobate sects about whom I mentioned in the start of the chapter, the detail of their doctrine has been covered in this part and still if someone desire more knowledge of the subject may study my other books on the subject.

Now I unveil the portals of the practice and theory of the *Sufis*, furnishing my explanation with evident proofs, in order that you may easily comprehend its meaning, and that any skeptic having insight may be led back into the right way, and that I may thereby gain blessing and Divine reward.

Chapter XV

The Uncovering of the First Veil

Gnosis (Marifat معرفت)

Allah said:

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ

“No just estimate of Allah do they make,” (Q 6:91).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

لو عرفتم الله حق معرفته لمشيتم علي البحور و زالت بدهاكم الجبال

“If you knew Allah as He ought to be known, you would walk on the seas, and the mountains would move at your supplication.”

Marifat معرفت (Gnosis) of Allah has two facets, i.e. cognitional (Ilmi علمي) and emotional (Hali حالي).

Cognitional gnosis is the foundation of all blessings in this world and in the next, for the most important thing for a man at all times and under all circumstances is knowledge of Allah, as He has said:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me.” (Q 51:56).

Here *يَعْبُدُونِ* means *يَعْرِفُونِ* i.e. “I have only created Jinns and men, that they may have *marifat* (knowledge) of Me.” But the greater part of men neglects this duty, except those whom Allah has chosen and delivered them from the worldly evils and whose hearts He has vivified with His love. Allah said:

وَجَعَلْنَا لَه نُورًا يَمْشِي بِيَدِي النَّاسِ

“And a light whereby he can walk amongst men,” (Q 6:122).

Umar the Caliph (may Allah be pleased with him) is such example. And Allah also said:

كَمَنْ مَتَّئِلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ

“Be like him who is in the depth of darkness,” (Q 6:122).

Abu Jahl (a Quraish infidel) is such example.

Gnosis is the life of the heart through Allah, and the turning away from all others (than Allah). The worth of everyone is in proportion to his gnosis, and he who is without gnosis is worthless.

Theologians and *Ulama*, means by *marifat* (gnosis) to have right cognition of Allah, whereas for *Sufi* Sheikhs, *marifat* is to keep one’s state (*hal* حال) right towards Allah. Hence, they say that gnosis is more excellent than cognition, for right state is possible without right cognition but right cognition is not the guarantee of right state, i.e. knowledgeable person until and unless have right cognition of Allah cannot be Gnostic but one may have cognition of Allah without being a Gnostic. Those who were ignorant of this distinction engaged in useless controversy, and disbelieved each other. Now I will explain the matter in order that all may be benefited.

There is a great difference of opinion as regards to the *marifat* (gnosis) and right cognition of Allah. The *Mutazilites* assert that gnosis involves intellect and except an intelligent person no one can have it. But they are wrong in their contention, as within Islam all the insane are believed to have gnosis and similarly those children who are still not wise enough are deemed to have faith. Were the criterions of gnosis intellect, all the unintelligent must be without gnosis? While unbelievers have intellect but they are charged with infidelity. If intellect were the cause of gnosis, it would follow that every sensible person must be a Gnostic, and all who lack sense must be ignorant of *marifat* (gnosis), which is manifestly absurd.

Another group has the view that reasoning is the cause of *marifat* (knowledge) of Allah, and that such knowledge is not gained except by those who assume it in this manner. This doctrine is also false as demonstrated by Iblis, for he saw many evidences, such as Paradise, Hell, the Empyrean and the Throne of Allah, and many more, yet they did not cause him to have gnosis. Allah has said:

وَلَوْ أَنَّا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَى وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ

“Even if We did send unto them angels, and the dead did speak unto them, and We gathered together all things before their very eyes, they are not the ones to believe, unless it is in Allah’s plan,” (Q 6:111).

Were the reasoning, proofs and evidences the cause of gnosis, Allah would have declared it gnosis of cause and not His own will as cause of gnosis. According to the view of *Sunnis* (orthodox Muslims), soundness of intellect and manifest evidences can be the means of gnosis, but not the cause thereof. The sole cause of *marifat* of Allah is His Will and Favor and nothing else, for without His Favor intellect is blind and does not even know itself. None of the intellectuals have ever been able to cognize His reality and when intellect is ignorant to itself, how then can it know another. Similarly, meditation on proofs and evidences and finding reasons thereof without His grace and favor leads to error, for covetous and heretics, all go for reasoning and majority of them do not attain gnosis. But one who becomes the staging place of His Favor and Grace, his all acts are gnosis, his reasoning is quest and his neglect of it is resignation to Allah’s will. But in perfect gnosis, resignation is not better than quest, for quest is such a foundation that cannot be neglected, while resignation is such a root that excludes the possibility of agitation, and these two principles do not essentially involve gnosis. In reality man’s only guide and enlightener is Allah. Reason and the proofs adduced by reason are unable to direct anyone into the right way. Can any reasoning be more demonstrative than this revelation,

وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا هُمْ عَنْهُ

but if they were returned, they would certainly relapse to the things they were forbidden, (Q 6:28).

When the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), was asked concerning gnosis, he said:

عرفت الله بالله وعرفت ما دون الله بنور الله

“I realized Allah by Allah, and that which is not Allah by the *Nur* (light) of Allah.”

Allah created the body and committed its life to the spirit, and he created the *dil* (soul) and committed its life to Himself. When intellect and reasons have no power to keep the body alive, how can they give life to *dil* (soul)? So Allah hath said,

أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ

Man he who was dead, to whom We gave life,” (Q 6:122) i.e. the life is completely in the hands of Allah: and then He said,

وَجَعَلْنَا نُورًا يَمْشِي بَيْنَ النَّاسِ

and a light whereby he can walk amongst men,” (Q 6:122)

i.e. I am the Creator of the light in which believers seek their path.

And He also said,

أَقَمَّنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ

as one whose heart Allah has opened to Islam, so that he has received enlightenment from Allah.” (Q 39:22).

As Allah kept opening of hearts with Him, so did He keep its closing also with Him. He said,

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ

Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, (Q 2:7),

and also said,

وَلَا تُطِيعُ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا

and whose hearts We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us,” (Q 18:28).

When contraction and expansion and leaps and bounds of heart are in His hands then, it is absurd to consider something other than Him for guidance. Everything except Him is a cause or a mean, and causes and means cannot possibly indicate the right way without the favor of the Causer. Veil is not a guide, rather a robber.

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبِيبٌ إِلَيْكُمْ إِذْ بَيَّنَّنَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ

“But Allah has endeared the Faith to you, and has made it beautiful in your hearts,” (Q 49:7).

See, Allah has referred the beauty and love of Faith to Himself. The gift of piety, which is essentially gnosis, is imposed by Him. The pious has no choice to follow or abandon the path of piety; therefore, unless Allah makes Him known, it is not possible for the creature to gain His gnosis through its own efforts. Abu al-Hasan Nuri says:

لا دليل على الله سواه انما العلم يطلب لاداء الخدمة

“There is none to point out the way to Allah except Allah Himself; the knowledge is sought only for performance of His devotion.”

No created being is capable of leading anyone to Allah. Those who rely on reasoning are not more sensible than Abu Talib, and there was no greater demonstration than the self of Muhammad (peace be upon him). Since Abu Talib was preordained to infidelity, even through the guidance of Muhammad (peace be upon him) he could not avail any benefit. The first step of reasoning is turning away from Allah, because reasoning involves the consideration of others (than Allah), whereas the basis of gnosis is turning away from all (save Allah). Habitually, the existence of each object is established through reasoning, but attainment of *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) is an extra ordinary act. *Marifat* of Allah can only be attained by unceasing bewilderment of intellect, and His favor. It cannot be acquired by any human act, and man has no argument except His Grace and Kindness. It involves the opening of heart and Heavenly Bounties, for anything other than this is phenomena. Although it is possible that a phenomenal being may reach to another like itself but it cannot reach the Creator and acquire Him while it exists, for in every act of acquisition one who makes the acquisition is predominant and the thing acquired is under his power. Thus, it is not honor that intellect should be led by the act to affirm the existence of the Agent, but the true honor is that one should be led by the light of the Truth to deny his own existence. In the former case the *marifat* involves logic, and in the later case it becomes an inward experience.

Those who think that intellect is the cause of gnosis should first of all consider that which affirms gnosis in the heart. Whatever the intellect affirms, *marifat* negates it, i.e. whatever shape of Allah is formed by intellect, but He is in reality something different. And even intellect perceives something

different, which also won't match the reality. How, then, is there any room for intellect to arrive at gnosis by means of demonstration? Intellect and imagination are homogeneous, and where genus is affirmed gnosis is denied. To conclude the existence of Allah from intellectual proofs is simile and to deny it on the same grounds is nullification. Intellect cannot pass beyond these two principles, which in regard to gnosis are of no use. Believer of such doctrine are not Unitarians.

The intellect tried the best to its capacity, but could not find anything else except itself, therefore, the lovers of the Truth were left with no alternative but to desire and search for Him. They without any mean fell on the shrine of helplessness and after abandoning their comfort got restless and stretched their hands in supplications and sought relief for their souls. And when they got exhausted in their search, the Grace of the Truth aided them i.e. they found the way from Him to Him and got relief from the anguish of absence. They set foot in the garden of intimacy and were awarded rest in delight and happiness.

But when intellect sees that the soul has attained its desire, tries to exert its control, but does not find the way and ultimately settles down in vain and become distressed and resigns. Then Allah after clothing it in the garment of service commands that while you were independent you were veiled by your faculties and their exercise and when these were annihilated but you remained and when you were isolated, you attained the blessing of approach. Hence, the *dil* (soul) is graced with the proximity of Allah and the intellect is made responsible to serve. And *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) is itself *marifat*.

The gist of the matter is that Allah causes man to know Him through Himself with a knowledge that is not linked to any faculty. This is such a knowledge in which the existence of man is merely metaphorical; hence his egoism by all means is utter treachery, his *dikr* (remembrance of Allah) is without forgetfulness, his acts become faultless and his gnosis is not empty words but actual feeling.

Another group declares that gnosis is the result of inspiration. This is also impossible, because a proof is a criterion to establish the truth or falsehood of *marifat* (gnosis), whereas the inspired have no such criterion. For example, one claims that according to his inspiration Allah occupies space and other claims that Allah does not occupy space, hence one of these contradictory statements should be true, but a proof is necessary in order to decide where the truth lies. Therefore, still both the claimants are dependent on proof and their inspiration is of no use. This view is held by the Brahmans.

In our age, one of the groups has carried this view to an extreme. They pretend to be pious but factually are deviated from the path of Truth. Their assertion is disgusting to all reasonable Muslims and unbelievers, for if ten claimant of inspiration say ten different things on the same matter they all would be called false and none of them would be right. If it be said that whatever conflicts with the *Shariat* (religious law) is not inspiration, I say that this argument is fundamentally unsound, because, if inspiration is to be judged and verified by the standard of the *Shariat*, then gnosis does not depend on inspiration, but on law and prophecy and Divine guidance. Hence, inspiration by any standards is wrong in gnosis.

Yet another group claims that knowledge *marifat* of Allah is intuitive and natural. This also is impossible. Was *marifat* attainable unpremeditatedly all the sensible men would have the knowledge of the Truth but we see that some reasonable men deny the existence of the Truth and hold the doctrines of simile and nullification. Hence, it is proved that knowledge of Allah is not intuitive and natural. Moreover, if it were so, the man would not have entrusted with this duty to attain it, for it is unreasonable to pain someone for self evident thing, such as one's self, the heaven and the earth, day and night, pleasure and pain, etc., concerning the existence of which no reasonable man can have any doubt, and which he must know even against his will.

But some aspirants to Sufism, considering the absolute certainty have declared it to be must and intuitive because they say: "We know Allah intuitively," giving the name of intuition to this certainty. Substantially they are right, but their expression is erroneous, because intuitive knowledge cannot be exclusively restricted to one class, on the contrary, it belongs to all reasonable men. Furthermore, intuitive knowledge is that appears in the minds of living creatures without any means or evidence, whereas the knowledge of Allah and His *Marifat* involves means. But Master Abu Ali Daqaq and Sheikh Abu Sahl Saluki and his father, who was a leading religious authority at Nishapur, maintain that

the beginning of the gnosis is demonstrative and that its end is intuitive just as technical knowledge is first acquired and finally becomes instinctive.

The orthodox *Sunnis* have the same opinion and they say that in Paradise the knowledge of Allah will be intuitive and if it is lawful there, why can't it be here in this world. Likewise, the Prophets when in this world heard the words of Allah directly, through an angel, or by revelation, knew Him intuitively. We also say the same that the inhabitants of Paradise would know Allah intuitively in Paradise, because Paradise is not a place of affliction. All the Prophets are secure from their end as those who intuitively attain His *marifat* would have no fear of being separated from Allah. The excellence of gnosis and faith is that they are hidden, and if they are made manifest, it would be a situation of compulsion without any free will and would shake the foundations of the religious law and the principle of apostasy is annulled, so that the impiety of Balam, Barsia, and Iblis would become meaningless, for it is generally believed that they had *marifat* (knowledge of Allah). In the case of Iblis Quran reveals,

فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

(Iblis) said: `Then by Thy power I will put them all in the wrong – ‘ (Q 38:82).

To initiate talk with “*فَبِعِزَّتِكَ* by Thy power” and then to get the reply is a sign of gnosis and the Gnostic while he remains a Gnostic, has no fear of being separated from Allah, and separation only takes place when he loses gnosis but intuitive knowledge is never vanishes.

This doctrine is full of danger to the people, therefore, only as much knowledge is sufficient which be able to save one from danger and evil. One should only be aware of this much that the man's knowledge and his gnosis depend entirely on the information and eternal guidance of the Truth. It is possible that man's certainty in gnosis may increase or decrease now and then, but any increase or decrease is impossible in the reality of *marifat*, since in either case it would be weakened. You must not let blind conformity enter into your knowledge of Allah, and know Him through His attributes of perfection which can only be attained through the providence and favors of Allah. The proofs and intellect are absolutely under His control If He wills He makes one of His actions a guide for some one to shows the way to Himself, and if He wills otherwise, He makes that same action an obstacle that prevents one from reaching Him. Thus Jesus (may blessings of Allah be on him) was to some a guide that led them to gnosis, but to others he was an obstacle that hindered them from gnosis. One group called him the servant of Allah and the other group took him as son of God. Similarly, some were led to Allah by idols, sun and moon, while others were led astray by taking them as their godhead. Were demonstration cause of *marifat*, every demonstrator would be Gnostic, which is totally wrong. Allah elects some people and makes everything proof of their *marifat*, so that they gain gnosis of the Court of the Truth and know Him. These are the means of *marifat* for them but not the immediate causes of it, and one means is no better than another in relation to Him who is the Author of them all. The Gnostic's affirmation of a means is a sign of dualism, and regard to anything except the object of knowledge is polytheism.

مَنْ يُضَلِّلِ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ

“To such as Allah rejects from His guidance, their can be no guide:” (Q 7:186).

When a man is doomed to perdition in the Preserved Tablet, nay, in the will and knowledge of Allah, how can any proof and demonstration lead him aright?

مَنْ التَفَتَ إِلَى الْإِغْيَارِ فَمَعْرِفَتُهُ زَنَارٌ

One who cares for other, his *marifat* is duality.”

Who is overwhelmed and annihilated in the love of Allah how anything other than Him can conquer him. When Abraham came out of the cave at day time, he did not observe anything although the proofs and wonders of nature are in abundance and more clear at day time. But when he came out at night he saw a star (رَأَى كَوْكَبًا). Had reason been the cause of his *marifat*, the proofs and wonders are more evident during day time. So, Allah, as He pleases and by whatever means He pleases shows His

servant the way to Himself and opens to him the door of gnosis, so that he attains to a degree where the very essence of gnosis appears alien and its attributes become harmful to him, and he is veiled by his gnosis from the object known and realizes that his gnosis is merely a pretension.

Dhu al-Nun says:

أيالك ان تكون بالمعرفة مدعيًا

“Beware lest thou make claim to gnosis,” embrace its reality, so you might be delivered.”

So, anyone who is blessed with revelation of His excellence, his self becomes burden and his attributes a source of corruption. He who belongs to Allah and to whom Allah belongs is not connected with anything in the universe. The gist of *marifat* (gnosis) is to recognize that all belongs to Allah. When one knows that all possessions are in the absolute control of Allah, then he has no fear of being veiled from self or mankind. Ignorance is the cause of veil and as soon as it is annihilated, the veil vanishes and because of the *marifat* both the worlds become equal to him.

Now I will mention some of the numerous sayings of the Sheikhs.

Abdullah b. Mubarak says:

المعرفة ان لا تتعجب من شيء

“Gnosis consists in not being astonished by anything,”

because astonishment arises from an act exceeding the power of the doer, and Allah is Omnipotent and it is impossible that a gnosis should be astonished by His acts. If there be any room for astonishment, one must needs marvel that Allah exalts a handful of earth to such a degree that it perceives His commands, and drop of blood to such an eminence that it discourses of love and knowledge of Him, and seeks vision of Him, and desires union with Him.

Dhu al-Nun says:

حقيقة المعرفة اطلاع الخلق على الاسرار بمواصله لطائف الانوار

“Gnosis in reality is to get knowledge of the secrecies of the created through the elegant splendors,”

i.e. until Allah, in His providence, illuminates the heart of man and keeps him safe from contamination, so that all created things have not even the worth of a mustard seed in his heart, the contemplation of Divine mysteries, both inward and outward, does not overwhelm him with rapture and when one is blessed with such state, his every look becomes an act of contemplation.

Shibli says:

المعرفة دوام الحيرة

“Gnosis is continual amazement.”

Amazement is of two kinds, i.e. amazement at the essence and amazement at the state. The former is polytheism and infidelity, but the latter is gnosis, for no gnosis can have any doubt concerning the existence of Allah and intellect has no access to His state, resultantly one is amazed on the existence and state of the Creator. Hence someone has said:

يا دليل المتحيرين زدني تحيرًا

“O Guide of the amazed, increase my amazement!”

In the first place, he affirmed the existence of Allah and the perfection of His attributes, and recognized that He is the object of creature’s search and He is the accomplisher of their prayers and the Author of their amazement. Then he requested for increase of amazement and recognized that in seeking Allah the intellect have no alternative but amazement and confusion. This is very fine sentiment.

It is also possible that knowledge of Allah's Self may involves one in amazement of his own being, because when a man knows Allah he sees himself entirely subdued by the Divine Omnipotence, his amazement is increased and say that since his existence is dependent on Him, then who and what am I?

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه

“he who knows himself has come to know his Lord,”

i.e. he who knows the annihilation of self knows Allah to be Eternally Subsistent. Annihilation destroys intellect and all human attributes, and when intellect fails to apprehend substance then nothing is left except amazement.

Abu Yazid said:

المعرفة ان تعرف ان حركات الخلق وسكناتهم بالله

“Gnosis consists in knowing that the motion and rest of the creation depend on Allah.”

And without His permission no one has the least control of His kingdom, reality is reality through Him, effects are effects through Him, attributes are attributes through Him, and every static or moved is static or moved through Him, for no one can perform any action until He creates the ability to act and puts the will in his heart to act, and that human actions are metaphorical and that Allah is the real Agent.

Muhammad b. Wasi describing the gnosis says:

من عرف الله قل كلامه دام تحيرة

“One who has attained the *marifat* of Allah, his words are few and his amazement perpetual,”

i.e. only that which is expressible can be expressed. Principally expressions have a limit and if the object which is being expressed is limitless, how finite can express correctly the infinite? And since the infinite cannot be expressed it leaves no resource except perpetual amazement.

Shibli says:

حقيقة المعرفة العجز عن المعرفة

“Real gnosis is the helplessness to attain gnosis,”

i.e. inability to know the real nature of a thing that of which a man has no clue except the powerlessness of attaining it. Therefore, he shall not make any claim at his own, because his helplessness is a quest, and so long as the seeker of the Path depends on his own faculties and attributes, he cannot properly be described by the term *Ajz* عجز (helplessness) and when these faculties and attributes depart, then his state is not helplessness, but annihilation.

Some, who affirm the attributes of humanity and subsistence of the obligation to decide with sound judgment and the authority maintained over them by Allah's proof, declare that gnosis is powerlessness, and that they are incapable to attain anything. This is deviation and committing mischief. I say in desire of what they have become so helpless? Incapability has two signs, which are not to be found in them:

- firstly, the annihilation of the faculties of desire, and
- secondly, the manifestation of the Magnificence of Allah.

Where the annihilation of the faculties take place, there is no room for outward expression and if powerlessness is interpreted through expression, the interpretation of inability would be nothing but

inability. And where the Magnificence of Allah is revealed, no clue can be given and no discrimination is conceivable. Hence one who is powerless does not know that he is so, or that the state attributed to him is called incapability. Incapability is other than Allah, and the affirmation of *marifat* is only through *marifat* and so long as there is room in the heart for other, or the possibility of expressing other save Allah, true gnosis is not attained. The Gnostic is not Gnostic until he turns aside from all that is not the Truth.

Abu Hafz Haddad says:

منذ عرفت الله ما دخل في قلبي حق ولا باطل

“Since I have come to know of Allah neither truth nor falsehood has entered in my heart.”

When a man is committed to desire and passion he turns to the *dil* (soul) which guides him to the *nafs* (lower soul) which is the place of evil. Similarly, when he finds the evidence of gnosis, he turns to the *dil* (soul) which guides him to the spirit, which is the source of truth and reality. But when soul is other, inclination to it is not right. Hence, the created demands all the proofs of gnosis from the soul which is centre of desire and passion and Gnostics are free of desires and passions and they do not incline towards *dil* (soul). They do not get rest from anything except Allah and they are always inclined towards the Truth. This is the difference between one who turns to the soul and one who turns to Allah.

Abu Bakr Wasti says:

من عرف الله انقطع بل حرس انقمع

“He who has attained the *marifat* of Allah, he is cut off from all things, nay, he is dumb and wretched,”

i.e. he is unable to express anything and all his attributes are annihilated. So the Prophet (peace be upon him), while he was in the state of absence, he was the most eloquent of the Arabs and non-Arabs and when he was taken to the proximity of Allah, he said,

لا احصي ثناء عليك

“I know not how to utter Thy praise.”

He further said:

“O Allah! My tongue is not that capable to render Thy praise. How and what should I say? I am dumb and stateless. Thou are what Thou are. My speech would be either about my ownself or about Thou, for if I talk of my ownself I am veiled and if I try to speak about Thou, in Thy proximity I deem unworthy to utter anything.”

Answer came:

لعمرك اذا سكت عن ثناءي فاكمل منك ثناءي

“By your life! Your incapacity to praise me is the greatest praise.” i.e. if thou deemest thyself unworthy to praise Me, I will make the universe thy deputy, that all its atoms may praise Me in thy name.”

Chapter XVI

The Uncovering of the Second Veil

Unification (Tawhid توحيد)

Allah said,

وَالْهَكْمُ لِلَّهِ وَاحِدٌ

“And your God is One God:” (Q 2:163),

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

“Say: He is Allah, the One and Only;” (Q 112:1),

لَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَإِذَا بَيَّ

“Take not (for worship) two gods: for He is just One God: your God is one” (Q 16:51).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

There was a man in earlier times. He had no good deed whatsoever except that he pronounced Allah to be one. When he was dying he said to his folk that his body should be burnt after his death and half of his ashes be thrown into the river and rest of the half to be scattered in the air when there was a strong wind, so that no traces of him to be left. His folks did as they were told. Allah bade the air and the water to preserve the ashes, which they did so. On Resurrection when Allah will raise that man from the dead, He will ask him why did he cause himself to be burnt, and he will reply:

“O Lord, from shame to Thee, for I was a great sinner,”

and Allah will pardon him.

The real *tawhid* توحيد (unification) consists in declaring the unity of a thing and in having a perfect knowledge of its unity. Allah is Alone, without any partner and argument. No one is partner to His acts. The Unitarians acknowledge Him from His attributes and their knowledge of unity is called Unification.

Unification has three aspects:

- Unification of Allah for Allah, i.e. His knowledge of His Unity;
- Allah’s Unification of His creatures, i.e. His decree that a man shall pronounce Him to be One, and admission of Unification in his heart;
- Men’s unification of Allah, i.e. their knowledge of the unity of Allah.

When a man knows Allah he declares His unity, for He is one, and is free of union and separation. Neither duality is lawful for Him nor is His unity a number so as to be made two by the predication of another number. Similarly He is not bounded so as to have six directions, and then every direction to be fixed to other six directions, so the addition of numbers would never end. He has no space, and that He is not in space, so as to need a substance, nor a substance, which cannot exist without another like itself, nor a natural constitution, in which motion and rest originate, nor a spirit so as to need a frame, nor a body so as to be composed of limbs; and that He does not become immanent in things, for then He must be homogeneous with them; and that He is not joined to anything, for then that thing must be a part of Him; and that He is free from all imperfections and exalted above all defects; and that He has no similar, so that He and His creature should make two; and that He has no

child whose begetting would necessarily cause Him to origin and union; and that His essence and attributes are unchangeable; and that He is endowed with those attributes of perfection which believers and Unitarians affirm, and which He has described Himself as possessing; and that He is exempt from those attributes which heretics arbitrarily impute to Him; and that He is Living, Knowing, Forgiving, Merciful, Willing, Powerful, Hearing, Seeing, Speaking, and Subsistent; and that His knowledge is not a state in Him, nor His power solidly planted in Him, nor His hearing and Sight so detached in Him, nor His speech divided in Him; and that He together with His attributes exists from Eternity; and that objects of cognition are not outside of His knowledge, and that entities are entirely dependent on His will; and that He does which He wills, and Wills that which He Knows, and creature has no cognizance thereof; and that His decree is an absolute fact, and that His friends have no resource except resignation; and that good and evil are pre ordained by Him, and is the Only Being that is worthy of hope or fear; and that He creates all benefits and injuries; and that He alone gives judgment, and His judgment is all Wisdom; and that no one has any possibility of attaining unto Him, and that the inhabitants of Paradise shall behold Him; and that He is free of any simile; and that such terms as “confronting” and “seeing face to face” cannot be applied to His Being; and His saints may enjoy the contemplation of Him in this world. Those who do not acknowledge Him to be such are guilty of impiety.

As has been said at the beginning of this chapter that unification consists in declaring the unity of a thing, and that such a declaration cannot be made without knowledge. The *Sunnis* have declared the unity of Allah with true comprehension, because, seeing a subtle work and a unique act, they recognized that it could not possibly exist by itself, and finding manifest evidences of origination in every thing, they perceived that there must be an Agent who brought the universe into being – the earth and heaven and sun and moon and land and sea and that moves and rests and their knowledge and speech and life and death, for all these an artificer was indispensable. Accordingly, the *Sunnis*, rejecting the notion there are two or three artificers, declared that they are satisfied with a single artificer who is perfect, living, knowing, almighty, and independent of partner. And inasmuch as act requires at least one agent, and the existence of two agents for one act involves the dependence of one on the other, it follows that the Agent is unquestionably and certainly is one.

Here we are at variance with the dualists, who affirm light and darkness, and with the *Magians*, who affirm *Yazdan* and *Ahriman*, and with the philosophers, who affirm nature and potentiality, and with the astronomers, who affirm the seven planets, and with the *Mutazilites* who affirm creators and artificers without end. I have briefly refuted all these vain opinions in a book entitled *al-Riayat be-huquq Allah*. I must refer anyone who desires further information to study this book or the works of the ancient theologians. Now I will turn to the signs and indications which the Sheikhs have talked on this subject.

Junaid said:

التوحيد أفراد القدم عن الحديث

“Unification is to separate the Eternal from phenomenal,”

That is to say, not to regard the eternal as a locus of phenomena, or phenomena as a locus of the eternal; and to know that Allah is Eternal and that we are phenomenal, and that nothing of mankind genus can be connected with Him, and that nothing of His attributes is mingled in created, for there is no homogeneity between the eternal and the phenomenal and eternal was existent before phenomenal. As Eternal was not dependent on phenomenal before their existence, similarly eternal has no need of phenomenal after their existence. This is contrary to the doctrine of those who hold spirit to be eternal. They have been mentioned earlier. If someone considers eternal to descend into phenomena or phenomena to be attached to the eternal lawful, then no proof remains of the eternity of Allah and the origination of the universe. This is the faith of atheists. May Allah save us from such belief?

In short, in all the actions of phenomena there are proofs of unification and evidences of the Divine Omnipotence and signs which establish the eternity of Allah:

“Everything in the universe is His sign, which speak of the Unification of Allah.”

But the men are too heedless and that’s why they leaving Him aside, desire from others and are intoxicated in praise of others. When He does not require any help in creation or annihilation, then how come that He would need the help in their subsistence.

Hussein b. Mansur (al-Hallaj) says:

اول قدم في التوحيد فناء التفريد

“The first step in unification is the annihilation of separation,”

The meaning of *tafrid* تفريد is pronouncement that one has become separated from imperfections, and *tawhid* توحيد means the declaration of a thing’s unity. Therefore, in *tafrid* (separation) it is possible to affirm that which is other than God and this quality may be ascribed to others besides Allah. But in unity it is not possible to affirm other than Allah and unity may not be ascribed to anything except Him. Thus, partnership in *tafrid* (separation) is permissible but not in unification. Accordingly, the first step in unification is to deny (that God has) a partner and to put admixture aside, for admixture on the way (to God) is like seeking the way without a lamp.

And Husri says that we have five principles in unification:

رفع الحدث واثبات القدم وهجر الاوطان ومفارقة الاخوان ونسيان ما علم وجهل

- “To do away with phenomenal,
- affirmation of eternity,
- departure from familiar dwellings,
- separation from brethren, and
- forgetfulness of known and unknown.”

To do away with phenomenal consists in denying that phenomena have any unification or that can possibly attain to His holy essence.

The affirmation of eternity consists in being convinced that Allah always existed, as has already been explained in discussing the saying of Junaid.

The departure from familiar dwellings means, departure from habitual pleasures of the lower soul and the forms of the world, and for the adepts, it refers to departure from lofty stations and glorious states and exalted *karamat* (miracles).

The separation from brethren means turning away from the society of mankind and diverting full attention towards Allah, for any thought of other than Allah is a veil and imperfection for the Unitarian. The more his thoughts are associated with others (than Allah) the more is he veiled from Allah? It is agreed among all the religions that unification is the fixing and concentration of mind and thoughts, whereas to care for or content with others (than Allah) is a sign of dispersion of thought.

And forgetfulness of a thing which is known or unknown means that the knowledge of the created is bounded with state and attribute or genesis and nature, and whatever the knowledge of mankind affirms about, for unification denies it. Similarly whatever their ignorance affirms about it is merely contrary to their knowledge, for ignorance is not unification, therefore, knowledge of the reality of unification cannot be attained without denying the personal initiatives in which knowledge and ignorance consists. When insight overwhelms it is knowledge but when heedlessness overwhelms it is ignorance.

Some elder related that once while he was attending the discourse of Husri, he fell asleep and he dreamed that two angles descended from Heaven and listened discourse of Husri for some time. Then one of the angels said to the other, that whatever Husri had said was theory and not *tawhid* (unification). When he awoke up he heard Husri explaining *Tawhid*. Husri looked at him and said, "It is impossible to speak of unification except theoretically."

Junaid said:

التوحيد ان يكون العبد شبحاً بين يدي الله يجري عليه تصاريه في مجاري احكام قدرته في لبح بحار توحيد بالفاء عن نفسه
وعن دعوة الخلق له وعن استجابته لهم بحقائق وجود وحدانيته في حقيقة قربه بذهاب حسه وحر كنهه لقيام الحق
له فيما اراد منه وهو ان يرجع اخر العبد الي اوله فيكون كما كان قبل ان يكون

"The reality of Unification is that when Allah on the path of His predestination plan enforces His decree,

- the man should consider himself a puppet before Him and annihilate his desires and authority in the sea of His unity;
- should annihilate his *nafs* (lower soul),
- be not attentive to the call of the people and annihilate his movements while in proximity and through the realization of knowledge and essence of *Tawhid*
- stands by the will of the Truth so that his end is like his beginning and attains the state in which he was before his existence."

This means that the Unitarian has no authority, power or choice to interfere in the will of Allah and is absorbed so much in the unity of Allah that he has no regard to himself, for in the state of proximity his *nafs* (lower soul) is annihilated and senses vanishes. The commandments of Allah are enforced on him as He pleases. One is so annihilated in his desires that that he becomes like an atom as he was in the eternal past when the covenant of unification was made, and Allah answered the question which He Himself had asked, and that atom was only the object of His speech. Mankind do not find any joy to extend some sort of invitation to such a person who have attained this *maqam* (station) and neither such person has any affection with the mankind that he should respond to their call.

This saying indicates the annihilation of human attributes and perfect resignation to Allah in the state when a man is overpowered by the revelation of His Majesty, so that he becomes a passive instrument and a subtle substance that feels nothing, i.e. he is annihilated to everything and his body becomes an object for the mysteries of Allah. His speech and actions are attributed to Him and his every attribute stands by Him. He is annihilated to everything and his subsistence becomes an evidence of the secrecies of the Truth, so much so that his speech and acts are referred through Him and his all attributes stand by Him. Still he remains subject to the ordinances of the *Shariat* (religious law), so that the proof of the Truth may be established, but he will be annihilated from the vision of everything.

Such was the *maqam* (station) of Prophet (peace be upon him) when on the night of the ascension he was borne to the station of proximity, although, there was a gap in the *maqam*, but not in proximity. His object was far above the intellect of people and their imaginations and thoughts. The mankind found him absent and he found himself in absence. He was amazed on his being without attribute after getting annihilated in the attribute of annihilation. His natural chemistry and temperateness of disposition did not remain fixed at one point. His *nafs* (lower soul) moved to the place of soul, and soul moved to the place of spirit, and spirit moved to the place of the inward and inward reached to the proximity of the Truth and he was liberated from everything and he desired that his body should be destroyed and his personality be dissolved, but Allah's purpose was to establish His proof. He bade the Prophet (peace be upon him) to remain in the state that he was in. He gained strength from the command and through this strength attained the *maqam* (station) of existence by Allah and when he was back to his own state, he said:

اني لست كاحدكم اني ابيت عند ربي فيتعممني ويسقيني

"I am not like any one of you. Verily, I pass the night with my Lord, and He gives me food and drink, thus, my life and existence is bounded with Him."

And he also said,

لي مع الله وقت لا يسعني فيه ملك مقرب ولا نبي مرسل

"I attain a particular time from Allah in which none of the trusted angels nor does any Prophet have any room."

Sahl b. Abdullah said:

ذات الله موصوفة بالعلم علي مداركة بالاحاطة ولا مرئية بالابصار في دار الدنيا
وهو موجود ببقاء الايمان من غير حد ولا احاطة ولا حلول وتراه العيون في العقبى ظاهراً وباطناً في ملكه
وقدرته قد حجب الخلق عن معرفة كنه ذاته ودلهم عليه بآياته,
والقلوب تعرفه والعقول لاتدرکه ينظر اليه المؤمنون بالابصار من غير احاطة ولا ادراك

"The limit of Unification is that

- you should recognize that the essence of Allah is endowed with knowledge, that is neither comprehensible nor visible to the eye in this world,
- but He in the light of the reality of faith, exists without any distinction and comprehension; and He by His Grace is manifest in His kingdom;
- and that mankind is veiled from knowledge of the ultimate nature of His essence, although He guides one through manifestation of His signs and wonders;
- and that the hearts know Him, but the intellect cannot reach unto Him; and that believers shall behold Him with their (spiritual) eyes, without comprehending His infinity."

This saying is very comprehensive and includes all the principles of unification.

And Junaid said that the noblest saying concerning unification is that of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

سبحان من لم يجعل لخلقه سبيلاً الي معرفته الا بالعجز عن معرفته

"Glory to Allah, who has not vouchsafed to His creatures any means of attaining unto knowledge of Him except through helplessness to attain unto knowledge of Him."

Many have mistaken the meaning of these words and supposed that helplessness of gnosis implies to non-existence of gnosis. This is absurd, because helplessness refers only to an existing state, not to a state that is non-existent. For example, a dead man is not incapable of life, but he cannot be alive while he is dead and a blind man is not incapable of seeing, but he cannot see while he is blind and a lame is not incapable of standing, but he cannot stand while he is lame. Similarly, a Gnostic is not incapable of gnosis so long as gnosis is existent, for it is must and resembles intuition.

This saying may be brought applicable with the doctrine of Abu Sahl Saluki and Master Abu Ali Daqqaq, who assert that gnosis is acquired in the first instance, but finally becomes intuitive. And intuitive knowledge is that the possessor is compelled and incapable of putting it away or drawing it to himself. Hence, according to this saying, unification is the act of Allah in the heart of His creature.

Shibli says;

“Unification veils the Unitarians from the Beauty of Oneness,” because if unification is said to be the act of man, and an act of man does not cause the revelation of Allah, and in the reality of revelation that which does not cause revelation is a veil.

Man with all his attributes is other than Allah, for if his attributes are taken as divine, then he himself must be taken as Divine, and then perforce, to whom this attribute belong to, he is also His attribute and he would also be the Truth. Similarly, Unitarian, Unification, and the One, all three, will be the causes of the existence of one another and this is precisely the Christian Trinity. If any attribute prevents the seeker from annihilating himself in unification, he is still veiled by that attribute, and while he is veiled he is not a Unitarian, for all except Allah is vanity, and this is the interpretation of “لا اله الا الله” there is no God but Allah.”

When Ibrahim Khawwas met Hussein b. Mansur at Kufa, he asked him, “O Ibrahim, in search of what have you spent your whole life?” Ibrahim answered: “I have struggled a lot in *tawakul* (trust in Allah).” Mansur said: “You have wasted your life in cultivating your spiritual nature: what has become of annihilation in unification?”

The Sheikhs have discussed at large the terms by which unification is denoted. Some say that it is an annihilation that cannot properly be attained unless the attributes subsists, while the others say that it has no attribute whatever except annihilation. The analogy of union and separation must be applied to this question in order that it may be understood.

I declare that *tawhid* (unification) is a mystery revealed by Allah to His servants that cannot be expressed in words at all, much less in high-sounding phrases, for explanatory terms and those who use them are other than the Truth, and to affirm what is other than Him in unification is to affirm polytheism. So under such conditions, *Tawhid* will be referred as sportiveness, although the Unitarian is always very serious about *Tawhid* and does not keep any concern with extravagancies.

Chapter XVII

The Uncovering of the Third Veil

Faith (*Iman* ايمان)

Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا

“O ye who believe! Believe.” (Q 4:136),

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

“O ye who believe!” (Q 4:135).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

الايمان ان تؤمن بالله وملائكته وكتبه ورسله واليوم الآخر

“Faith is belief in Allah, His angels, His (revealed) books and day of Resurrection.”

Etymologically, *iman* ايمان (faith) means verification. Everyone has discussed a lot concerning the meaning of faith (*iman*) according to *Shariat* (religious law) and there is a lot of controversy among them. The *Mutazilites* hold that faith includes acts of devotion, both theoretically as well as practically; hence they say that a man who commits sin, no more retains his faith. The *Kharijites* are of the same opinion and declares a man infidel if he commits a sin. Some declare that faith is simply a verbal profession, while others say it is only knowledge of Allah. And some of the *Sunni* scholastics assert that it is mere verification. I have written a separate book explaining this subject, but here purpose is to establish what the *Sufi* Sheikhs believe.

Like the scholastics, the *Sufi* Sheikhs are also divided on this question in two groups. One group which includes Fudayl b. Iyad, Bashr Hafi, Khair al-Nassaj, Sumnun al-Muhibb, Abu Hamza Baghdadi, Muhammad Jurairi and a great number of others hold that faith is the totality of verbal profession, verification and practice. But the other group which includes Ibrahim b. Adham, Dhu al-Nun, Abu Yazid, Abu Suleman Durani, Harith Muhasibi, Junaid, Sahl b. Abdullah, Shaiq Balkhi, Hatim Asam, Muhammad b. al-Fadl Balkhi and a number besides hold that faith is verbal profession and verification. Among the scholastics Malik and Shafii and Ahmad b. Hanbal maintain the former view, while Abu Hanifa, Hussein b. Fadl Balkhi, Muhammad b. al-Hasan, Dawud Tai and Abu Yusuf support the latter view.

The difference between them is entirely one of the expressions and is devoid of substance. I will now briefly explain, in order that you may acquire its knowledge to safeguard against charging someone for contradicting the principle of faith.

Both *Sunni Ulama* and *Sufi* Sheikhs are agreed that faith has essence and a derivative. The essence of the faith is confirmation in the heart, and the derivative is observance of the Divine command. Arabs commonly and customarily transfer the name of an essence to a derivative by way of metaphor, e.g. they call the sun light “the sun”. In this sense the one of the groups apply the term faith to the obedience, for man cannot save himself from Divine punishment without being obedient to His command. The mere confirmation without performance of the Divine commands is not sufficient to secure one from punishment. Therefore, the more one is devoted the more he is secure from punishment. Since obedience together with confirmation and verbal profession is the cause of security from Divine punishment, therefore, they bestow on obedience the name of faith.

The other group asserts that gnosis, not obedience, is the cause of safety and deliverance, for the devotion without gnosis is of no avail. But contrary to this, if one has gnosis but lacks in worship will be ultimately delivered, though it depends on the will of Allah whether he shall be pardoned by His grace or through the intercession of the Prophet (peace be upon him), or whether he shall be punished according to his transgressions and then be permitted to Paradise. Those who have gnosis, although they are transgressors and guilty, by reason of their gnosis would not remain for ever in Hell, while those who have only acts without gnosis do not enter Paradise. So it becomes clear that worship and obedience are not the causes of the cause of deliverance. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

لن ينجا احدكم بعمله

none of you shall be delivered because of his acts.”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked that even would he also be treated in the same way and he replied,

لا انا الا ان يتغمدني الله برحمته

yes, I too, though Allah may cover me with His Grace.”

Hence in reality, without any controversy among Muslims, faith is gnosis, admission, and performance of acts. One knows Allah by His attributes, and the most elect of His attributes are:

- those concerned with His Magnificence,
- those concerned with His Majesty, and
- those concerned with His Excellence.

As regards to the later the created have no clue of it except to recognize His Excellence and deny all sorts of imperfection from Him. As regard to formers, the one whose object is His Magnificence is always longing for vision and that whose object is His Majesty would always abhors his own attributes and his heart is stricken with awe and fear. So longing is the result of the effects of love, and so is abhorrence of human attributes, because the lifting of the veil of human attributes is the very essence of love. Therefore faith and gnosis are love, and obedience and devotion are the signs of this love. So, when soul is the place of friendship, eyes the honored place of sight, life the place of warning and spirit place of contemplation, then his body should not neglect the command of Allah and who neglects His command knows Him not.

It is very common now a day among the aspirants to Sufism. When a group of heretics saw the excellence and respect of the real *Sufis*, they pretended themselves to be like them and started saying that the pain of the worship and obedience only last until you do not attain *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) and once you have attained it the pain of the worship and obedience vanishes from the body. I say no, rather when you have gnosis, the spirit is filled with longing and His command is held in greater veneration than before. But I do consider that a pious man may reach a point where he is relieved from the irksomeness of obedience and devotion through the increase of Divine aid, so that he performs without trouble what is troublesome to others. This state is not achievable without a longing that produces violent agitation.

Some say that faith is God gifted, while others say that it springs entirely from man and this has long been a matter of controversy among the people in Transoxania. Those who assert that faith come entirely from Allah, they in one sense believe on sheer compulsion, because man must then have no choice. Those who assert that it springs entirely from man believe on free-will, though man cannot know Allah except through the knowledge that He gives him. The way to *Tawhid* (unification) lies between compulsion and free-will. Faith is an act of man but it is linked to the guidance of Allah, as He said:

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا

“Those whom Allah (in His Plan) willeth to guide – He openeth their breast to Islam; those whom He willeth to leave straying – He maketh their breast close and constricted,” (Q 6:125),

i.e. inclination to believe is the guidance of Allah, while belief is the act of man. The signs of the desire of guidance in the heart are that:

- One must have firm belief of unification in the heart;
- His eyes are refraining from forbidden sights and looking heedfully on evidences;
- His ears are desirous of listening to His word:
- His belly is empty of what is unlawful;
- His tongue is committed to speak only the truth, and
- His body is refraining from all unlawful activities.

If one fulfills all these only then he can establish his claim matching the reality and acts. Hence those who assert that faith comes entirely from Allah, maintain that gnosis and faith may increase or decrease. Although everyone is agreed on that increase or decrease is not possible in *marifat* (knowledge of Allah) because if it is lawful in *marifat*, then per force the object of gnosis must also be liable to increase or decrease. So when fluctuation is not lawful on the Object, then how it could be lawful on His *marifat*, for *marifat* cannot be anti to *marifat*, therefore, increase or decrease would take place in acts and in other areas. Everyone is agreed upon that obedience may increase or decrease and this fluctuation is in acts and in other areas. *Hashwiyan* who links themselves to both these groups are involved in a strange confusion as some of them hold that obedience is an element of faith, while others declare that faith is a verbal profession and nothing else. Both these doctrines are unjust.

In short, faith is the absorption of all human attributes in the desire and search of Allah and seekers of the Truth must acknowledge that the might of gnosis overwhelms the attributes of agnosticism, and where faith exists agnosticism is banished, for, as it is said,

إذا طلع الصباح يطل المصباح

“a lamp is of no use when the dawn rises,”

and no argument is required to establish the outbreak of day. And Allah has said,

إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا أَرْضًا أَفْسَدُوهَا

Kings, when they enter a country, despoil it,” (Q 27:34).

When gnosis is established in the heart of the Gnostic, all the effects of doubt and skepticism and agnosticism are vanished, and the influence of gnosis subdues his senses and passions so that in all his acts, visions and words he remains within the grip of His Authority.

Someone asked Ibrahim Khawwas concerning the reality of faith. He replied:

I have no answer to this question just now, because whatever I say now would be mere expression. This question is of such nature which demands its answer through practical action. I am setting out for Mecca, and you are also destined for Mecca. Be my fellow traveler, so you may find the answer. He consented and joined Ibrahim in his journey to Mecca. As they journeyed through the desert, every day two loaves and two cups of water appeared. Ibrahim gave one to him and took the other for himself. One day an old man riding on a horse came to them. When he saw Ibrahim, he got down from the horse and conversed with Ibrahim for a while, and then he left. The fellow asked Ibrahim that who was the elder man. Ibrahim told him that it was the answer of his question. On his further quest, Ibrahim told him:

“He was Khidr, who pleaded to let him accompany me, but I refused, for I feared that in his company I might put confidence in him instead of Allah, and then my trust in Allah would have been vitiated. Real faith is trust in Allah.”

As Allah has said,

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

but on Allah put your trust if you have faith.“ (Q 5:23).

Muhammad b. Khafif says:

الإيمان تصديق القلب بما أعلمه الغيوب

“Faith is the belief of the heart in that knowledge which comes from the Unseen.”

The true faith is to believe in that which is hidden. The vision of Allah is not possible through eyes. The state of belief in a man can not take place until he receives strength and aid from Allah and it is not attainable until it is bestowed by Allah. All the Gnostics get gnosis and knowledge from Him. He is the One who reveals gnosis and knowledge in their hearts and has kept it away from man through his own struggle. Therefore, who establishes the faith of His gnosis in his heart, is a pious man.

Now I will discuss the matters of practice and will explain their difficulties.

Chapter XVIII

The Uncovering of the Fourth Veil

Purification from Foulness

After faith, the first thing incumbent on Muslims is purification, so they be able to say their prayers. The purification is to cleanse the body from filth and pollution, and to wash the three members (face, hands, and feet), and to wipe the head with water as the *Shariat* prescribes or to perform dry ablutions with dust in the absence of water or severe illness. The laws on purification are known to everyone.

Purification is of two kinds, outward purification and inward purification. As prayer is not just without purification of the body, similarly gnosis also is not right without the purification of the heart. The water for body purification must be clean, unpolluted, free of impurity, and unused. For inward purification, the *Tawhid* (unification) must be pure and belief undefiled. The *Sufis* are always connected in purification outwardly and in unification inwardly. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

“Be constant in ablution, that two guardian angels may remain friendly with thee,”

And Allah has said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

“For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.” (Q 2:222).

The one who keeps his body clean, the angels keep him as friend and who keeps his heart prosperous with unification, Allah make him His friend. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to call in his invocations,

اللهم طهر قلبي من النفاق

“O Allah, keep my heart pure from hypocrisy.”

Although hypocrisy never touched the heart of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he regarded the honor and respect bestowed on him as an affirmation of other than Allah, and in unification it is hypocrisy to affirm other than Allah.

Although each aspect of the *karamat* (miracles) of Sheikhs are eye opener and perfect guide for the disciples but ultimately at the *maqam* (station) of excellence the same becomes a veil between the seeker and the Benefactor of the honor and *karamat*, may the attention be towards self or other, hence Abu Yazid said:

نفاق العارفين افضل من اخلاص المريدين

“The hypocrisy of Gnostic is better than the sincerity of disciples,” for which is a *maqam* (station) to the novice is a veil to adept. The novice desires and struggles to gain *karamat* (miracles), but the attention of the adepts is fixed on the Giver of *karamat*. In fact, the affirmation of *karamat*, or of anything that involves the thought of other than Allah, appears hypocrisy to the people of the Truth, for *karamat* involves embracing others.

Accordingly, where the friends of Allah because of the proximity of *maqam* (station) are in difficulty and danger, that is a *maqam* (station) of deliverance for all sinners, and where sinners are in difficulty and danger, there the infidels are fearless of their infidelity. Because, if infidels knew as sinners know, that their sins are displeasing to Allah, they would all be delivered from infidelity. Similarly if sinners knew, as the friends of Allah know, that all their actions are defective, they would all be saved from sins and purged of contamination. Therefore, outward and inward purification must go together.

- When a man washes his hands he must wash his heart also from the love of worldliness,
- when performs cleansing after urination or natural evacuation he must purify his heart from love of others,
- when he puts water in his mouth he must purify his mouth from the remembrance of others (than Allah),
- when he washes his nose he must make promise not to smell the lust in future,
- when he washes his face he must turn away from all familiar objects and turn towards Allah,
- when he washes his arms he must forego all his authority,
- when he wipes his head he must resign his affairs to Allah, and
- when he washes his feet he must not form the intention of taking his stand on anything except according to the commands of Allah.

Thus he will be purified both inwardly as well outwardly, for all the outward acts are combined with inward, as to mention of faith through tongue is an outward action and its confirmation through heart is an inward action. The validity of intention depends on heart and obedience and devotion is the work of the body.

The method of spiritual purification is to deliberate and mediate on the evils of this world and to perceive that it is false and transitory and except through self-mortification the heart does not get independent of it. The most important act of mortification is to observe the external rules of discipline diligently in all circumstances. Ibrahim Khawwas said:

“I pray Allah to give me everlasting life in this world, in order that, while mankind after getting free from the pain of the worldly devotion and obedience is engrossed in the pleasures of the Paradise and forgotten the devotion of Allah, I may observe the rules of religion amidst the affliction of the world and remember Allah.”

It is related that Abu Tahir Harmi lived forty years in Mecca, and he never attended to natural call in the vicinity of the sacred place and always went outside of the sacred territory whenever he had to release himself. He used to say that he would not pour the water which he had used to cleanse himself on ground that Allah had called His.

When Ibrahim Khawwas was ill of dysentery in the principal mosque at Rayy, he had to perform sixty ablutions in the course of a day and night, and ultimately died in the water.

Once, Abu Ali Rudbari got afflicted with devilish thoughts about purification. One day he went to the river at dawn time and remained in the water till sun rose. During that interval his mind kept on troubling him until he cried out: “O Allah! Grant me peace.” He heard a voice from Unseen saying: “Peace consist in knowledge.”

Sheikh Sufyan during his disease which led him to death, for the performance of one prayer he purified himself for sixty times and said: “I shall at least be clean when I leave this world.”

One day Shibli purified himself with the intention of entering the mosque, he heard a Heavenly voice saying:

“You have washed your outward self, but how about your inward purity?”

He turned back and gave all his possession in charity and spent the next whole year in no more clothes than were necessary for prayer. In the same condition he came to Junaid, who said to him:

“O Abu Bakr, that was a very excellent purification which you have performed, may Allah always keep you purified!” so, after that, Shibli was never without purification.

When he was dying and could no longer purify himself, he made a sign to one of his disciples that he should purify him. The disciple did so, but forgot to let the water flow through his beard. Shibli was

unable to speak. He seized the disciple's hand and pointed it to his beard, whereupon the rite was duly performed.

Shibli also said that whenever he neglected any rule of purification, always some vain conceit arose in his heart.

Abu Yazid said:

"Whenever a thought of this world occurs to my mind, I perform purification; and whenever a thought of the next world occurs to me, I perform a complete ablution," This world is temporary and place of filth, therefore, its thoughts are also filthy, whereas the next world is the place of absence and repose, and the result of thinking of it is like pollution, hence impurity involves purification and pollution involves total ablution.

One day Shibli purified himself. When he reached to the door of the mosque a voice whispered in his heart:

"Is it your purification that you have entered to My house with such boldness?" Shibli turned back, but the voice asked:

"Do you turn back from My door? Whither will you go?" Shibli was unable to bear it and he uttered a loud cry. The voice said:

"Do you protest before Me?" Hearing this, Shibli stood still and the voice came:

"Do you pretend to endure My affliction?" Shibli exclaimed:

"O Allah, I implore Thee to help me before Thyself."

The *Sufi* Sheikhs have discussed the true meaning of purification in quiet length, and have commanded their disciples not to cease from purifying themselves both outwardly and inwardly. Since they are the travelers of the way to the Court of the Truth, therefore, they have a principle that he who outwardly desire to worship must purify himself outwardly with water, and he who desires to be in proximity of the Truth must purify himself inwardly. The outward purity takes place through water and inward purity is attained with repentance. Now I will explain the principles of repentance and its corollaries.

Repentance (Taubah توبه) and its Corollaries

You must know that *tauba* توبه (repentance) is the first *maqam* (station) for the seekers moving on the way to the Truth, just as purification is the first step of those who desire to serve Allah. Hence Allah has said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا

"O ye who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance." (Q 66:8).

وَتَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا

"Turn ye all together towards Allah," (Q 24:31).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

مأس شيء أحب إلي الله من شاب تائب

"There is nothing that Allah loves more than a youth who repents";

and he also said:

التائب من الذنب كمن لا ذنب له

“He who repents of his sins is even as one who has no sin”;

then he added,

إذا أحب الله عبد لم يضره ذنب

when Allah loves a man, sin shall not hurt him,” then he recited

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ

for Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly,” (Q 2:222).

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about the signs of repentance, he replied, “regret”. And “sin shall not hurt him” means that he will not become an infidel on account of sin, and neither his faith will be weakened. When sin cannot cause loss to one’s faith, then that loss of sin which leads one to deliverance is actually not a loss.

Etymologically *tauba* توبه means “return”, therefore, it is said تاب أي رجع that *tauba* really involves the turning back from what Allah has forbidden through fear of what He has forbidden.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الندم توبه

penitence is the act of returning.”

This saying comprises of three things which are involved in *tauba*, namely:

- the first condition of *tauba* (repentance) is to regret for the previous disobedience of the command of the Truth,
- the second condition is not to commit any sin in the prevailing situation, and
- finally determine not to sin again.
- These three conditions involves in repentance, because when one is wholeheartedly regretful, the other two conditions make part of repentance. Similarly *nadamat* ندامت (contrition) may be due to three causes:
- The first is the fear of Divine chastisement while having an eye on his wrong doings and feel regretful of his evil actions.
- The second cause could be the desire of Divine favor and certainty that it cannot be gained by evil conduct and disobedience therefore, he is regretful to his evil actions in struggle to gain Divine favor.
- The third cause is that he feels shame of ever present Allah and feels regretful on being disobedient to Him.

In the first case the penitent is *taib* تائب (repentant), in the second case he is *munib* منيب (a penitent), and in the third case he is *auwab* اواب.

Similarly, *tauba* (repentance) has following three *maqam*.

- *Tauba* توبه (repentance), for fear of Divine punishment;
- *Inabat* انابت (penitence) for desire of Divine reward; and
- *Aubat* اوبت for the sake of obeying the Divine command.

Tauba توبه (repentance) is the degree of the common believers, and implies repentance from grievous sins. Allah said,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا

O ye who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance.” (Q 66:8).

Inabat انابت (penitence) is the *maqam* (station) of the saints and elects of Allah, for whom He said,

مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَجَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُنِيبٍ

who feared (Allah) Most Gracious unseen, and brought a heart turned in devotion (to Him):” (Q 50:33).

And *aubat* اوبت is the characteristics of the Prophets and Apostles, for Allah said,

نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ

how excellent is Our service! Ever did he turn (to Us)!“ (Q 38:30,44).

Repentance (*tauba*) is to return from grievous sins to obedience, penitence (*Inabat*) is to return from minor sins and to step in the valley of love and *aubat* is to return to Allah after disregarding own self. Hence, the difference between turning to obedience from sins, to love from devilish thoughts, and from own self to Allah, need no explanation.

Tauba (repentance) has its origin in the stern prohibitions of Allah and in the heart's being aroused from the slumber of heedlessness and immediately comprehending own faults. When a man recognizes his evil conduct and repulsive deeds he tries to seek deliverance from them, and Allah opens the door of repentance for him and leads him back to the pleasantness of obedience. According to the opinion of *Sunnis* and all the *Sufi* Sheikhs, a man who has repented of one sin may continue to commit other sins and nevertheless receive Divine recompense for having abstained from that one sin. And this is also possible that through blessing of that recompense he might abstain from other sins, i.e. suppose someone is habitual of drinking and fornication and later on he repent from fornication but remain committed to drinking, under such situation his repentance to fornication would be lawful and right. But the a sect of the *Mutazilites* hold that no one can properly be called repentant unless he avoids all grievous sins. But their doctrine is wrong, because a man is not punished for the sins that he has not committed. When one renounces or do not commit certain kinds of sins he has no fear of being punished for that, consequently, his repentance is admitted and becomes effective.

Similarly, if he performs some religious duties and neglects others, he will be rewarded for those which he performed and will be punished for those which he neglected. Moreover, if anyone who does not have the means or vigor to commit a sin, and still he repents, he is repentant, for *nadamat* ندامت (contrition) is one of the kinds of repentance. In prevailing condition he regretted on his past sins and through that repentance he has gained contrition and firmly resolved not to commit it again, even though he should have the power and means of doing so at some future time.

As regards to the manners and definition of repentance, the *Sufi* Sheikhs hold diverse opinions. Sahl b. Abdullah and a group of Sheikhs have the opinion that:

التوبته ان لا تنسى ذنبك

“Repentance consists in not forgetting your sins,”

And that one should remain conscious about them, so that later on because of good deeds he may not be misled to conceit, for regret and shame on evil doings has preference over good deeds. One who remembers his misdeeds is never affected by vanity.

Junaid and others take the opposite view and say that:

“Repentance consists in forgetting the sin.”

They argue that the penitent is a lover of Allah, and the lover of Allah is in contemplation of Him, and in contemplation it is wrong to remember sin, for in contemplation remembering of sin is itself a sin. Because one wasted some time in committing the sin and rest of the time he wastes in remembering it, for mentioning of oppression is a veil of sincerity.

This controversy goes back to the difference of opinion concerning mortification and contemplation which has been discussed in the doctrine of the Sahlis.

Those who hold the *taib* تائب (penitent) to be self-dependent regard his forgetfulness of sin as heedlessness, while those who hold that *taib* تائب (penitent) dependent on the Truth regards his remembrance of sin as polytheism. Hence, if penitent is with self attributes his pertinacity is still resolvable and when he is annihilated to his attributes then it is not right to discuss his trait. Therefore Moses while his attributes were subsistent said (words of Quran),

تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ

to Thee I turn in repentance,” (Q 7:143).

But the Prophet (peace be upon him), while his attributes were annihilated, said,

لا احصي ثناء عليك

I cannot render Thy due praise.”

In short, the mention of grief while in proximity is itself a grief. It behooves the penitent not to remember his self, and then why the remembering of his sins. Indeed, remembrance of sin is a sin, because it is the place of dislike and sin is also a hateful thing therefore, its remembrance and mentioning would also be hateful, as it is not lawful to mention of even other than sin. Since mention of a crime is a crime, similarly to forget the crime is also a crime, for remembrance and forgetfulness is connected to your self. Junaid said that he read many books, but never found anything as instructive as this verse:-

اذا قلت ما اذبت قالت مجيبةً حياتك ذنب لا يقاس به ذنب

“When I asked my beloved, what is my sin? she said in reply:

Your existence is such a grievous sin that all other sins are worthless before it.” When in the proximity of beloved physical presence is unlawful, then what to talk of his attributes!

In short, repentance is a divine strengthening and sin is a corporal act. When contrition prevails over the heart the body has no means of repelling it. As in the beginning no human force could prevent repentance, so how any of his acts could prevent repentance in the end. Allah has said.

فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

and His Lord turned towards him: for He is Oft Returning,” (Q 2:37).

There are many verses in the Quran to the same fact, which are too well known to require citation.

Repentance is of three kinds:

- The first one is from immorality to the way of rectitude;
- the second is from right to what is still more right, and
- finally from self hood to Allah.

About the first kind of repentance Allah says:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ

“And those who having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins –“ (Q 3:135).

The second kind of repentance is of Moses who said,

رَبِّكَ إِلَيَّ

to Thee I turn in repentance,” (Q 7:143).

The third kind of repentance is the saying of Prophet (peace be upon him) who said,

وانه ليغان علي قلبي واني لاستغفر الله في كل يوم سبعين مرة

“whenever (seeing the higher *maqam*, from the lower *maqam*) I feel veil on my heart, I repent seventy times a day.”

It is bad and blameworthy to commit sin and praiseworthy to incline to repentance. First kind of repentance is for common people and its commandment is very clear. Until the right path is not met with, occupying the mid way is tranquility and veil.

The second kind of repentance is praiseworthy and this is the repentance of the elects. It is impossible that they should repent of sin or disobedience. Don't you see that whole of the universe is sore for the vision of Allah but Moses repented, because he desired for vision of the Truth with his own volition, and in love personal volition is a taint. Moses renounced his personal volition by saying “رَبِّتُ” I turn in repentance,” but the people thought he had renounced the vision of Allah.

And as to the third kind of repentance, it belongs to the degree of divine love and those who love Allah they repent not only of the imperfection of a station below the station to which they have attained, but also of being conscious of any *maqam* (station) or state. Hence, the *maqamat* (stations) of Prophet (peace be upon him) were continually growing and when he reached the higher station, he used to beg pardon for the lower station and repent from seeing it.

It is not incumbent to remain away from that sin for which repentance has been preferred, for only firm commitment not to commit the sin is sufficient. But still if circumstances force one to commit the same sin again to which he repented, still he would be rewarded for being refrained from that sin for a particular period. Many novices of this path have repented and gone back to wickedness and then once more, in consequence of an admonition, have returned to the true Path. Some elder related that he repented seventy times and went back to sin on every occasion, until at the seventy first time he became steadfast.

Abu Umru Ismail b. Nujaid²⁴ related that as a novice, he repented in the assembly of Abu Uthman Hairi and remained steadfast in repentance for some time. One day suddenly the evil thought prevailed over him and he fell into error. He left the society of Sheikh, and even whenever he saw him from afar his guilt caused him to flee from his sight. One day unexpectedly he came across of him and the Sheikh said to him:

“O son, do not associate with your enemies unless you have sufficient strength to counter it, for an enemy see your faults and rejoice and if you have no faults, enemy will feel sorrow. If you must sin, come to us, that we may bear your affliction, so you do not achieve the object of your enemy.”

The heart of Abu Umru got disgusted of sins and then he remained steadfast on his repentance.

Someone having repented of sin returned to it and then repented once more. He was regretful and felt ashamed and thought that with what face he should turn to Allah. He heard heavenly voice, saying:

²⁴ Abu Umru Ismail b. Nujaid Nishapuri, companion of Junaid, died in Mecca 366 A.H.

“You obeyed Me and We recompensed you, then you abandoned Me and I showed indulgence towards you; and now if you will return to Me, My door of mercy is open for you.”

Dhu al-Nun says:

توبة العوام من الذنوب وتوبة الخواص من الغفلة

“Ordinary men repent of their sins but the elects repent of their heedlessness.”

The ordinary men shall be questioned of their outward behavior but the elects shall be questioned concerning the real nature of their conduct. Heedlessness is a pleasure to ordinary men, but a veil to the elect.

Abu Hafs Haddad says:

ليس للعبد في التوبة شيء لان التوبة اليه لانه

“Man has no part in repentance, because repentance is divine guidance to him from Allah and not from Man.” According to this, repentance is not man’s effort rather one of Allah’s gifts, a doctrine which is closely akin to that of Junaid.

Abu al-Hasan Fushanji says:

اذا ذكرت الذنب ثم لا تجد حلاوته عند ذكره فهو التوبة

“When you remember a sin and feel no delight in it, that is repentance,” it is because the remembrance of a sin is either due to regret or due to delight or desire.

One who remembers his sin regretfully he is repentant, whereas one who remembers his sin with a desire and plan is a sinner. The desire of the sin is more evil than the act of sin, for the sin is a short-lived act, but its desire is perpetual. Therefore, one who commits himself in sin for a moment is better than who keeps his heart object of evil desires day and night.

Dhu al-Nun says:

التوبة تويتان وتوبة الاستحياء فتوبة الانابة ان يتوب العبد خوفاً من عقوبة وتوبة الاستحياء ان يتوب حياءً من كرمه

“The repentance is of two kinds,

- the repentance of return and
- the repentance of shame:

The former is repentance through fear of Divine punishment; the later is repentance through shame of Divine clemency.”

The fear is caused by revelation of Allah’s Majesty, while the modesty is caused by vision of Allah’s Beauty. So one burn with the fire of fear of His Majesty and the other is enlightened by the light of His Beauty and one is in a state of sobriety and other in state of intoxication. Those who feel modesty are intoxicated, and those who feel fear are sober.

This discussion is very lengthy but I have preferred brevity.

Chapter XIX

The Uncovering of the Fifth Veil

Prayer (al-salat الصلاة)

Allah hath said:

وَأَقِمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

“And be steadfast in prayer; Practice regular charity;” (Q 2:43).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

الصلوة وما ملكت إيمانكم

“Look after your prayers and those who are under your care.”

Etymologically, *salat* الصلاة (prayer) means remembrance (of Allah) and obedience, but scholastics apply the term especially to the known prayers which Allah has commanded to be performed five different times a day. There are certain preliminaries before a prayer is offered. These are:

- The first and the foremost is purification which involves outward purification from filth and inwardly from lust.
- The next is the cleanliness of clothes. It should be free of any filth and is obtained through lawful means.
- The place of worship should be outwardly free from contamination and inwardly free from all sorts of corruptness and sin.
- The next is turning towards *Qibla*. The outward *Qibla* is Kaba and the inwardly *Qibla* is the Throne of Allah, by which the object is the contemplation of the Truth.
- Then, standing outwardly in the state of ability and inwardly in the garden of proximity but outwardly the lawful timings are must and inwardly to remain in His presence.
- To maintain purity of intention at the time of approaching His Court of Audience and Calling of *Takbir* i.e. *Allah-o-Akbar* in the station of awe and annihilation.
- To stand in the abode of union, and to recite the Quran distinctly and reverently. To bow with humility, and to prostrate with abasement.
- To recite *tashahhud* (invocation) with concentration, and to finish the prayer with annihilation of one's attributes.

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed, there were heard a sound from his breast like sound of a cauldron on fire. And when Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was about to offer prayer, his hair stood on their ends and penetrated from his clothes. Shaken and trembling he would say that hour had come to fulfill a trust which the heavens and the earth were unable to bear.

Some elder asked Hatim Asam that how did he say his prayer? He said:

When the time of prayer comes I do outward and inward *wadu* (ablution). The outward *wadu* I perform with water and inward with repentance. Then I go to the mosque and perceive that Kaba is in front of me, *maqam* of Ibrahim in the centre of my eye brows, Paradise on my right and Hell on my left, and bridge *Sirat* under my feet and angel of death behind me. After this I call *Takbir* with full pomp, stand with respect, recite Holy Quran with awe, bow with humility, prostrate with lamentation and abasement, observe sitting with calmness and dignity and finally call off my prayer with thanks.

Prayer is such devotion in which novice from beginning to end at each stage finds way to Allah, and he has the vision of these stages. Thus, for novices,

- purification takes the place of repentance,
- dependence on Sheikh takes the place of ascertaining the *Qibla*,
- standing in prayer takes the place of self-mortification,
- reciting Quran takes the place of *dikr* (remembrance of Allah),
- bowing takes the place of humility,
- prostration takes the place of self-knowledge,
- invocation takes the place of intimacy, and
- salutation takes the place of detachment from the world and escape from the bondage of station.

Hence, when Prophet (peace be upon him) became divested of all feelings of delight in complete bewilderment, he used to say,

ارحنا يا بلال بالصلاة

“O Bilal, comfort us by the call to prayer.”

The *Sufi* Sheikhs have discussed this matter at length and their every point is praiseworthy. Some hold that prayer is a means of obtaining presence with Allah, and some regard it as means of being absent from self. So one group came into presence from absence and the other got absent from presence. Therefore, in this world at the *maqam* (station) of vision where the people who have the vision of Almighty Allah, among those who are absent become present and those who are present become absent.

I, Ali b. Uthman al-Jullabi, assert that prayer is a Divine command and it can not be the means of presence or absence, because a Divine command does not become a cause or means of anything. The cause of presence is presence itself, and similarly the cause of absence is also absence itself. If prayers were the cause or means of presence, the absentee because of it would have been present and similarly were it the cause or means of absence the absentee would have been present by neglecting to perform it. As its performance is incumbent on all whether they are present or absent, the prayer is sovereign in its essence and is not linked with presence or absence. The prayer is performed in abundance by those who are engaged in self-mortification and also who are steadfast. Thus the Sheikhs command their disciples to perform four hundred *rakaat* in their prayer during a day and night that their bodies may get habitual to devotion. Likewise, those who are steadfast perform excessive prayers in thanks giving for the favors which Allah has bestowed upon them.

As regards to those, who hold natural disposition (اهل احوال), act in two ways. The prayer of one of them is in the perfection of ecstasy, correspond to the “station” of union, so that through their prayers they become united. And the prayers of the second group are when the ecstasy is withdrawn; their prayers correspond to the station of separation, so that thereby they become separated. Those who attain *maqam* of union pray by day and night but those who are at the stage of separation perform no more prayers than what are incumbent on them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

جعلت قرة عيني في الصلاة

“the coolness of my eyes lies in prayer,”

He said so because prayer is a source of joy to the steadfast.

On the night of ascension when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was brought nigh unto Allah, and his soul was loosened from the fetters of phenomenal being, and his *nafs* (lower soul) moved to the place of soul, and soul moved to the place of spirit, and spirit moved to the palace of Mystery and had lost consciousness of all degrees and stations, and was over taken so much by contemplation that all of

his human attributes and needs were annihilated. The Divine evidences were manifested and he reached to the depth of the Truth by abandoning oneself and got absorbed in eternal contemplation. He inspired by longing said, "O God, do not return me to the place of affliction, neither let me put in the battlefield of nature and passion!"

Allah commanded: "It is My decree that you shall return to the world for the sake of establishing the religious law, in order that I may give you there what I have given you here."

When he returned to this world, he used to say as often as he felt a longing for that exalted station, "O Bilal, comfort us by the call to prayer!"

Thus to him every prayer was an ascension and cause of nearness to Allah. The eyes of people would see him in prayer but factually his body was in prayer, heart in dedication, and inwardly he used to be on its way to proximity but his body melting in grief. For this reason he called prayer as coolness of his eyes. Apparently he was present in the human body but his spirit used to be at Heavenly Kingdom.

Sahl b. Abdullah says:

علامه الصادق ان يكون له تابع من الحق اذا دخل وقت الصلوة يحثه عليها وينبهه ان كان فاءً

"It is a sign of man's sincerity that Allah deposes an angel who urges him to pray at the time of the prayer and wakes him up if he is asleep." This mark (of sincerity) was apparent in Sahl himself, for although paralyzed and in his old age, he used to recover at the time of prayer and after having performed his prayer, was unable to move from his place.

One of the Sheikhs says:

يحتاج المصلي الى اربعة اشياء: فناء النفس وذهاب الطبع وصفاء السر وكمال المشاهدة

"Four things are necessary to him who prays: His *nafs* (lower soul) is annihilated, loss of the natural desires, inward purity, and has perfect contemplation."

The performer of the prayer has no way out but annihilation of the *nafs* (lower soul) and which is attained only by concentration of thought. When he has fully concentrated his thought then he rule over his *nafs* (lower soul), for his substance is based on separation and can not fall under the expressions of union. The loss of the natural desires is not possible without the affirmation of the Divine Majesty, because His Majesty becomes the cause of the destruction of all that is other than Him. Similarly the purity of inmost heart is not possible without love and excellence in contemplation is not attainable without the purity of the inmost heart.

It is said that Hussein b. Mansur (al-Hallaj) had made it compulsory for him to perform four hundred *rakaat* of prayer in a day and a night. On being asked that why he took so much trouble though he had attained a very high degree, he answered:

"You see pain and pleasure but the lovers are annihilated to their attributes, what concern they have with pain or pleasure! Beware lest you call indolence maturity and lust search for Allah."

Some elder narrated that he was praying behind Dhu al-Nun, when he pronounced the *Takbir* (Allah-o-Akbar), got fainted and fell down like a lifeless body.

Junaid in his old age did not skip any of the litanies (*awrad*) of his youth. When he was urged to refrain from some of these supererogatory acts of devotion to which his strength was unequal, he replied, "whatever I attained in the beginning was due to these practices, how is it possible that after attaining such a degree I leave them."

It is well known that the angels are ceaselessly engaged in worship. Obedience is their drink and devotion is their diet, because they are spiritual and have no *nafs* (lower soul). Whereas it is the *nafs* (lower soul) discourages men from obedience, and the more it is subdued the easier the worship becomes, and when *nafs* is annihilated, worship becomes the food and drink of man. And for this reason it is right to say that angels are annihilated of their *nafs* (lower soul).

Abdullah b. Mubarak narrated that in his teenage he saw a female ascetic who while praying was bitten by a scorpion forty times, but no change of expression was visible in her countenance. When she had finished, he asked her that why did she not throw the scorpion away from her? She answered, "O son! You are a kid, how it was possible for me to do my own business when I was engaged in Allah's business?"

Abu al-Khair Aqta²⁵ had gangrene in his foot. The physician counseled that his foot must be amputated, but he would not allow this to be done. The disciples suggested that his foot to be cut off while he was praying, for at that time he was unconscious. The physicians acted on this advice. When Abu al-Khair finished his prayers he found his foot amputated.

Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) during his prayers at night used to recite the Quran in a low voice, whereas Umar b. Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) used to recite in a loud voice. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Abu Bakr Siddiq why he did recite Quran in a low voice? Abu Bakr replied, "He, to whom I call hears, may it be high voice or a whisper."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) then asked Umar b. Khattab why he did recite Quran in a high voice? He replied, "To wake the drowsy and drive away the Devil."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) suggested Abu Bakr to recite Quran a bit loudly and Umar to keep a low tone, i.e. to act against their habits.

Some Sheikhs perform obligatory acts of devotion openly, but conceal those which are supererogatory in order that they may escape from ostentation. They presume that anyone who desires that others should take notice of his religious practices becomes a hypocrite. Similarly they say that although they do not take notice of their self devotion and mortification, but people do see and this too is hypocrisy. Some Sheikhs however, exhibit both their obligatory and supererogatory acts of devotion, on the ground that ostentation is unreal and piety is truth, therefore, it is absurd to hide reality for the sake of unreality. They say that empty your heart from ostentation and then worship Allah wherever you will. The Sheikhs are aware of the true spirit of the rules of devotional practices, and have enjoined their disciples to preserve them.

One of the elders said that he traveled for forty years, and never missed a single public service of prayer and he used to be in some town on Friday.

The corollaries of prayer belong to the station of love, of which I will now set forth the principles in detail.

Love (*muhabat* محبة) and Matters Connected Therewith

Allah hath said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ

"O ye who believe! If any from among you turn back from his Faith, soon will Allah produce a people whom He will love as they love Him –" (Q 5:54),

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ

"Yet there are men who take (for worship) others besides Allah, as equal (with Allah): they love them as they should love Allah." (Q 2:165).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) related that Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) revealed him the command of Allah that:

²⁵ Died 340 A.H..

من اهان لي ولياً فقد باء عليّ بالمحاربة،

وما ترددت في شيء كترددني في قبض نفس المؤمن يكره الموت واكره مساءته ولا بد له منه، وما تقرب الي عبدي بشيء احب الي من اداء ما افترضت عليه،

ولا يزال عبدي يتقرب الي بالنوافل حتي احبه، فاذا احببته كنت له سمعاً وبصراً ويداياً ومويداً

“Whoever despises any of my friends has declared war against Me. I do not hesitate in anything as I hesitate to seize the soul of My faithful servants who dislikes death and whom I dislike to hurt, although he has no other way out; and no means whereby My servants seeks My favor is more pleasing to Me than the performance of the obligations which I have laid upon him; and My servant continuously seek My favor by works of supererogation until I love him, and when I love him I am his hearing and his sight and his hands and his helper.”

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

من احب لقاء الله احب الله لقاءه

“Allah loves to meet those who love to meet Him,”

and he also said:

اذا احب الله عبداً قال لجبرئيل يا جبرئيل اني احب فلاناً فأحبه، فيحبه جبرئيل،

ثم يقول جبرئيل لاهل السماء ان الله قد احب فلاناً فأحبه فيحبه اهل السماء،

ثم يضع له القبول في الارض فيحبه اهل الارض، وفي البغض مثل ذلك

“When Allah loves a man He says to Gabriel, I love such and such, so do love him; then Gabriel loves him and says to the dwellers in Heaven, `Allah loves such and such,` and they love him too; then he is famed on earth, so that he is loved by the inhabitants of the earth; and as it happens with regard to love, so does it happen with regard to hate.”

The love of man with Allah and Allah’s love for man is lawful and established. Both Quran and *Sunnah* (Traditions of Prophet, peace be upon him) are witness to it and *Ummah* has unanimity. It is the attribute of Allah that He loves His friends and His lovers love Him.

Etymologically *muhabat* محبة (love) is derived from *hibbah*, حبه which are seeds that are found placed in desert. The name *hubb* حب was given to such desert seeds (*hibb* حب), because its life is hidden in it. So, love is the source of life just as seeds are the origin of plants. When the seeds are scattered in the desert, they become hidden in the earth, and rain falls upon them. The heat of the sun effect it, summer and winter pass over it but the seeds do not take any heed of them and grow up only when their season fall in and bear flowers and give fruit. Similarly, when love takes its dwelling in the heart, it does not get corrupted by the presence or absence, by pleasure or pain, and by separation or union.

Others have the opinion that *hubb* حب is derived from *hubbi* حبي, “meaning a pool full of stagnant water which having no outsource of receiving fresh water”, as when love is collected in the heart of the seeker and fills it, then there is no room for any thought except of the beloved. As when Allah graced Abraham with His friendship, he became empty of everything save the remembrance of Allah and universe became veil for him and he got sick of these veils because of His love and in that state he said (verse of Quran),

فَأَنَّهُمْ عَدُوِّي وَإِلَّا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“for they are enemies to me; not so the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds;” (Q 26:77).

As regards to this Shibli says,

love is called love because it obliterates everything from the heart except the beloved.”

Hubb حب also means the four conjoined pieces of wood on which a water pot is placed. So in this sense it would mean, as the wooden stand bears the weight of the pot similarly a lover bears whatever his beloved gives out to him i.e. honor or disgrace, pain or pleasure, fair or foul treatment and it has no bar on him. The role of the lover is the same as of wooden stand to bear the load, as it was created only for this reason.

According to others *hubb* حب is derived from *habb* حَب, the plural of *habbah* حَبه and *habbah* is the core of the heart, and means of its existence. In this case *Hubb* حب is called by the name of its dwelling place, a principle of which there are numerous examples in Arabic.

Others derive it from *habab* حباب “bubbles of water and the effervescence thereof in a heavy rainfall.” The love is named as *hubb* حب because it speaks of lover’s longing for beloved search and vision. The lover has a special kind of emotion and palpitation in his heart which keeps him agitated for his beloved. As the bodies are fond of spirits, similarly the hearts of the lovers are fond of the vision of their beloved and as the body subsist through the spirit, so the heart subsists through love, and love remains active and fresh through vision and union with the beloved.

إذا ما تمنى الناس راحة وتمنيت ان القاك يا عز خاليا

“When people desire comfort and tranquility,
O my beloved! I wish, I meet you in seclusion.”

Others, again, declare that *hubb* حب is a name applied to pure love. The Arabs call the pure white of the human eye حبة الانسان, just as they call the pure black (core) of the heart حبة القلب. Since the heart is the seat of love and eye means of sight, hence the heart and the eye are rivals in love, as the poet says:

القلب يحسد عيني لذة النظر والعين تحسد قلبي لذة الفكر

“My heart envies mine eye the pleasure of seeing,
And mine eye envies my heart the pleasure of meditating.”

You must know that the term *muhabat* محبة (love) is used by theologians in many different manners. The restlessness of heart, the desire for the object of love, inclination, and passion are referred as love. But all these refer only to created beings and their mutual affection towards one another. These have no relation with the Eternal and cannot be applied to Allah, who is exalted far above anything of this sort. The term *muhabat* محبة (love) is also refers to beneficence, i.e. the man after attaining the perfection of saintship, is conferred high degree by Allah and He distinguishes him by diverse kinds of His miraculous graces.

It also means excellent praise which Allah bestows on a man for a good action. Some scholastic say that Allah’s love, which He has made known to us, belongs to those traditional attributes, like His face and His hand and His settling Himself firmly on His throne, of which the existence from the standpoint of reason would appear to be impossible if they had not been proclaimed as Divine attributes in the Quran and the Sunnah. Therefore we affirm them and believe in them, but suspend our own judgment concerning them. These Sufi Sheikhs however, deny that the term “love” as described above, can be applied to Allah. I will now explain to you the true nature of this matter.

Allah’s love of man is His good will towards him and His having mercy on him. Love is one of the names of His will, like satisfaction, anger, compassion, etc, and these names can only be used for the

will of the Truth. His will is an Eternal attribute whereby He wills His actions. In exhibition and comparability some attribute have superiority over others. In short, love of Allah towards man consists in:

- extending much favors to him in this world,
- giving him recompense in the next world,
- making him secure from punishment,
- keeping him safe from sin,
- bestowing on him states and exalted stations,
- causing him to turn his thoughts away from all that is other than Him, and
- cherish him with His eternal and peculiar Grace and Bounty, so that man turns to Him by renouncing all other.

When Allah peculiarly distinguishes anyone in this way, that particularity of His will is called "love". This is the doctrine of Harith Muhasibi, Junaid and a large number of the *Sufi* Sheikhs. The theologians belonging to different sects and the *Sunni* scholastics also hold the same opinion. As regards their assertion that Divine love is "praise given to a man for a good action", Allah's praise is His word and which is uncreated, for created cannot join uncreated. And as regards their assertion that Divine love means beneficence, His beneficence consists in His actions. Hence, all these views are substantially in close relation to each other.

Man's love towards Allah is a quality which manifest itself in the heart of the pious believer in the form of veneration and magnification, so that he seeks to satisfy his Beloved and becomes impatient in his desire for vision of Him, and desire of His proximity makes him restless, so he does not find comfort with anyone except Him, and grows familiar with the remembrance (*dikr*) of Him, and renounces the remembrance of everything besides. Repose becomes forbidden to him and rest flees from him. He is cut off from all habits and associations and renounces sensual passion and longing of love overwhelm him, so that he submits himself before the command of Allah and knows Him by His attributes of perfection. It is impossible that man's love of Allah should be similar in kind to the love of His creatures. The love of mankind demands attainment of the beloved and to have full knowledge of him. This is a corporeal love, whereas the lovers of Allah while in His proximity are annihilated to themselves, how they can be desirous of such state.

The seeker stands to himself in friendship, but who annihilates himself in love stands by his beloved, and the actual wayfarer of this path are those who have annihilated themselves and are completely overpowered by the love of the Truth, because a phenomenal being has no means of approaching the Eternal save through the omnipotence of the Eternal. He who knows what the real love is feels no more difficulties, and all his doubts depart.

Love has two aspects:

- The love of like towards like, which is a natural inclination and satisfaction of the *nafs* (lower soul). It desires to have physical feel and sensual intercourse with the beloved.
- The love of one who is not homogeneous. This is to get satisfaction from some of the attributes of his beloved, e.g. hearing without speech or seeing without eye.

The people who are captivated by love are of two kinds:

- those who regard the favor and beneficence of Allah towards them, and are led by that regard to love the Benefactor:
- those who are so enraptured by love that they reckon all favors as a veil (between themselves and Allah) and by regarding the Benefactor are led to (consciousness of) His favors. They are on a higher degree of state than the former.

In short, love is a term which is common in all the nations and religions and is found in every dictionary. No sensible person can hide its meanings. Among the *Sufi* Sheikhs Sumnun al-Muhibb holds a peculiar doctrine concerning love.

He asserts that love is the basis and foundation of the Path to Truth, and status of states and *maqamat* (stations) is of stages. Every stage of the seeker can decline save love; for love is not destructible in any circumstances so long as the seeker remains in following the path of love. All the other Sheikhs agree with him in this matter, but since the term love is a common word, apparently to keep the doctrine of Divine love remain hidden, they have changed its name, though its real essence remained. Hence, instead of calling it purity of love they gave it the name of *safut* صفوت (purity) and to lover of the Truth they called *Sufi*. Some others used the word *faqr* فقر (poverty) to denote the renunciation of the lover's personal will in his affirmation of the Beloved's will, and they called the lover *faqir* فقير (poor) because the lowest degree of love is conformity of the beloved and it is anti to disagreement. I have explained the theory of purity and poverty in the beginning of this book. A noble Sheikh has said:

"Love is clearer to devotees than the interpretation of *Shariat*. The love for repentant is easier than cry of pain and distress and for the young riders is more important than ride. For Hindus the slavery of love is better than the prison of Mahmud Ghaznavi. The tales of the lovers and the beloved are more popular among the Romans than Cross. The love stories depicting happiness and sorrow are part of the literature of all the Arabian tribes."

The gist of this preamble is that there is no human being who has not been gifted with the essence of love and his heart is devoid of the pleasure and comfort of love. The heart of everybody is either intoxicated in love or he is drunk with its overwhelmingness, for the construction of heart is based on anxiety and agitation. The oceans of friendship pledges are no more than mirage before love. The heart void of love is like a wilderness void of food and drink. Love can not be enforced or relinquished by efforts. The *nafs* (lower soul) does not get aware of the subtleties of love which manifest on heart.

Umru b. Uthman Makki says in his book on love that Allah created the *dilha* (soul) seven thousand years before the bodies and kept them in the station of proximity, and that he created the spirits seven thousand years before the *dilha* (souls) and kept them in the degree of intimacy and that he created the hearts seven thousands years before the spirits and kept them in the degree of union, and revealed the luster of His Beauty to the heart three hundred and sixty times every day and bestowed on it three hundred and sixty looks of Grace, and He caused the spirits to hear the word of love and manifested three hundred and sixty exquisite favors of intimacy to the soul. So that when they surveyed the phenomenal universe and saw nothing more precious than themselves, they got filled with vanity and pride, therefore Allah subjected them to probation. He imprisoned the heart in the spirit and the spirit in the soul and the soul in the body and then He mingled reason with them. He revealed His commands through prophets, and then each of them began to seek its original station. When Allah commanded them to pray, the body betook itself to prayer, the soul attained to love, the spirit arrived at proximity to Allah, and the heart found rest in union with Him.

These all are explanations of love and not love, because love is an ecstasy, and it does not stand to speech. If the whole world wishes to attract love, they cannot and similarly they cannot repel it with effort. It is not possible even if the whole world wish together that the seeker of the love is filled with love or who has the wealth of love is made empty of it. The love is Allah's gift and how the mankind can perceive the true nature of this Divine Grace when they are committed to amusement, sport and fun.

There are many sayings of Sheikhs about *ishq* عشق (extreme love). Some hold that excessive love of man towards Allah is possible but it is not lawful that Allah should have excessive love of someone. They say that *ishq* (extreme love) is the attribute of that who is debarred from his beloved, and man can be debarred from Allah, but Allah cannot be debarred from man, therefore man may love Allah excessively, but the term is not applicable to Allah. Some others take the view that Allah cannot be the object of man's excessive love, for it involves crossing of limits but Allah is not limited.

The modern assert that excessive love, both in this world and the next, is not possible, although excessive love is possible for the desire to seek the perception of the Godhead, as the essence of Allah is not attainable. They say that love is possible with one of the essence of Allah but not excessive love. They also refer that excessive love is not possible without vision, whereas love can be embedded by mere hearing. Since excessive love depends on sight, therefore, Allah cannot be the object of excessive love, as no one has seen Him. Everyone has only listened about Him and they have made their own claims. The essence of Allah is not attainable or perceptible that man should be able to feel excessive love towards Him. Allah, through His attributes and actions, is a Gracious Benefactor to His friends because of which man's love is permissible with His attributes. Since Jacob was absorbed in the love for Yusuf, from whom he was separated, his eyes became bright and clear as soon as he smelt Yusuf's shirt. Similarly, Zulaikha was ready to die on account of her excessive love for Yusuf; her eyes were not opened until she was united with him. Some of the *Sufis* have said that since there is no opposite of Allah, similarly excessive love also has no opposite; therefore, excessive love may be lawful with Allah.

There are still many subtle signs and hints concerning love but for the fear of prolonging the matter I finish the discussion here. I will now mention a few of the innumerable indications which *Sufi* Sheikhs have given as to the true nature of love.

Master Abu al-Qasim Qushayri says:

المحبة نحو المحب بصفاته واثبات المحبوب بذاته

“Love is the effacement of the lover's attributes and the establishment of the Beloved's essence.”

The Beloved is subsistent and the lover is annihilated. The jealousy of love requires that the lover should make the subsistence of the Beloved absolute by negating himself, so that he attains complete friendship (saintship). The lover cannot negate his own attributes except by affirming the essence of the Beloved and this is also not possible that lover can stand by his attributes, for in that case he would be independent of Beloved's Beauty. But when he knows that his life is the Beauty of his Beloved, he necessarily tries to annihilate his own attributes, for he is veiled from his Beloved in their presence and thus in love for his Friends he becomes an enemy to himself. When Mansur Hallaj was mounted on the scaffold his last words were,

حسب الوجد افراد الوجد له

the destination of the seeker is to know Allah as One.”

It is incumbent on lover to annihilate himself for the sake of love and that the dominion of his *nafs* (lower soul) after being used in search of friend should be vanished.

Abu Yazid says:

المحبة استقلال الكثير من نفسك واستكثار القليل من حبيبك

“Love consists in regarding your much as little and your Beloved's little as much.”

The same condition is of man with Allah, so whatever worldly benefits have been gifted to mankind, Allah calls them little,

كُلُّ مَتَاعِ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ

short is the enjoyment of this world.” (Q 4:77),

but with this He calls their praise of Him much,

وَالَّذِينَ كَرِهُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالَّذِينَ كَرِهُوا

for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise,” (Q 33:35),

in order that all His creatures may know that He is the real Beloved. This attribute is not lawful for mankind as whatever Allah bestows on them is not less.

Sahl b. Abdullah al-Tustari says:

المحبة معانقة الطاعات ومباينته المخالفات

“Love consists in embracing acts of obedience and in avoiding acts of disobedience,”

If love is true then it is easier to follow the command of the beloved. This is a refutation of those heretics who declare that a man may attain to such a degree of love that obedience is no longer required of him, a doctrine which is sheer heresy. It is impossible that any person, while he is fully in his senses, should be relieved of his religious obligations. The whole *Ummah* is unanimous on that the *Shariat* (religious law) will never be abrogated, and if such person may be relieved from his religious obligations then these can be abrogated for everyone. This is a sheer deviation and impiety. The case of persons overcome with rapture and those who are mentally unsound is different. However, it is possible that Allah in His love should grace a man to such a degree that it costs him no trouble to perform his religious duties, because the feelings of pain in execution of a command depend on the degree of love. If love is strong, the pain of devotion would be lesser. This is evident from the practices of Muhammad (peace be upon him), so when Allah swore by his name لعمرك, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) committed himself entirely to devotion both by day and night, so that his blessed feet became swollen. On that Allah said,

مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى

We have not sent down the Quran to thee to be (An occasion) for thy distress.” (Q 20:1).

And it is also possible that one should be relieved of the consciousness of performing the Divine commands, as the Prophet said,

انه ليغان علي قلبي حتي كنت استغفر الله في كل يوم سبعين مرة

verily, a veil is drawn over my heart, and I ask forgiveness of Allah seventy times daily,”

Prophet (peace be upon him) never regarded his self and actions, for he was far above from the thoughts of devotion. He always kept his eyes on the Majesty of Allah’s command and would call his actions unworthy to be presented before Allah.

Sumnun Muhibb says:

ذهب المحبون لله يشرف الدنيا والاخرة

“The lovers of Allah are blessed with the glory of this and the next world, for the prophet (peace be upon him) said,

المرء مع من احب

“a man is with the object of his love.”

The lovers of Allah are with Him in both the worlds and those who are with Him have no fear of any loss. The glory of this world is Allah’s being with them, and the glory of the next world is their being with Allah.

Yahya b. Maud al-Razi says:

حقيقة المحبة ما لا ينقص بالجفاء ولا يزيد بالبر

“Real love is neither diminished by unkindness nor increased by kindness and bounty,” because both these are the causes of love, and the cause of a thing is reduced to nothing when the thing itself

actually exists. A lover delights in the affliction that his beloved makes him suffer, and he regards kindness and unkindness with the same indifferences.

When Shibli was supposed to be insane, and was admitted in the hospital, some persons came to visit him. He asked them who were they. They said that they were his friends. Hearing their answer he started pelting them with stones. All of them ran away. Then he said, "Had you been my friends, you would not have fled from my affliction."

Chapter XX

The Uncovering of the Sixth Veil

Alms (al-zakat زكاة)

Allah hath said:

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

“And be steadfast in prayers; practice regular charity;” (Q 2:43).

There are many Verses of Quran and Hadith about alms (*zakat* زكاة). It is one of the obligatory ordinances of the faith but on whom who is worthy of paying it and its disobedience is unlawful. It becomes due on the completion of a benefit; e.g., two hundred dirham constitutes a complete benefit, and anyone who is in possession of that sum ought to pay five dirham or if he possesses twenty dinars he ought to pay half a dinar after one year or if he possesses five camels he ought to pay one sheep after one year, and so forth. Like wealth *zakat* (alms) is also due on account of dignity, because that is also a complete benefit. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

ان الله فرض عليكم زكاة جاهكم كما فرض عليكم زكاة مالكم

“Allah has made it incumbent upon you to pay the alms of your dignity, as He has made it incumbent upon you to pay the alms of your property.”

And he also said,

لكل شيء زكاة وزكاة الدار بيت الضيافة

“everything has its alms, and the alms of a house is the hospitality.”

Actually *zakat* (alms) is that thanks giving for a benefit received, which is to be paid in similar kind as the benefit. Health is a great blessing, for which every limb owes alms. Therefore man ought to occupy all his limbs with devotion and not yield them to pleasure and pastime, in order that the alms due for the blessing of health is fully paid. There are alms for every spiritual blessing also but their reality cannot be recounted, for it is not possible to count all the benefits. *Zakat* is incumbent on each person according to his own assessment. It is the name of the *marifat* (knowledge) of outwardly and inwardly blessings. When a man knows that the blessings bestowed upon him by Allah are in abundance, accordingly he would render thanks in abundance by way of alms.

The *Sufis* do not consider it praiseworthy to give alms on account of worldly blessings, because they disapprove of greed. What better example can be of a greedy person that he keeps two hundred dirham in his possession for a whole year and then gives away five dirham in alms? Since liberality is the custom of the generous and they are liberal in their generosity, how should alms giving be incumbent upon them? Some formal theologian, wishing to make trial of Shibli, asked him that on what amount or quantity alms is ought to be given. Shibli replied:

“Where greed is present and property exists, five dirham out of every two hundred dirham, and half a dinar out of every twenty dinars. That is according to thy doctrine; but according to mine, a man ought not to possess anything, in which case he will be saved from the trouble of giving alms.”

The divine asked him that whose authority he followed in that matter.

Shibli said:

“The authority of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) the Veracious, who gave away all that he possessed, and on being asked by the Prophet (peace be upon him) what he had left behind for his family, answered, Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him).”

Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

فَمَا وَجِيتَ عَلِيَّ زَكَاةَ مَالٍ وَهَلْ يَجِبُ الزَّكَاةَ عَلَيَّ جَوَادٍ

“Almsgiving is not incumbent on me,

For how can a generous man be required to give alms?”

The wealth of the generous is for charity and their blood is excused. Neither they are avarice in wealth nor they fight for their blood, for they don't consider them as their property.

It is absurd for anyone to cultivate ignorance and say that since he has no property therefore, he needs not to be acquainted with the knowledge of almsgiving. To learn and obtain knowledge is an essential obligation, and to turn away from it is infidelity. It is one of the evils of the present age that many pretenders of piety and dervishhood reject knowledge in favor of ignorance. Once I was giving devotional instruction to some novices and was discussing the alms on camels and explaining the rules in regard to she-camels of different ages. An ignorant fellow, tired of listening, rose and said that since he had no camels therefore, the acquiring of that knowledge was of no use to him. I answered to him that as knowledge was necessary in giving alms, so it was also necessary in taking alms. If anyone should give you a she-camel in her third year and you should accept her, you ought to be in knowledge of it. No one is relieved from the obligation of knowledge even though he has no property and does not want to have any property.

Some of the *Sufi* Sheikhs have accepted alms, while others did not like to do so. Those who had voluntarily adopted *faqr* فقر (poverty) did not take alms and used to say, “we do not amass property, therefore we need not to give alms; nor will we accept alms from worldlings, lest they should have the upper hand and we the lower.”

But those who are rendered helpless in the hands of poverty accept alms, not for their own wants but with the purpose of relieving a brother Muslim of his obligation of almsgiving. With this intention the receiver of alms, not the giver, has the upper hand. If it is considered the other way that the upper hand is of the giver, it would be wrong, and words of Allah

وَيَأْتِيهِمُ الصَّدَقَاتُ

and He receives their gifts of charity,” (Q 9:104),

would become meaningless and the giver of alms must be superior to the receiver, a belief which is utterly false. The upper hand belongs to him who relieves his Muslim brother from a heavy responsibility. Dervishes are not worldly, but they keep an eye for the next world and if a dervish fails to relieve a worldling of his responsibility, the worldling will be held accountable and punished at the Resurrection for having neglected to fulfill his obligation. Therefore Allah afflicts the dervish with a slight want in order that worldlings may be able to perform what is incumbent upon them.

Necessarily, the upper hand is of the dervish who receives alms in accordance with the command of Allah because it behooves him to take that which is due to Allah. If the hand of the recipient of alms were the lower hand, as some of the *Hashwiyya* declare, then the hands of the Prophets, who often received alms due to Allah and delivered it to the proper authority, must have been lower (than the hands of those who gave the alms to them). This view is erroneous as its adherents do not see that the Prophets received alms in consequences of the Divine command. The religious *Imams* have acted in the same manner as the Prophets, for they have always received payments due to the public treasury. Those are absolutely wrong who assert that the hand of the receiver is the lower and that of the giver is the higher. These are the basics of Sufism and this topic which is closely related to liberality and generosity, therefore, now I will discuss about liberality and generosity.

Liberality (جود) and Generosity (سخا)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

السخي قريب من الله قريب من الجنة بعيد من النار والبخيل قريب من النار وبعيد من الجنة

“The generous is close to Allah and Paradise and away from Hell. The avarice is in the proximity of Hell and away from Paradise.”

The theologians opine that liberality (جود) and generosity (سخا), when regarded as human attributes, are synonymous. But Allah may be called liberal (جواد) but not generous (سخي) because He has called Himself by the former name and not by the later, and generous (سخي) has also not been used in any of the Hadith (traditions). All orthodox Muslims are agreed that it is not allowable to apply any name to Allah that is not proclaimed in Quran and the Sunnah, e.g. He may be called *Alim* عالم (knowing) but not *Aqil* عاقل (intelligent) or *Faqih* فقيه (wise), although three terms bear the same signification. We call Him *Alim* عالم (knowing) because He has used this word for Himself and we refrain from using other two words as He has not used them for Himself. Similarly we call Him *Jawad* جواد (Liberal) and not *Sakhi* سخي (generous).

Some people differentiate between liberality (جود) and generosity (سخا), for they are of the view that generous discriminates in his liberality and his actions are connected with selfish motives and causes. This is an elementary stage in liberality. The *Jawad* جواد (liberal man) does not discriminate and his actions are devoid of selfish motives and any secondary cause. These two qualities were exhibited by two Prophets, viz., Abraham, the Friend of Allah (may blessings of Allah be on him), and Muhammad (peace be upon him), the beloved of Allah.

It is said that Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him) was accustomed not to eat anything until a guest came to him. Once, three days passed and no guest turned to him. Ultimately a fire worshipper appeared at his door. When the visitor disclosed his identity, Abraham denied his hospitality to him and the visitor left without any entertainment from him. Allah reproached Abraham on this account and said that he could not give a loaf of bread to one whom He had nourished for seventy years? But Muhammad (peace be upon him), when the son of Hatim visited him, spread his own sheet on the ground for him and said,

اذا تاكم كريم قوم فآكرموه

“honor the generous person of a tribe when he comes to you.”

The one who discriminated in generosity abstained from giving a loaf of bread but who did not, he laid mantle of his Prophethood for an infidel. Abraham's position was generosity, but Muhammad (peace be upon him) was placed at *maqam* (station) of liberality (جود). The best rule in this matter is set forth in the maxim that liberality consists in following one's first thought, and that it is a sign of avarice when the second thought prevails over the first. The desirous prefer the first thought, for it is unquestionably from Allah.

There was a merchant at Nishapur who used to regularly visit Sheikh Abu Said. One day Sheikh asked him charity for some dervish. The merchant narrated that at that time he had one dinar and a small silver coin and in the first instance he thought to give dinar but then second thought prevailed to give silver coin and he gave that to the dervish. When the Sheikh got free the merchant asked him whether it was right for anyone to contend with Allah. The Sheikh answered, “You contended with Allah: He bade you to give the dinar, but you gave the silver coin.”

Once Sheikh Abu Abdullah Rudbari came to the house of a disciple in his absence, and ordered that all the belongings in the house should be sold out. When the disciple returned he felt happy and for the delight of Sheikh did not utter a single word. In the meantime his wife also came and when she saw all that went inside the house and removed her dress. She gave the dress to her husband and said that it also belonged to the house hold effects and should be treated in the same manner. The husband warned her that she by her own will was doing more than what was commanded. The woman replied that what the Sheikh did was a result of his liberality and we too must exert ourselves to display our liberality. The husband although agreed with her said that since they had surrendered themselves to Sheikh, so whatever the Sheikh had done was their liberality (جود).

The liberality is figured in one's attributes. A disciple always ought to sacrifice his property and self in obedience to the command of Allah. Hence Sahl b. Abdullah said,

الصوفي ذمه هدر، ومملكه مباح

"the Sufi blood may be shed with impunity, and his property maybe seized."

Sheikh Abu Muslim Farisi narrated that:

Once I set out with a group of people for Hijaz. In the suburbs of Hulwan we were attacked by Kurds, who stripped us off our patched frocks. We instead of fighting started consoling them. One man among us became greatly excited, whereupon a Kurd drew his sword and tried to kill him. We intervened and pleaded the Kurd to spare his life. The Kurd said that sparing such a liar was not at all lawful and he must be killed. When I asked him the reason he said that the man was not a genuine *Sufi*, a pretender among the *Sufis* and it was better that such person might not exist. On my further inquiry he replied:

"The lowest degree of a *Sufi* is to act liberality (جود). This fellow was so desperately attached to these rags that he quarreled with his friends, how could he be a *Sufi*? We are your friends. Since long time we have been performing your task, and plundering you and liberating you from the worldly encumbrances."

Once, Abdullah b. Jafar (may Allah be pleased with him) was passing through a spring of a grazing field. He observed a black slave watching over a herd of goats. A dog came and sat near him. The slave threw a loaf of bread before him which he ate, then he threw the second bread and after some time he threw the third bread before the dog. Abdullah came to him and asked about his daily ration. The slave told him that it was three breads. On Abdullah's quest that why he had given his whole ration to the dog, the slave said, "The dogs are not inhabited here. I don't know that from how far has he come in search of bread and I did not like that his effort is wasted" Abdullah liked his gesture and after buying him along with herd, handed over all to him and also freed him from the chains of slavery. The slave prayed for him and after giving every thing in charity left that place.

A man came to the house of Hasan b. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and said that he owed four hundred dirham. Hasan gave him four hundred dirham and went into the house, weeping. They asked him why he wept. He answered, "had I not neglected that much, he might have been saved from humiliation of begging."

Abu Sahl Saluki never put alms into the hands of a beggar, but always used to lay alms on the ground so that needy might pick it up. He used to say, "worldly goods are too worthless to be placed in the hand of a Muslim, so that my hand should be the upper and his lower."

Once king of Abyssinia sent huge measure of musk to Prophet (peace be upon him). He dissolved the complete quantity in the water and rubbed it on himself and companions.

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) related that once a person came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and he gifted him a valley filled with herds of goats. When the man reached back to his tribe, he pleaded them to become Muslims, as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was so generous that at the time of giving he was not debarred by any thought of hunger or poverty.

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) related that once Prophet (peace be upon him) received eighty thousands dirham. He laid them on the sheet and did not leave that place until he had distributed the whole money.

Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said that once he saw Prophet (peace be upon him) who had tied stones on his stomach because of hunger.

I once met a dervish to whom a Sultan had sent gold pieces of worth three hundred dirham. He along with the gold went to a bath house and distributed it to the people present there.

I have already discussed the subject of liberality in the chapter on preference while disseminating the doctrine of the Nuris.

Chapter XXI

The Uncovering of the Seventh Veil

Fasting (al-sawm الصوم)

Allah hath said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ

“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you,” (Q 2:183).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that he was informed by Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) that Allah said:

الصوم لي وأنا اجزي به

“Fasting is for Me, and I have the best right to give recompense for it”

Fasting is an inwardly devotion and has no outwardly connection. The others cannot know about this devotion, therefore its recompense is in abundance.

It is said that mankind will enter in Paradise through Allah’s mercy, and that their rank therein depend on their religious devotion, and that their abiding therein for ever is the recompense of their fasting, that’s why Allah said that He Himself would give recompense for it. Junaid said:

الصوم نصف الطريقة

“Fasting is half of the Mystic way of life.”

Some of the Sheikhs used to fast perpetually and some fasted only during the month of Ramadan. Their fasting during Ramadan was to seek recompense and not to fast other than Ramadan was to safeguard against hypocrisy and to renounce self will. I have seen many Sheikhs who used to fast but people would not come to know about their fasting as they would eat if somebody set food before them. This is more in accordance with the *Sunnah*. Aisha and Hafsa (the mothers of the believers, may Allah be pleased with them) related that one day when Prophet (peace be upon him) came home we told him that we had prepared sweetmeat of dates for him. He said that he intended to fast but now instead he would fast on some other day and asked them to bring the sweetmeat.

I have seen Sheikhs who fasted on the “white days” (from the 13th to the 15th of every month), and on the tenth of Muharam, and also during Rajab, Shaiban, and Ramadan (lunar months). I have also seen Sheikhs who observed the fast of David, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) called the best of the fasts, i.e. they fasted one day and broke their fast the next day.

Once I came into presence of Sheikh Ahmad Bukhari. He had a dish of sweetmeat before him, from which he was eating, and he made a sign that I should join him. I in a very childish way answered that I was fasting. He asked me why I was fasting. I told him that it was in conformity with such and such. The Sheikh said that it was not right for human beings to conform to human beings. I was about to break my fast, but he said, “Since you wish to quit conformity with him, do not conform to me, for I too am a human being.”

The reality of fasting is abstinence, and the total mystery of Sufism is hidden in it. The least degree in fasting is hunger.

الجموع طعام الله في الارض

“to remain in hunger is Allah’s food on earth.”

According to law and reason hunger is commendable.

One month's continual fasting is incumbent on every Muslim who has attained to manhood, is sensible, healthy and resident. The fast begins on the appearance of the moon of Ramadan, or on the completion of the month of Shaiban. For every fast sincere intention and firm obligation are necessary. Abstinence involves many obligations, e.g.

- keeping the belly without food and drink, and
- guarding the eyes from lustful looks, the ear from listening to evil speech and backbiting, and tongue from vain or foul words, and
- guarding of the body from submission to worldly things and disobedience to Allah.

One who acts in this manner would truly be observing the fast, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

إذا صمت فليصم سمعك وبصرك ولسانك

“when you fast, let your ear, eye, and your tongue should also fast.”

And he also said,

رب صاءه ليس له من صومه إلا الجوع والعطش

“many who fast are such that they do not gain anything from their fasting except hunger and thirst.”

I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) in my dream and asked him to give me a word of counsel. He said,

احبس حواسك

“imprison your senses.”

To keep the senses imprisoned is real self-mortification, because all kinds of knowledge is acquired through these five senses:

- sight, its place is eye which see the world and colors.
- hearing, ears are the place of hearing and they hear the voice.
- taste, palate is the place of taste
- smell, nose is the place of smell, and
- touch has no special locus but is spread in all the limbs of the body and which are sensible to cold, hot, severity and gentleness.

These senses are the commander of the intellect and knowledge. Four of them have particular locus, but the fifth, namely touch, is spread over the whole body. Everything that becomes known to human beings passes through these five doors, except intuitive knowledge and Divine inspiration. There is no chance of any err in intuitive knowledge and Divine inspiration, but senses possess purity and impurity also. Just as senses are open to knowledge, reason, and spirit, so they are open to imagination and passion. The senses act jointly both in case of piety and sin or felicity and misery, e.g., the true friendship side between eye and ear is that they see and hear the truth and evil side is that they see the lust and hear useless talk. In case of touch, taste and smell the friendship to truth is to obey the command of Allah and evil side is to move against the *Shariat*. It behooves on who is fasting to imprison all his senses in order that they may return from disobedience to obedience, so that he may qualify as true fast observer. To abstain only from food and drink is work of old women and children. The true fasting is that man should be free from others, and save himself from the worldly desires and forbidden things. Allah hath said,

nor did We give them bodies that ate no food,” (Q 21:8),

and

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا

did ye then think that We had created you in jest,” (Q 23:115).

The spirit of fasting is to abstain from idle pleasures and unlawful acts, for fasting is not only to refrain from eating lawful food. I marvel at those who say that they were keeping a voluntary fast and yet fail to perform obligatory duties. Not to commit sin is obligatory, whereas continual fasting is an apostolic custom (which may be observed or neglected). When a man protects himself from disobedience all his circumstances are fast.

It is related by Abu Talha Malki that Sahl b. Abdullah Tustari was fasting on the day of his birth and also on the day of his death, as he was born in the forenoon and drank no milk until the evening payer, and on the day of his death he was fasting.

The continual fasting has been forbidden by the Prophet (peace be upon him), although he used to fast continually, and when his companions conformed with him in that respect, he forbade them, saying:

اني لست كأحدكم اني ابيت عند ربي يطعمني ويسقيني

“I am not as one of you: I pass the night with my Lord, who gives me food and drink.”

The votaries of self-mortification assert that this prohibition was an act of affection, and not that it was unlawful. Others regard it as being contrary to the *Sunnah*, but the fact is that continuance in fasting is impossible, because the day's fast is interrupted by night and even if the intention of fast is made in the night, still continuance will not be there.

It is said about Sahl b. Abdullah that he used to eat only once in fifteen days. During Ramadan he would eat nothing throughout the month until the Eid day, and used to pray four hundred *rakaat* on every night. This exceeds the limit of human endurance, and cannot be accomplished by anyone without Divine aid, which becomes his nourishment.

It is well known that Sheikh Abu Nasr Saraj, (the author of book *al-Lama*) who was known as the Peacock of the Poor, came to Baghdad in the month of Ramadan. He was given a private chamber in the Shuniziyya mosque, and was asked to lead the prayers of dervishes. He led their *trawih* prayer throughout the month and recited the whole Quran five times. Every night a servant brought a loaf of bread to his room. When he departed, on the Eid day, the servant found all the thirty loaves untouched.

Ali b. Bakr relates that Hafs Mussisi ate nothing in Ramadan except on the fifteenth day of that month.

Ibrahim Adham ate nothing from the beginning to the end of Ramadan, though it was summer season. He used to labor as a harvester throughout the day and would give his earning to dervishes. He used to remain in devotion throughout the night. The people secretly monitored his activities and saw that he neither ate nor slept.

Sheikh Abu Abdullah Khafif before his death had observed forty uninterrupted solitudes of forty days each.

I have met with an old man who used to observe two solitudes annually of forty days each.

I was present with Danishmand Abu Muhammad Banfisi at the time of his death. He had not eaten any food for eighty days and inspite of that had not missed a single occasion of public worship.

There were two elders at Merv; one was called Masud and the other was Sheikh Abu Ali Siyah. Masud sent a message to Abu Ali, saying: "For how long shall we make empty pretensions, let us sit in seclusion for forty days and don't eat anything." Abu Ali replied: "No, let us eat three times a day and remain in seclusion for forty days with single purification."

The difficulties of this question still remains, as ignorant conclude that continuance in fasting is not possible, while physician allege that such a theory is entirely baseless. I will now explain the matter in detail so that ambiguity is removed.

Perpetual fasting, without infringing the Divine command, is a *karamat* (miracle), and *karamat* is graced to elects and not to everyone. When *karamat* is not common then how can its commands e.g., perpetual fasting, be common. If they were vouchsafed to all, faith would be an act of necessity and Gnostic would not be recompense on account of gnosis. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was man of evidentiary miracles and therefore he outwardly divulged perpetual fasting, but he forbade the men of *karamat* (saints) to reveal it, because a *karamat* involves concealment, whereas a miracle involves revelation. This is a clear distinction between the miracles performed by Prophets and the *karamat* performed by saints. This much should be sufficient for anyone who is divinely guided.

The forty days` seclusion of the saints is derived from the state of Moses. When the saints desire to hear the word of Allah spiritually, they remain in hunger for forty days. After thirty days they cleanse their teeth and spend ten more days. Hence, Allah speaks to their hearts, because whatever the prophets enjoy openly the saints may enjoy secretly. It is not possible to hear the word of Allah in the presence of phenomenal subsistence, therefore, the four humors must be overwhelmed by depriving them of food and drink for forty days, and that the purity of love and the subtlety of the spirit may hold absolute sway. Since this involves hunger therefore, now I will ponder upon the reality of hunger.

Hunger and Matters Connected with it

Allah hath said:

وَلْتَبْلُوْا نَفْسَكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْعَمَلَاتِ

"Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil)," (Q 2:155)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

بطن جاع احب الي الله من سبعين عابدا غافلا

"Man with empty belly is more preferred before Allah than the seventy heedless worshipers."

It's a noble act to remain with hunger and it has the approval among all the religions and nations. Outwardly hunger sharpens the intelligence and improves the mind and health, particularly of that person who by reducing his food has adorned himself. Hunger produces humility in the heart and humbleness in the *nafs* (lower soul) and diminishes its power.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

اجيعو بطونكم واطمأوا الكبادكم واعرؤا اجسادكم لعل قلوبكم يرون الله غيا في الدنيا

"make your bellies hungry and your livers thirsty and do not put your bodies in adornment of dress, that perchance your hearts may have the vision of Allah in this world."

Although hunger causes pain to the body, but it illuminates the heart, purifies the soul, and leads the spirit unto the presence of the Truth. The body afflictions are neglected when spiritually one is blessed with vision, spirit is purified and heart is illuminated. To eat one's fill is not a good act, for were it an accepted act, the beasts would not have been filled to their bellies. It is the act of beasts to fill their

bellies and to be hungry is the act of brave. Hunger cultivates the spiritual nature whereas filling of belly cultivates the body.

One who cultivates his spiritual nature by means of hunger, in order to devote himself entirely to Allah and detach himself from worldly ties, is not on the same level with one who cultivates his body by means of greed, and serves his lusts. One need the whole universe to eat and another only eat to gain strength to meet his devotional obligations. The men of the old time used to eat to live but you live to eat. There is a clear difference between both.

المجوع طعام الصديقين ومسلك المريدين

“Hunger is the food of the truthful and a way of novices.”

The predestination is determined, but still it was for the sake of morsel of food that Adam fell from Paradise, and was banished far from the neighborhood of Allah. One whose hunger is compulsory is not really hungry, for one who desires to eat is like the one who eats and he is also not who has renounced the food but the food has been stopped from him. The one who while food is in front of him renounces it and bear pain of hunger is really a hungry man. To subdue the lusts of *nafs* (lower soul) and imprison the devil is not possible without hunger. Katani says:

من حكم المريدان يكون فيه ثلاثة اشياء نومه غلبة وكلامه ضرورة واكلاه فاقة

“Three things are must for the novice: his sleep when he is overpowered by slumber, and his speech only when needed, and eat when he is starving.”

According to some, starvation involves abstention from food for two days and nights, but others prefer for three days and nights, or a week. Some others opine that to eat once in forty days or to eat after forty days is starvation. The true mystics believe that a sincere man feel hunger is only once in forty days and his hunger merely serves to keep him alive, and all hunger besides is natural appetite and vanity, may Allah save from such hunger.

All praises to Allah, all the veins in the bodies of Gnostics are evidences of the Divine mysteries, and that their hearts are tenanted by vision of the Most Exalted. The doors of the hearts are opened in their breasts, and the reason and passion get stationed there. The spirit helps the intellect and *nafs* (lower soul) is helpful to passions. The more the natural humors are nourished by food, the stronger does the lower soul becomes. The desires are increased and the whole body is subdued by the *nafs* (lower soul), and in every vein a different kind of veil is produced. But when the desirer of food abstains from it, the *nafs* (lower soul) grows weak, and the reason gains strength. The sensual power vanishes from the veins. The mysteries and evidences of Allah become more visible. When the lower soul is unable to work and passion is annihilated, every vain desire is effaced in the manifestation of the Truth, and then the seeker attains his desire.

Abu al-Abbas Qassab said:

“My obedience and disobedience depend on two cakes of bread:

- when I eat I find in myself the stuff of every sin,
- but when I abstain from eating I find in myself the foundation of every act of piety.”

The fruit of hunger is contemplation of Allah, of which the forerunner is mortification.

If contemplation is achieved through fill of belly, it is better than that hunger which is limited to mortification, for contemplation is the battlefield of brave men, whereas mortification is the playground of children. The satiety in contemplation of Allah is better than that hunger which leads to contemplation of created.

Chapter XXII

The Uncovering of the Eighth Veil

Pilgrimage (Hajj)

Allah has said:

وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا

“Pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allah – those who can afford the journey;” (Q 3:97).

The Hajj (pilgrimage) is binding on every Muslim of sound mind who has the means to perform it and has reached manhood. The Hajj consists of:

- To make a vow of pilgrimage putting on the pilgrimage's garb (*ihram*) at Miqat,
- stay at Arafat,
- circumambulating the Ka`ba,
- running (*sahi*) between *Safah* and *Marwah*.

One must not enter the sacred territory without being clad in *ihram*. The sacred territory (*Haram*) is so called because it contains the *maqam* (station) of Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him) which is a place of peace. Abraham had two *maqam* (stations), the *maqam* of his body, namely Mecca, and the *maqam* of his soul, namely friendship. Whoever seeks his bodily station must renounce all lusts and pleasures and put on the pilgrim's garb and refrain from hunting lawful game. He should be present at Arafat with all his senses under strict control. From there should go to *Mudalifah* and *Mashar al-Haram*, pick up pebbles and circumambulate the Kaba. Then he should visit Mina and stay there for three days and throw pebbles in the prescribed manner. Then get his hair cut and perform the sacrifice and put on his (ordinary) clothes.

But whoever seeks the spiritual station of Abraham must renounce familiar associations and bid farewell to pleasure and take no thought of other than Allah, for his looking towards the phenomenal world is prohibited.

Should stay at the Arafat of gnosis and from there set out for the *Mudalifah* of amity and from there occupy his heart to circumambulate the *temple of Divine Purification* and throw away the pebbles of passion and corrupt thoughts in Mina of peace, and sacrifice his lower soul on the altar of mortification and arrive at the station of friendship. By entering the bodily station of Abraham one gets peace from enemy and their weapons, whereas by entering the spiritual station one gets peace from heedlessness and separation from Allah.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

الحاج وفد الله يعطيهم ما سألوا ويستجيب لهم ما دعوا

“The pilgrims are the ambassadors of Allah. What they wish they get and their prayers are answered.”

The seekers of spiritual station, neither wish for anything nor do they pray, rather remain in satisfaction. As Abraham said (verse of Quran):

إِذْ قَالَ لِرَبِّهُ اسْلِمِ قَالَ اسْلِمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“Behold! His Lord said to him: `Bow (thy will to me):` He said: `I bow (my will) to the Lord and the Cherisher of the Universe.`”

When Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him) attained the *maqam* of friendship and renounced all by making his soul independent from others (than Allah), Allah wished to have his splendor publicly manifested and Nimrod was selected for this task. He separated him from his parents, burnt the fire, Satan prepared the catapult. Abraham after wrapped in the cow skin was placed in the pan of the catapult. At that time Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) appeared and asked Abraham if he could help him out. Abraham said that he did not need his help. Gabriel asked if he had any desire to be met by Allah. Abraham said:

“Allah is independent of my need, He knows my state. His will is my will. He knows that for His sake I am being thrown in the fire. When He is fully aware of my state, then why should I plead to Him.”

Muhammad b. al-Fadl says:

I wonder at those who seek His temple in this world but they do not seek contemplation of Him in their hearts? They may find His temple sometimes and may not find the other time, whereas contemplation is always attained. If they are bound to visit a stone, which is looked at only once a year, surely they are more bound to visit the temple of the heart, which is looked at three hundred and sixty times in a day and night. Mystic's every step is a symbol of his journey to Mecca, and when he reaches at the sanctuary he wins a robe of honor for every step.

Abu Yazid says:

“If anyone's recompense for worshipping Allah is deferred until the next day, it is as if he has not worshipped Allah today, for the recompense of every moment of worship and mortification is immediate.”

He also said:

“On my first pilgrimage I saw only the Kaba. The second time, I saw both the Kaba and the Lord of Kaba; and the third time I saw the Lord alone and Kaba was out of my sight.”

In short, the sanctuary is that where magnificence of contemplation is. The one who does not perceive the whole universe where he comes nigh unto the Truth and a retired chamber where he enjoys intimacy with Allah, he is still a stranger to Divine love, but when he has vision the whole universe is his sanctuary. The darkest thing in the world is the Beloved's house without the Beloved. The actual thing in the abode of friendship is the contemplation of satisfaction of which sight of Kaba is a cause. The sight of Kaba is not the real object but every cause must retain its relation with the Causer, for we don't know from which hidden place the providence of Allah may appear, and from where the desire of the seekers may be satisfied. Mystics find their object by traversing wilderness and deserts, not right in the safe sanctuary, for eyeing on Beloved's sanctuary is unlawful. In their practices longing, eagerness, continuous anxiety and unease is the real thing.

Someone came to Junaid. He asked him from where he had come. He replied that he had been on pilgrimage. Junaid said: “When you started your journey from your home did you get freedom from your sins? He said: “No.”

Junaid said: “Then you have made no journey. At every stage where you halted for the night did you traverse a station on the way to Allah?” He said: “No.”

Junaid said: “Then you have not trodden the road stage by stage. When you put on the pilgrim's garb at *Miqat* did you discard the attributes of humanity?” No, was the answer.

Junaid said: “Then you have not put on the pilgrim's garb. When you stood at Arafat did you realize your presence in contemplation of Allah?” No, he replied.

Junaid said: “Then you have not stood at Arafat. When you went to Mudalifah and achieved your desire did you renounce all sensual desires?” The answer was no.

Junaid said: “Then you have not gone to Mudalifah. When your circumambulated the Kaba did you with your spiritual eyes observe the Magnificence of Allah in the abode of purification?”

No, he replied.

Junaid said: "Then you have not circumambulated the Kaba. When you ran between *Safah* and *Marwah* did you get conversant to the *maqam* (station) of purity and rank of virtue?" "No. was the reply"

Junaid said: "Then you have not run (performed *sahi*). When you came to Mina did all your wishes not cease?"

"No."

Junaid said: "Then you have not yet visited Mina. When you reached at the slaughtering place and offered sacrifice did you sacrifice the objects of sensual desire?"

He replied: "No."

Junaid said: "Then you have not sacrificed. When you threw the pebbles did you throw away whatever sensual thoughts were accompanying you?"

No, was the answer.

Junaid said: "Then you have not yet thrown the stones, and you have not yet performed the pilgrimage. Return and perform the pilgrimage in the manner which I have described in order that you may arrive at the *maqam* (station) of Abraham."

Fudayl b. Iyad said that at Arafat he saw a youth who with bowed head stood silent. All the pilgrims were praying but he was quite. He asked him to participate in prayer. The youth told him that he was under severe distress, because he had lost his spiritual state and had left with no face to pray. Fudayl told him to pray, for Allah might listen to his prayer through the blessing of this multitude. The youth was about to lift up his hands and pray, when suddenly he uttered a shriek and died at the spot.

Dhu al-Nun said that at Mina he saw a young man sitting quietly while the people were engaged in sacrifice. I looked at him to see who he was and what he intend doing. He cried:

"O Lord, all the people are offering sacrifice. I wish to sacrifice my lower soul to Thee; do Thou accept it."

Having spoken, he pointed his forefinger to his throat and fell dead.

Pilgrimage has two aspects, i.e. in absence (from Allah) and in the presence (of Allah).

One who is absent (from Allah) even in the sanctuary of Kaba, is as if he is at his home, for absence is the same may it be from home or sanctuary of Kaba. One who is present with Allah in his own house is as he is present with the Truth in the sanctuary of Kaba, for presence in the Court of the Truth is presence everywhere. Pilgrimage is an act of mortification for revelation of contemplation. Mortification does not become the direct cause of contemplation, but is only a means to it and the cause does not have much effect in its meaning and reality. The true object of pilgrimage is not to visit the Kaba, but to obtain contemplation of Allah. Now I will render a discourse on contemplation which elucidates the same so that you might be benefited.

Contemplation (*Mushahida* مشاهدة)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

اجيعو بطونكم دعوا الحرس واعروا اجسادكم قصروا الامل واطمأوا الكباد كم دعوا الدنيا لعلكم ترون الله بقلوبكم

"Make your bellies hungry, abandon greed, do not adorn your bodies, lessen your desires, keep your liver thirsty and leave the world alone, that your hearts may have the vision of Allah."

When Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) asked about beneficence the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

اعبد الله كأنك تراه فإن لم تكن تراه فإنه يراك

“Worship Allah as though you see Him, for if you do not see Him, yet He sees you.”

Allah revealed to David:

“O David! Do you know what My *Marifat* (knowledge) is?

David said, “No”.

Allah said: It is life of the heart in contemplation of Me.”

By contemplation (مشاهدة) the *Sufis* mean spiritual vision of Allah in public and private.

Abu al-Abbas Ata in his commentary of the following verse of Quran,

إِنَّ الدِّينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا

in the case of those who say, `our Lord is Allah` and, further, stand straight and steadfast,” (Q 41:30), says:

“they say `Our Lord is Allah` in self-mortification (*mujahida* مجاهدة) and they `become steadfast` on the carpet of contemplation (*mushahida* مشاهدة).”

The reality of contemplation depends on perfect faith, and rapturous love, for in the rapture of love a man attains to such a degree that his whole being is absorbed in the thoughts of his Beloved and he sees nothing else.

Muhammad b. Wasi says:

ما رأيت شيئا قط إلا ورأيت الله فيه - أي بصحة اليقين

“I never saw anything in which I did not have the vision of Allah without perfect faith.”

Shibli says:

ما رأيت شيئا قط إلا الله يعني بغلبات المحبة وغلباني المشاهدة

“I in the rapture of love and the fervor of contemplation see only Allah in everything.”

One sees some act through that he beholds the Agent with his spiritual eye and he sees the act and the Agent both. Another is absorbed so much by love of the Agent that he sees only the Agent. The first method is demonstrative and the other is ecstatic. This is to say that one demonstrates so that evidences of Truth are manifested to him, whereas the other is absorbed in love of Allah and evidences and verities are a veil to him. Therefore, he who attains knowledge of a thing does not get comfort aught besides, and he who loves a thing does not regard aught besides. He does not protest on any of the acts of his beloved nor does speak against His command because he does not want to have any interference with Him in His decrees and His acts.

Allah while mentioning the ascension of Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى

(His) sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong!” (Q 53:17).

Prophet (peace be upon him) did not pay heed to anything because of his rapturous longing for Allah, whatever he wanted to see he saw that with the eyes of his heart. When the lover turns his eye away from created things, he will inevitably see the Creator with his heart. Allah has said,

لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى

for truly did he see, of the signs of his Lord, the Greatest!"(Q 53:18).

Allah also said:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze," (24:30),

i.e. to close their bodily eyes to lusts and their spiritual eyes to created things. He who keeps a check on his eyes from sighting lust through self-mortification he definitely sees his Lord through these eyes. So, one who is most sincere in self-mortification is most firmly grounded in contemplation, for inwardly contemplation is connected with the outwardly mortification.

Sahl b. Abdullah says:

من غَضَّ بَصْرَهُ عَنِ اللَّهِ طَرْفَةً عَيْنٍ يَأْهِي بِطُولِ عَمْرِهِ

"One, who turns his eyes from Allah for a single moment, will never be rightly guided all along his life."

Because to regard others is to seek others and who has gone to others is lost. Therefore the men of contemplation only count that life in which they enjoyed contemplation. They do not reckon time not spent in contemplation as life, that to them it is really death. Thus, when Abu Yazid was asked how old he was, he replied, four years. They astonishingly asked how that could be and Abu Yazid replied:

"I have been veiled (from Allah) by this world for seventy years, but I have vision of Him during the last four years: the period in which one is veiled does not belong to one's life."

Shibli used to pray:

اللهم اخبأ الجنة والنار في خبأيا غيبك حتى تعبد بغير واسطة

"O Allah, hide Paradise and Hell in Thy unseen places, that Thou mayest be worshipped independently." The human nature does have the desire of Paradise, hence heedless people worship only for the greed of Paradise and they are devoid of love of Allah and resultantly are debarred from contemplating Him.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) that he did not see Allah on the night of the ascension, but Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) relates that Prophet (peace be upon him) told him that he saw Allah on that occasion. This led to controversy among the people and no one tried to realize that in saying that he did not see Allah the Prophet (peace be upon him) was referring to his bodily eyes whereas in saying the contrary he was referring to his spiritual eye. Among both the audiences one was formalist and the other spiritualist and Prophet (peace be upon him) spoke to each of them according to their insight and state. Since he had the vision of the Truth through his spiritual eyes, what difference does it make even if he had not seen the Truth through his bodily eyes?

Junaid used to say:

If Allah should say to me, "Behold Me", I would reply, "I will not behold Thee", because in love the eye is other (than Allah) and alien, and partnership of other in vision of the Truth is unacceptable. I may keep on visioning Him in this world without the involvement of bodily eyes."

إني لا حسد ناظري عليك فأغض طرفي إذا نظرت عليك

"Truly, I envy mine eye the sight of Thee,
And I close mine eye when I look on Thee."

Junaid was asked whether he wished to see Allah. His answer was negative. When they asked him the reason, he said, "When Moses wished, he did not see Him, but Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not wish, and he saw Him."

Our wish and desire are the greatest veils that hinder us from vision of Allah, because in love the existence of self-will is disobedience, and disobedience is a veil. When self-will vanishes in this world, contemplation is attained, and when contemplation is firmly established, there is no difference between this world and the next.

Abu Yazid says:

ان الله عبادةً لوحيداً من الله في الدنيا والاخرة لا يرتدوا

"Allah has slaves who would apostatize if they were veiled for a moment from Him in this world or in the next," i.e. He sustains them with perpetual contemplation and keeps them alive with the life of love. When one who enjoys revelation is deprived of it, he is necessarily accursed by heaven.

Dhu al-Nun says that one day while in Egypt, he saw some lads throwing stones at a young man. The lads told him that he was a madman and pretend to see God. He turned to the young man and inquired whether he had really said so. He answered that if he did not see Him for a moment, the veil would drop and he would be debarred from His obedience.

Here, some people have fallen into the error, and they say that vision of Allah or spiritual contemplation in the state of *dikr* (remembrance of Allah) and contemplation is an imagination of the mind either from memory or reflection. It is a wrong comparison and manifest error, Allah is not finite that the imagination should be able to define Him or that the intellect should comprehend His nature. Whatever is imagined it would be from the genus of imagination and what ever intellect would perceive that would be from his genus, whereas Allah is independent of being part of some genus. The entire subtle and gross alike are homogeneous to each other notwithstanding their mutual contrariety. In reality the *Tawhid* (union) in the light of Eternity is opposite of genus. The entire opposite things are created and all the created beings are homogenous. Allah is far above from these things which heretics refer about Him.

Therefore contemplation in this world resembles vision of Allah in the next world. Since, the companions of the Prophet are unanimous that vision is possible hereafter, then why the contemplation of the Truth is not lawful in this world.

There is no difference between the revealers of the contemplation in this world and vision in the next world and one who would speak about them would say that contemplation in this world and vision hereafter is lawful. He will not claim that he has seen, for contemplation is an attribute of the heart and cannot be expressed by the tongue except metaphorically. When tongue could speak of inward, it will not be contemplation, rather would be a claim. Which intellect is unable to perceive, how tongue can put it in words, it can only accept it as lawful.

Therefore, contemplation is presence of the heart and incapability of the tongue. Hence silence ranks higher than speech, for silence is a sign of contemplation, whereas speech is a sign of ocular testimony. There is big difference in evidence and contemplation of a thing. Accordingly when the Prophet (peace be upon him) attained proximity to Allah, he said,

لا احصي ثناء عليك

"I cannot tell thy praise."

because he was in state of contemplation, and contemplation in the degree of love is perfect unity, and any outwardly expression in unity is otherness. Then he said:

انت كما اثنت علي نفسك

"Thou art hast praised Thyself,"

i.e. Thy words are mine, and Thy praise is mine, and I do not deem my tongue capable of expressing what I feel.

As the poet says:-

تَهْنَيْتُ اِنْ اَهْوَيْتُ فَلَمَّا رَاَيْتَهُ بَهْتُ فَلَمْ اَمْلِكْ لِسَانًا وَلَا طَرْفًا

“I desired my beloved, but when I saw him

I was dumbfounded and possessed neither tongue nor eye.”

Chapter XXIII

The Uncovering of the Ninth Veil

Companionship, its Rules and Principles

Allah has said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا

“O ye who believe! Save yourself and your families from a fire,” (Q 66:6),

i.e. teach them the manners.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

حسن الادب من الايمان

“Good manners are a part of faith.”

And he also said:

أدبني ربي فأحسن تأديبي

“My Lord taught me manners and gave me an excellent teaching.”

You must know that the beauty and elegance of all religious and temporal affairs depend on decorum. There are rules for every occasion and for everyone. All, whether they are Muslims or infidels, atheist or Unitarians, heretics or *Sunnis* all agree that observance of virtue in dealings is appreciable and nothing can be achieved in this world without good manners. Among people good manners consist in the observance of virtue, and in religion good manners consists in the observance of the *Sunnah* and as regards to love they consist in the observance of reverence. All these are connected with each other, because one who is without virtue does not comply with the *Sunnah*, and whoever fails to comply with the *Sunnah* does not observe due reverence. In matters of conduct the observance of discipline is the result of reverence for the object of desire. The reverence for Allah and His signs springs from piety. Anyone who disrespectfully treads the reverence which is due of the evidences of Allah gains nothing in the Path of Sufism. The seeker of the Truth under all circumstances of intoxication and rapture is bound to observe the discipline, for they are habituated to such rules, and habit is second nature and it is impossible that a living creature should be divested of its natural humors. Therefore, so long as the human body of the seeker remains in existence he with or without efforts observe the rules of obedience. In the state of sobriety he observes the rules of obedience with efforts but when he is in the state of intoxication Allah keeps them in discipline. A saint under no circumstances neglect manners, for love is the product of manners and good manners are the sign of love. When Allah vouchsafes a *karamat* (miracle) to anyone, as a proof He causes him to watch over the code of conduct of religion. This is contrary to the view of heretics, who assert that when a man is overpowered by love he is no longer subject to obedience. I shall set forth this matter more clearly elsewhere.

The rules of discipline have three aspects.

The first type is of observance of discipline in *Tawhid* (unification) that one must guard one's self in public and private from any disrespectful act, and behave as though one were in the presence of a king. It is related in the genuine *Hadiith* (Tradition) that one day the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sitting with his legs extended. Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) came and said, “O Muhammad, sit like a slave in the Court of thy Lord.”

It is told that Harith Muhasibi for forty years never leaned his back against a wall, and always sat on his knees. On being asked why he gave himself so much trouble he replied, "I feel ashamed to sit otherwise than as a slave while I am contemplating Allah."

At Kumand, a village at the extremity of Khurasan I saw Adib Kumandi, a reputable man. For twenty years he had never sat down except while in *tashahhud* (reciting invocation) during his prayers. When I inquired the reason of this, he answered that he had not yet attained such a degree that he should sit while contemplating the Truth.

Abu Yazid was asked that by what means he had gained so high spiritual rank. He answered, "By keeping good manners of companionship with Allah, I always remained respectfully and behaved alike both in private as well in public."

People must learn from Zulaikha how to observe and preserve good manners in contemplating the object of their adoration, for when she was alone with Yusuf (may blessings of Allah be on him) and besought him to consent to her wishes, she first covered the face of her idol. When Yusuf inquired from her about that act she replied that it was in order that it might not witness her in profanity. This is against the manners. And when Yusuf met Jacob and Allah blessed them with union, He also bestowed on Zulaikha her youth and wealth of Islam, and she was honored of being the wife of Yusuf. When Yusuf tried to have matrimonial affections with her, she ran away. Yusuf said to her, "I am your same beloved, why are you running away from me. Have you been relieved of my love?" Zulaikha replied, "No, it's not like that, I love you more now but I always kept the honor of my Deity. First time my deity was an idol which was unable to see. Since it had two eyes, though lifeless, I had covered him to safeguard against any accusation of disrespect. But now my God is He Who without any aid can see. In whatever condition am I, He is seeing me, and I do not want to leave good manners.

And when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was blessed with ascension, his observance of discipline restrained him from paying any regard either to this or to the next world. In the words of Quran,

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى

(His) sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong! (Q 53:17).

The second kind of discipline is that which is observed towards one's self in one's conduct, and which consists in avoiding, when one is in isolation and alone, any act that would be improper in the company of one's fellow creatures or of Allah, e.g., one must not utter untruth by declaring one's self to be what one is not, and one must eat little in order that one may seldom go to the lavatory, and one must not look at anything which is not decent for others to see. It is related that Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) never beheld his own nakedness, because he was ashamed to see in himself what he was forbidden to see in others.

The third kind of discipline is observed in social intercourse with the fellow-creatures. The most important rule for such intercourse is to act well, and to observe the custom of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at home and out.

These three sorts of disciplines cannot be separated from one another. Now I will set them forth in detail as far as possible, in order that you and all my readers may follow them more easily.

Companionship and Matters Connected Therewith

Allah hath said:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا

"On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will Allah the most gracious bestow love." (Q 19:96).

Allah would bestow His love on those who do righteous deeds, keep an eye on their heart, do their duty towards their brethren and prefer them to themselves.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

ثَلَاثٌ يَصِفِينَ لَكَ وَدَاخِيكَ تَسْلَمُ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ لَقِيْتَهُ وَتَوَسَّعَ لَهُ فِي الْمَجْلِسِ وَتَدْعُو بِأَحْسَنِ الْأَسْمَاءِ

“Three things render your brother’s love toward you sincere:

- that you should salute him when you meet him,
- you should make room for him when he sits beside you,
- you should call him by the name that he likes the best.”

And Allah said,

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ

“The believers are but a single brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; (Q 49:10).

All are commanded to create atmosphere of reconciliation among two Muslim brethren, so that no one feel annoyed.

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

اَكْثَرُوا مِنَ الْاِخْوَانِ فَاَنْ رَبِّكُمْ حَيِّ كَرِيْمٌ يَسْتَحْيِي اِنْ يَعْذِبُ عَبْدًا بَيْنَ اِخْوَانِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

“Make many brethren, for your Lord is generous and kind, and because of the modesty of His kindness on the Day of Resurrection He will not punish His devotees in the presence of their brethren.”

Companionship must be for the sake of Allah, and not for the purpose of gratifying the *nafs* (lower soul) or any selfish interest, in order that a man may divinely be rewarded for observing the rules of companionship.

Malik b. Dinar said to his son-in-law, Mughira b. Sheba:

“O Mughira, if you derive no religious benefit from a brother and friend, abandon his society that you maybe saved.” It means that get companionship of either with one who is superior to you or with one who is inferior to you. In the former case one will derive benefit from him, and in the latter case the benefit will be mutual, since each will learn something from the other and both will religiously be benefited. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “ان من تمام التقوي تعليم من لا يعلم،” the excellence of piety is to instruct one who is ignorant;”

Yahya b. Maud said:

بءس الصديق صديق تحتاج ان تقول له اذ كرني في دعائك:

وبءس الصديق صديق تحتاج ان تعيش معه بالمداراة: وبءس الصديق صديق يلجءك الي الاعتذار في زلة كانت منك

“Bad is the friend to whom you need to say, `Remember me in prayers`, because the recompense of a moment’s friendship is to remember in one’s prayers forever;

And bad is a friend with whom you need to spend life with caution, (for companionship is always based on frankness);

And bad is a friend to whom you need to apologize for a fault that you have committed, because apology is a sign of strangeness and strangeness in companionship is cruelty.”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

المرو علي دين خليله فلينظر احدكم من يخال

“A man follows the religion (habits and manners) of his friend, take heed, therefore, with whom you form a friendship.”

If he associates himself with pious people, he will be known as pious; although he is bad and his good deed ultimately would make him also a pious man. And if he associates himself with the wicked, although he is pious he will be known as wicked, for he pretend to show approval to their wickedness. One who remains contended to evil, may he be good but would be known as bad. It is related that a man while circumambulating the Kaba was praying, “O Allah! set my brethren to good deeds!” On being asked that why he did not implore a boon for himself at such a place, he replied:

“I have to return to my brethren, if they are good, I shall be good with them, and if they are wicked, I shall be wicked with them. When righteousness of my being depends on their righteousness, why I should not pray for them that they become right and I achieve my object through them.”

The basis of this saying is that the *nafs* (lower soul) gets satisfaction from habits, therefore, he accepts the habits of those with whom it gets acquainted, for *nafs* is composed of all matters and true and false desires. It is overwhelmed by what it sees in them and it effects on his nature. The companionship makes hawk learned, parrot through human efforts starts speaking and horse through training gets habitual to human attribute. There are so many such examples which elaborate the consequences of the companionship that how it can change the actual nature. The *Sufi* Sheikhs first of all demand from each other the fulfillment of the duties of companionship and enjoin their disciples to acquire the same, so that among them companionship becomes like a religious obligation.

The Sheikhs have written many books explaining the rules of *Sufi* companionship; e.g. Junaid composed a work entitled *Tashih al-iradat*, Ahmad b. Khadruya, entitled *Al-Riayay bi-huquq Allah*, and Muhammad b. Ali Tirmidhi entitled *Adab al-muridin*. Other exhaustive treatises on this subject have been written by Abu al-Qasim Hakim, Abu Bakr al-Warraaq, Sahl b. Abdullah, Abu Abd al-Rahman Salami, and Master Abu al-Qasim Qushayri. All those writers are great authorities on Sufism, but I desire anyone who possesses this book should enable him to dispense with other books and, as I said in the preface, “be sufficient in itself for you and for all students of the Sufi doctrine”. I will now classify in separate chapters their various rules of discipline relating to conduct.

The Rules of the Companionship of the Sheikhs

Since it is clear that the most important thing for the novice is companionship, therefore, the fulfillment of its obligations is necessarily incumbent on him. Solitude is fatal to the novice, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الشيطان مع الواحد

“Satan is with the solitary.”

Allah hath said,

مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ

“There is not a secret consultation between three, but He makes the fourth among them,” (Q 58:7).

A disciple of Junaid thought that he had attained to the degree of perfection and desired solitude. So, he abandoned his companionship and sat in seclusion. At nightfall a camel used to be brought to him and he was told to move to Paradise. He would mount on the camel and would reach to a pleasant place where he would find beautiful inhabitants, delicious viands and flowing streams. He used to be kept there until he was asleep and on waking found himself in his cell. Slowly and steadily he was overwhelmed by human conceit and when pride of youth also penetrated he started boasting about his

state. When Junaid heard the story he went to his cell and having heard him full account of his state, he said to him that next night when he come to that place remember to say thrice,

لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العلي العظيم

“there is no power or obstruction but in Allah, the Most High, the Most Great.”

The same night he was carried as usual, and though in his heart he did not believe Junaid, by way of trial he repeated those words thrice. The people around him shrieked and vanished, and he found himself seated on a dunghill in the midst of rotten bones. He acknowledged his fault and repented and returned to companionship.

The condition of companionship in Sufism is that one should treat everyone according to his degree. Thus he should treat elders with respect, those of their own sort with pleasant familiarity, and younger with affection. For him elders should be like his parents, should consider brothers of his own age group and should treat the younger like his sons. Should renounce hate, envy, and malice, and must not withhold sincere admonition. It is not permissible to speak evil on somebody's back and or to behave dishonestly with companions. Similarly it is also not appreciated to deny one another on account of any word or deed, because a companionship which begins for Allah's sake should not be cut short by human words or acts.

I when asked Sheikh Abu al-Qasim Gurgani that what obligations were involved in companionship, he said:

“One should not seek his own share, for all the evils of companionship arise from it as everyone starts demanding his share and solitude is better for such a man. He who neglects his own interest and looks after the interests of his companion is truly qualified for companionship.”

Some dervish set out from Kufa to visit Mecca. On the way he met Ibrahim Khawwas and begged for his company. Khawwas said, “In companionship there is necessarily be a commander and the other follower. What do you choose?” The dervish preferred the latter and accepted Khawwas as his commander. Khawwas bade him not to fail to comply with his orders. When they arrived at the halting place, Khawwas bade him sit down, and he drew water from the well. Since the weather was cold, he gathered sticks and kindled a fire, and whenever the dervish attempted to do anything he told him to sit down. At nightfall it began to rain heavily. Khawwas took off his patched frock and held it over dervish all night. The dervish really felt ashamed and embarrassed but could not say a word on account of the condition imposed on him. Next morning the dervish said to Khawwas that it was his turn to be commander, and Khawwas without hesitancy agreed. As soon as they reached the halting place, Khawwas began to perform the same menial works as before. The dervish tried to check him on that account but Khawwas said that it would be an act of disobedience to let one's self be served by one's commander. He continued to behave in that way until they reached Mecca. By that time dervish felt so ashamed that he fled from him. Khawwas got hold of him at Mina and said, “O son, when you associate with dervishes see that you treat them in the same fashion as I treated you.”

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said that he served the Prophet (peace be upon him) for ten years and during that period he never pointed a finger even once on his service.

Dervishes are of two kinds, residents and travelers. According to the custom of the Sheikhs, the traveling dervishes should regard the resident ones as superior to themselves, because they go to and fro in their own interest, while the resident dervishes have settled down in the service of Allah which in the former case is the sign of search, and in the latter is the token of attainment. Hence those who have found and settled down are superior to those who are still seeking. Similarly, the resident dervishes ought to regard the traveling dervishes as superior to themselves, because resident are laden with worldly encumbrances, while the traveling dervishes are unencumbered and detached from the world.

Again, old men should prefer young ones to themselves, for they are newer to the world and whose sins are less numerous; and young men should prefer to themselves the old ones, for they are better than them in devotion and service. If it happens like this, there will be no evil and there will be ease and deliverance for all.

The Reality of Culture (آداب Aaadab)

The reality of *Aadab* آداب (culture) means the collection of virtuous qualities, therefore, a cultured person is called so because his every act is based on righteousness. In ordinary language anyone who is acquainted with Arabic philology and grammar is called *adib* ادیب (cultured). But the *Sufis* define *adab* ادب as, “*adab* ادب involves steadfastness in good deed,” which means to remain fully cultured towards Allah both inwardly and outwardly. So, whosoever acts like that is *adib* ادیب (cultured) even if he is non Arab, and who does not act this way is the opposite. In conduct the phraseology and words have no value, and people with good deeds are always better than those who are just good orators.

Some Sheikh was asked that what the culture involved and he said:

“If you speak, your speech should be true and sincere, and if you act, your actions should be based on truth and justice.” The truth is although bitter but salty and good deed is though difficult but likened. When you speak your talk should be perfect and your quietness should be led by Truth.

In his book *Lama*, an excellent distinction as regards to *Aadab* has been made by Sheikh Abu Nasr Saraj, who says:

There are three classes of mankind as regards to *Aadab* آداب (Culture).

- Firstly, the worldlings, whose culture mainly consists in eloquence and oratory and learning and knowledge of the nightly conversations of kings and Arabic poetry.
- Secondly, the religious, whose culture chiefly consists in disciplining the *nafs* (lower soul) and correcting the limbs and observing the legal ordinances and renouncing lusts.
- Thirdly, the elects whose culture consists for the most part in spiritual purity and keeping watch over their hearts and fulfilling their promises and guarding the states, and paying no heed to evil suggestions and maintaining the utmost decorum at the time of presence (with Allah), and in the stations of proximity (to Allah).”

This saying is comprehensive. The different matters which it includes are discussed at several places in this book.

The Rules of Companionship Affecting Residents

When a Dervish chooses to reside and not to travel, he is bound to observe the following rules of discipline:

- When a traveler comes to him, he must meet him with respect and joyfully and treats him like an honored guest and considers him to be amongst the guests of Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him). He should serve him in the fashion as Abraham used to serve and sets before him whatever food he has, as Abraham used to do, “brought out a fated calf” (Q 51:26), and because of respect Abraham would never ask his guests that from where had they come and where they intended to go and who were they?
- The dervish should only think in his heart the guest has come from Allah and would be leading to Him and should recognize him only as servant of Allah.
- If the guest likes to live alone he should be given some vacant place and if he desires company he must consort with him unceremoniously in a friendly and sociable manner.

- At night when he lays on his bed the resident dervish should massage his feet, but if the traveler should say that he is not accustomed to it, the resident for fear of causing him annoyance must not insist.
- Next day, he must take him to the cleanest bath available. Must not keep his clothes at some dirty place and neither employ any stranger to serve the guest.
- He should scrape his back, knees, sole of the feet and hand with the intention that by cleansing his guest he would also be cleansed from all the evils.
- If resident has sufficient means, he should provide a new garment for his guest, otherwise, he need not trouble himself, but he should wash his guest's clothes so that he may put them on when he comes out of the bath.
- The next day he should invite his guest to visit some spiritual elder or Imam, who may be in the town, but he must not be compelled, for seekers of the Truth are not always masters of their own feelings, as Ibrahim Khawwas on one occasion refused the company of Khidr (may blessings of Allah be on him), who desired his companionship, for he was unwilling that his feelings should be engaged by anyone save Allah.
- It is not praiseworthy that resident dervish should take his guest to salute worldly men or to make him to attend their sick and funerals. Such resident who is greedy and hopes to make travelers an instrument of mendicancy and for the purpose conduct him from house to house, it would be better for him to refrain from serving any guest from the very beginning, for it would save the guest from humiliation.

I never felt more troubled and inconvenient during my traveling than from ignorant servants and impudent resident dervishes who during my stay with them would conduct me from house to house of different nobilities such like Khawajas and Farmers. Although apparently I would never make a complaint of that but I always felt great aversion going with them. I then vowed that, if ever I became resident, I would not behave towards travelers with such immodesty. There is no other benefit one might derive from associating with ill-mannered persons except that about whatever one feels ill, he develops habit of resigning from such activities.

If a traveling dervish stays for some days and makes worldly demand, the resident is bound to meet his wants immediately. But if the traveler is a pretender and low-minded, then the resident is not bound to comply with his un-genuine wants, for dervishhood is the path of those who have renounced the world and if he is a seeker of the world then he should meet his desires by visiting bazaar or beg services from kings. What business has a dervish to associate with devotees if he needs worldly things?

Once while Junaid and his disciples were occupied in some ascetic discipline, a traveling dervish came to them. They took sufficient pain to entertain him. When food was placed before him, he demanded some additional thing from them. Junaid said to him, "You should have gone to the bazaar, for you belong to the market, and you have no concern with convent and the mosque."

Once I set out from Damascus with two dervishes to visit Ibn al-Muala. He was living at village Ramla. We decided among ourselves that each of us should think of the matter concerning which we were in doubt, in order to see that the Sheikh might tell us our secret thoughts and solve our difficulties. I thought to desire from him the poetry and intimate supplications of Hussein b. Mansur. One of my dervish companions thought that he would desire him to pray that his disease of spleen might heal and the other companion thought of desiring from him a kind of sweetmeat. As soon as we arrived, Ibn al-Muala commanded that a manuscript of the poems and supplication of Hussein should be presented to me, and laid his hand on the belly of the invalid so that his illness was eased, and said to other dervish, "The desired sweetmeat is eaten by soldiers, you are dressed as a saint, and the dress of a saint does not accord with the appetite of a soldier. Choose one or the other."

In short, the resident is bound to serve traveling dervish who is committed to Allah and not desirous of his share thereof. If he is devoted to his own interests, then the other should act against his desire.

When he renounces it, then his friend ought to satisfy him, so that both of them remain on right path and may not lose their way.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) had made brotherhood between Salman (al-Farisi) and Abu Dhar Ghaffari (may Allah be pleased with them), both were leading men among the people of the Veranda and eminent spiritualists. One day, when Salman came to visit Abu Dhar at his house, his wife complained to Salman that her husband neither ate by day nor slept by night. Salman told her to fetch some food, and said to Abu Dhar, "O brother, I desire you to comply with my wish since this fasting is not incumbent on you." Abu Dhar complied. And at night Salman said, "O brother, I beg you to sleep for your body and your wife has a claim upon you, as well as thy Lord."

Next day when Abu Dhar went to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said, "Abu Dhar, I say the same thing as Salman said to you yesterday: verily, your body has a claim upon you."

What Abu Dhar abandoned, Salman got ready to abide for his share and left his own regularities. Anything done on this principle is right.

Once while in Iraq, I got occupied in seeking wealth and recklessly spending it, and ran into debt. Everyone who wanted anything turned to me, and I got entangled in that how could I accomplish their desires. An eminent Sheikh wrote to me:

"O son! Beware lest you distract your mind from Allah by satisfying the wishes of those minds who are engrossed in vanity. If you find any heart of higher degree than you, there is no harm in serving him, otherwise, do not distract yourself, for Allah is sufficient to take care for His servants."

By acting on his advice in a very short time I got free from that entangle.

The Rules of companionship in Travel

When a dervish prefers to travel and not to reside, he ought to observe the following rules:

- The travel must be for the sake of Allah, and not for the pleasure of *nafs* (lower soul). As he journeys outwardly, so he should flee inwardly from his sensual affections.
- He must always keep himself in a state of purity and must not neglect his devotional practices.
- The objective of his traveling should be to travel for pilgrimage or for Jihad (war) or to see a holy site or to derive some benefit or to seek knowledge or to visit a venerable person, a Sheikh, or tomb of some saint. If the dervish does not have either of these objectives his journey will not yield him any benefit.

During the travel he must keep with him *muraqqa* (patched frock), prayer-rug, ewer, rope, shoes or sleeper and a staff. The patched frock is to cover his nakedness, the prayer-rug to pray, the ewer to cleanse him with, and the staff to protect him from harmful objects. After performing *wadu* (ablution) he must put on his shoes in a state of purity and then leads him to the prayer-rug.

If anyone carries other articles, in adherence to *Sunnah* (Apostolic custom), such as a comb, nail-scissors, needle and a small box of antimony, it is lawful but if anyone keeps something in addition to above, we have to consider in what station the dervish is, for if he is a novice every article will be a shackle, a stumbling-block, an idol and a veil to him, and means of showing self-conceit. But if the dervish is firmly grounded adept he may carry all these and more articles.

One day Sheikh Abu Muslim Faris b. Ghalib al-Farisi paid a visit to Sheikh Abu Said b. Abu al-Khair. He found him sleeping on a couch which was surrounded with cushions. His legs were spread over each other and he was covered with fine Egyptian linen. Abu Muslim whose garment was so dirty that it resembled dry leather and his body was emaciated by austerities, on looking at Abu Said a feeling of disbelief overcame him and a thought occurred to him that they both were dervish, yet Abu Said was in all luxury and he was in sore tribulation. Abu Said divined his thoughts and got aware of his vainglory. He said:

“O Abu Muslim in which poetical work have you read that a self-conceited man is a dervish? O my brother I kept eye only on Allah and He made me seated on a throne, and since you have kept your eye only to yourself, Allah made you seated on the dust. I am preordained to contemplation, while you to mortification. Both these are the stations on the Way to Allah, but Allah is far aloof from both of them, and a dervish is dead to all stations and free from all states.”

On hearing these words Abu Muslim lost his senses and the whole world grew dark in his eyes. When he came back to his senses, he repented, and Sheikh accepted his repentance. Abu Muslim told Sheikh that he was unable to bear his sight and begged for leave. The Sheikh agreed to his request and read this verse:

That which my ear was unable to hear

My eye beheld all at once.

The traveling dervish must always observe the *Sunnah*, and when he comes to a resident dervish he should enter his presence respectfully and greet him. Then first of all he should remove his left shoe, for Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do this way. When he puts his shoe on he should first put on the right shoe. Similarly, he should wash his right foot before his left. Then he should perform two *rakaat* of salutation prayer and occupy himself with attending to the (religious) duties incumbent on dervishes. He must under no circumstances interfere with the resident dervishes, or behave immoderately towards them. Similarly he must not talk before the audience of the hardships which he have suffered in traveling, or discourse on theology, or tell anecdotes, or recite tradition, for all this is a sign of self-conceit. He must be patient on any foolish talk and tolerate their irksomeness for Allah's sake, for in patience there are many blessings. If residents or their servants command him and invite him for a visit to shrine or town people, he must comply if he can, but in his heart he ought to dislike such hospitality which represent the marks of respect with worldlings. He must take care not to trouble them by making any unreasonable demand, and he must not drag them to the court of high officials with the purpose of seeking an idle pleasure for himself.

Traveling as well as resident dervishes while in companionship must always endeavor to please Allah and must have a good belief in each other. They must not speak ill of any comrade face to face or behind his back, for it is improper for the seeker of the Truth to talk about the created. The true mystics in regarding the act see the Agent, and created beings in whatever state they may be, are the creation of Allah, whether it is faulty or faultless, veiled or in contemplation, so any criticism on them is a criticism on Allah. If one sees the creation with human eye, he ought to renounce it then, for created are veiled, subdued, forsaken and helpless. No one can act more than for what he has been created. The created has no interference in the kingdom of Allah and no one save Allah has the power and authority to change the nature of something.

The Rules of Eating

Men cannot sustain without food, for body cannot stand without nourishment, but moral virtue requires that one should not eat or drink in excess and one must not remain committed day and night only for this purpose. Shafii says:

من كان همته ما يدخل في جوفه فان قيمته ما يخرج منه

“The one whose object is filling of his belly should know that he is worth only that which comes out of it.”

Nothing is more hurtful to a novice in Sufism than excessive eating. I have already discussed on eating habits.

When Abu Yazid was asked why he praised hunger so highly, he answered:

“Yes! Had Pharaoh been hungry he would not have said,

I am your Supreme Lord,”

and had Qarun been hungry he would not have been rebellious.”

Thalaba (may Allah be pleased with him) was praised by all so long as he was hungry, but when he ate his fill he displayed hypocrisy.

Allah hath said:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ

“While those who rejects Allah will enjoy (this world) and eat as cattle eat; and fire will be their abode.”
(Q 47:12).

Sahl b. Abdullah Tustari said:

“In my opinion, a belly full of wine is better than one full of lawful food, for when a man’s belly is filled with wine, his intellect is at rest and the flame of lust is loosen, and people are secure from his hand and tongue, but when his belly is filled with lawful food he will seek for vain desires, his lust will increase and his *nafs* (lower soul) rises to seek its pleasure.”

The Sheikhs describing the *Sufis* have said:

اكلهم كاكل المرضى ونومهم كنوم الغرقي وكلامهم الكلي

“They eat like sick, sleep like shipwrecked men, and speak like one whose child has died.”

The foremost principal of eating is that one should not eat alone, and should prefer others in food. Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

شر الناس من اكل وحده وضرب عبدا ومنع رفده

“the worst among you is the one who eats alone, beats his slave and shows reluctance in charity.”

When seated for food one should not be silent, and begin by saying

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“in the name of Allah, the Most Merciful and the Most Gracious,”

and no one should say other to pick up or bring something for him, it makes the other annoyed. One should take salty mouthful first, and be fair with his friends.

The people asked Sahl b. Abdullah about the meaning of the verse,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ

Allah commands justice, the doing of good” (Q 16:90)

and he replied:

“Justice consists in dealing fairly with one’s friend in regard to food, and beneficence consists in considering friend’s claim better to that morsel than to him.”

My Sheikh used to say:

“I am astonished at that man who declares that he has renounced the world, but remain anxious about a morsel of food.”

The food should be eaten with right hand and one should look only at his own morsel. While eating one should not drink unless he feels its extreme desire, and he should drink only as much as will moisten his liver. He should not eat large mouthfuls, and should chew his food well and not make haste, for it may cause indigestion and it is also against *Sunnah*. When he has finished eating, he should praise Allah and wash his hands.

If some persons belonging to a community of dervishes secretly go to some one's invitation and eat something there, according to some Sheikhs this is unlawful and constitutes a breach of companionship, for as Allah has said,

أُولَئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ

they swallow into themselves naught but fire;" (Q 2:174).

But some hold it to be allowable when a number of persons act thus in union with each other. And some allow it in the case of a single person, on the ground that he is not obliged to deal fairly when he is alone, being alone he is relieved of the obligations of companionship.

Now, the most important principle in this matter is that the invitation of a dervish should not be refused, and that the invitation of a rich man should not be accepted and he should not be visited as well and also must not beg anything from him. Such conduct is an insult for *Sufis*, because worldlings do not pay due respect to dervishes.

In short, one does not become worldling because of the abundance of wealth, nor does little wealth make him dervish. The one who prefers poverty over wealth is not a worldling, may he be a king and one who disbelieves in the excellence of poverty is a worldling, even though he is reduced to want. When a dervish attends a party he should not constrain himself either to eat or not to eat, but should eat whatever is brought before him. If the host is a friendly person, the married invitee can take left over food to his home and if the host is not friendly it is not recommended to visit his house.

It is not praiseworthy to take home left over food under any circumstances. Sahl b. Abdullah says, "الدالة taking away of leftovers is abasement."

Rules in Movements

Allah hath said:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

"And the servants of (Allah) the Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, `peace`." (Q 25:63).

The seeker of the Truth should always walk according to his own methods. He should know about his each step, for if it is to gain some self motive he must repent and if it is for Allah he must persevere in it, so that he continues walking on the way to the Truth.

One day Dawud Tai had taken some medicine and he was asked to have some walk in the court of his house, in order that the good result of the medicine might become apparent. He replied, "I feel ashamed that on the Day of Judgment Allah should ask me why I made a few steps for my own selfish pleasure."

Allah hath said,

وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

and their feet bear witness, to all that they did." (Q 36:65).

The dervish should walk cautiously, with his head bowed as in meditation. Should keep his eyes straight and avoid looking right and left. If any person happens to fall on the way, he must not draw himself back from him for the sake of saving his dress, for all Muslims are clean, and their clothes too and such an act is mere conceit and self-ostentation. However, if the person is an unbeliever, and manifestly filthy, he may turn away from him, for it is lawful. When he walks with a group of people, he must not attempt to move ahead of them, since that is an excess of pride. Similarly he must not attempt to be at the rear, since that is an excess of humility, and of which if one is conscious is also pride. He must keep his footwear clean by day in order that Allah, through the blessings thereof, may keep his clothes clean by night. And when he is traveling with one or more dervishes or with a group of people, he should not stop on the way to talk with any person, nor should he make any attempt to keep his companions in waiting state. He should walk steadily and must not hurry, for it is the habit of greedy people and he should not walk very slowly, for it is the style of proud and he should place his complete foot on the ground.

The walk of the seeker of path should always be of such description that if anyone asks him whiter he is going he should be able to answer decisively,

إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي

I will go to my Lord!" (Q 37:99).

If his walk is not like this, it will be a curse for the dervish, because right steps proceed from right thoughts. Therefore, if man's thoughts are concentrated on Allah, his feet will follow his thoughts.

Abu Yazid said:

"The thoughtless walk of a dervish is a sign that he is heedless (of Allah), because all that exists is attained in two steps, one step away from self-interest and the other step firmly planted on the commandments of Allah."

The walk of the seeker is a sign that he is traversing a certain distance, and since proximity to Allah is not a matter of distance, what can the seeker do but cut off his feet in the abode of rest?

The Rules of Sleeping

There is a great difference of opinion among the Sheikhs on this subject. Some are of the opinion that it is not permissible for a novice to sleep except when he is overpowered by slumber, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

النوم اخ الموت

sleep is the brother of death."

Life is a benefit conferred by Allah, whereas death is an affliction. The former must be more excellent than the latter.

Shibli said:

الطلع الحق علي فقال من نام غفلا ومن غفل حجب

"The Truth graciously looked upon me and said, 'He who sleeps becomes heedless, and he who is heedless is veiled."

Some others hold that a novice may sleep at will and even should enforce sleep on him with efforts, for every act is performed in its true and judicial spirit.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

رفع القلم عن ثلث عن الناء حتى يتنبه وعن الصبي حتى يحتلم وعن المحبون حتى يفتق

“Three persons are exempted from performance of commands:

- the one who is sleeping until he awakes,
- the boy until he reaches puberty,
- the insane until he recovers his wits.”

The sleeping person is free from the restrictions of commands. The people are secure from his mischief. He does not have any control even on his personal volition. His *nafs* (lower soul) is incapable to gain its desires. The Recording Angels cease to write. His tongue makes no false claim and he is saved from lies and backbiting. He is far away to commit any evil.

لا يملك لنفسه نفعاً ولا ضرراً ولا موتاً ولا حياةً ولا نشوراً

The one in sleep is not the possessor of his profit or loss neither death nor life or even is incapable to rise at his own from sleep.”

Hence, Ibn Abbas says:

لا شيء أشد علي إبليس من نوم العاصي فإذا نام العاصي يقول متى يتنبه ويقوم حتى يعصي الله

“Nothing is more painful to *Iblis* (Satan) than a sinner’s sleep; for whenever the sinner sleeps, Iblis says, `When will he awake and disobey Allah?’”

Junaid had difference on this point with Ali b. Sahl al-Isfahani who wrote to Junaid a very fine letter on this matter:

Sleep is heedlessness and tranquility is turning away from Allah. It is unlawful for the lovers of the Truth to sleep or rest by day or by night, for if he acts so he will loose the object of his desire and will neglect himself and his state and will depart from the path leading to Allah. Allah revealed to David,

كذب من ادعي محبتي فاذا اجنة الليل نام عني

“liar is he who pretends to love Me and sleeps when night covers him.”

Junaid in reply said: Our wakefulness for His devotion is our act, whereas our sleep is Allah’s act towards us which is from Allah to us without our will, therefore, what proceeds from Allah to us without our will is more perfect than which proceeds from us to Allah with our will. Sleep is a gift which He bestows on those who love Him.

This question involves sobriety and intoxication, which has been fully discussed earlier.

It is remarkable that Junaid, who was man of sobriety, here encourages intoxication. Seemingly, he was enraptured at the time when he wrote and his temporary state might have been the cause of this expression, or it may be that the opposite is the case, and that sleep is actually sobriety, and wakefulness is actually intoxication. The sleep is an attribute of humility, and a man remains in the state of sobriety so long as he is in the grip of his attributes. The wakefulness, on the other hand is an attribute of Allah, and when a man exceeds his own attribute he is enraptured. I have met a number of Sheikhs who agree with Junaid in preferring sleep to wakefulness, because the visions of the saints and of most of the Prophets occurred during sleep.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

ان الله يباهي بالعبد الذي نام في سجوده ويقول انظروا املاء كني الي عبيدي روحه في محل النجوي وبدنه علي بسادة العبادة

“Verily, Allah takes pride in the servant who sleeps while he is in prostration. He speaks to His angels, `Behold My servant, whose spirit is in the abode of secret conversation with Me while his body is on the carpet of worship.’”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said:

من نام علي طهارة يوزن لروحه ان يطوف بالعرش ويسجد لله تعالى

“Whoever sleeps in a state of purification, his spirit is permitted to circumambulate the Throne and prostrate itself before Allah.”

Shah Shuja Kirmani remained awake for forty years. One night he fell asleep and had the vision of Allah, and afterwards he always used to sleep in hope of the same vision. How nicely Qais Amiri has put it in the verse:

واني لا تغشي وما بي نعسة لعل خيالا منك يلقي خيالاً

“I wish to sleep, although I do not feel drowsy,

That perchance in my dream mine thought has your vision.”

Some other Sheikhs agree with Ali b. Sahl in preferring wakefulness to sleep, because the Prophets received their revelations and the saints their *karamat* (miracles) while they were awake. One of the Sheikhs says:

لو كان في النوم خير لكان في الجنة نوم

“If there were any good in sleep there would be sleep in Paradise.” If sleep were the cause of love and proximity to Allah, it would follow that there must be sleep in Paradise, which is the dwelling place of proximity. Since neither sleep nor any veil is in Paradise, so we may consider that sleep is a veil.

The men of subtleties say that when Adam (may blessings of Allah be on him) fell asleep in Paradise Eve came forth from his left side, and was the source of all his afflictions. They also say that when Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him) told Ismail that,

يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ

“O my son! I see in my vision that I offer thee in sacrifice,” (Q 37:102).

Ismail (may blessings of Allah be on him) replied, “This is the reward due to one who sleeps and forgets his beloved. If you had not fallen asleep you would not have been commanded to sacrifice your son. Your sleep deprived you of your son and me from life. My affliction is momentarily whereas yours is life long.”

Shibli every night used to place in front of him bowl of salty water and a needle, and whenever he was about to fall asleep he would dip the needle in the salt water and draw it along his eyelids.

I have met with an elder who used to sleep after finishing the performance of his obligatory acts of devotion. Similarly, I have seen Sheikh Ahmad Samarqandi, who never slept at night for forty years, but he used to sleep a little during daytime.

This question involves around view of life and death. Those who prefer death to life must prefer sleep to waking, while those who prefer life to death must prefer waking to sleep. Wakefulness with efforts carries no merit, but the merit belongs to him who is blessed with wakefulness without effort. The Prophet (peace be upon him), whom Allah chose and whom He raised to the highest rank, did not force himself either to sleep or to wake. Allah commanded him, saying,

قُمْ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

stand (to prayer) by night, but not all night,” (Q 73:2).

Similarly, merit does not belong to the man who forces himself to sleep, but only to that man who is put to sleep, as the Men of the cave were exalted. When He after placing them on high degree of state removed the shackles of infidelity from their necks that they did not constrain themselves to

sleep or wake, but Allah enforced slumber upon them and nourished them without their will and efforts. About them Allah says:

وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ آيِقَاتًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ

“Thou wouldst have deemed them awake, whilst they were asleep, and We turned them on their right and on their left sides:” (Q 18:18).

Both these conditions were in the state of helplessness and when a man attains to such a degree that his will no longer exists, and his hand is withdrawn from everything, and his thoughts are averted from all save Allah, it matters not whether he is asleep or awake, and in either case he is full of honor.

The prerequisites as regards to the sleep of the novice are that:

- He must believe that the initial period of his sleep is the last time of his life; hence, he should repent of his sins and satisfy all who are in opposition to him.
- Should purify him before going to sleep.
- Should sleep on his right side, facing the *Qibla*,
- Having set his worldly affairs in order, he must give thanks for the blessing of Islam, and make a vow that if he should wake again he will not return to sin, for one who has set his affairs in order while he is awake has no fear of sleep or of death.

A saint used to visit an *Imam* who was engrossed in maintaining his dignity and was a prey to self-conceit. On every visit the saint used to say to *Imam*: “O So and so, you must die.” This used to offend the Imam, for why should that beggar be always repeating these words to him. One day he thought that next time he would utter the same words to him before the saint could utter anything to him. Next day when the saint came, the Imam said to him: “O So and so, you must die.” The saint put down his prayer-rug, spread it out, and laid his head on it and exclaimed, “I am dead,” and immediately yielded up his soul. The *Imam* took warning of that, and perceived that saint had been bidding him prepare for death, as he himself had done.

My Sheikh used to enjoin his disciples not to sleep unless overpowered by slumber, and when they had once awakened should not fall asleep again, as second sleep is unlawful and unprofitable to those who are the seeker of the Path.

This topic is very lengthy. Allah knows better.

The Rules of *Sufis* in Speech and Silence

Allah said:

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ

“Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allah,” (Q 41:33),

and

قَوْلٍ مَّعْرُوفٍ

kind words” (Q 2:263),

and

قُولُوا آمَنَّا

say ye: we believe” (Q 2:136).

Allah has commanded His servants to speak well as He has commanded them to acknowledge His Lordship and to praise Him and to call mankind to His court. Speech is a great blessing conferred on mankind by Allah, and thereby mankind is distinguished from all other living creatures. Allah has said,

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ

We have honored the sons of Adam;” (Q 17:70).

According to the commentators of Quran the text means “We have honored the sons of Adam by the gift of speech”. Nevertheless, the speech along with its goodness carries many great evils also, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

اخوف ما اخاف علي امتي اللسان

“the worst that I fear for my people is their tongue.”

In short, speech is like wine, which intoxicates the intellect, and who begins to have a taste for it cannot abstain from it, neither can he make himself safe from it. The *Sufis*, knowing that speech is harmful, never speak except when it is necessary. They consider the beginning and end of their discourse, for if the whole talk is based on truth, they speak otherwise they prefer silence. They have firm belief that Allah knows all secrets and those who do not consider Him to be such are liable for condemnation. Allah says:

أَمْ يَحْسِبُونَ أَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ بَلْ وَرُسُلْنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ

“Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsels? Indeed, (We do), and Our Messengers are by them, to record.” (Q 43:80).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

من امت نجنا

he who keeps silence is delivered.”

There are many advantages and spiritual favors in silence and in speech there are many evils. Some Sheikhs have preferred silence to speech, while others have set speech above silence. Among the former is Junaid, who said:

“Words and expressions are wholly pretensions, and where realities are established pretensions are idle.”

Sometimes one has to maintain silence although one has the power to speak, i.e. when one intends not to disclose something or fear becomes an excuse for not speaking in spite of one's having the will and power to speak. The refusal to make speech under such circumstances does not impair the essence of gnosis. But at no time a man is excused for mere pretension devoid of reality, which is the principle of hypocrites.

Beware, pretension without reality is hypocrisy, and reality without pretension is sincerity, for who bases his claim on contemplation needs no tongue to communicate with his Lord. When way of the Truth opens to someone he becomes independent of speech. Spoken expressions only serve to inform others and Allah is independent of explanation of our circumstances, and others than Allah are not worth so much that we should occupy ourselves with them. This is further cleared by the saying of Junaid,

من عرف الله كل لسانه

“he who has the *Marifat* (knowledge) of Allah is dumb”, for in actual vision speech is a veil.

Once Shibli while in the meeting place of Junaid rose up and cried aloud, “O my object of desire!” referred Allah. Junaid said, “O Abu Bakr, if Allah is the object of your desire, why do you point to Him,

Who is independent of this? And if the object of your desire is not He, why have you acted falsely? For Allah knows what you say.” Shibli asked Allah to pardon him for having uttered those words.

Those who prefer speech over silence argue that Allah has commanded us to set forth our circumstances, so that pretension is proved through its reality. If a man continues for a thousand years to be a gnostic in his heart and soul and there is no religious bindings on him to manifest it, he until confess that he has the *marifat* (knowledge) of Allah, he is virtually an infidel. Allah has bidden all believers to give Him thanks and praise Him and rehearse His bounties. Allah says,

وَأَمَّا بِعِزَّةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ

but the Bounty of thy Lord – rehearse and proclaim!” (Q 93:11).

The praise of Allah and gratitude by all means belongs to Him; therefore, our speech is reverence to providence of Allah Who says,

ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

call on Me; I will answer your (prayer):” (Q 40:60),

أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

I listen to the prayer of suppliant when he calleth on Me” (Q 2:186).

There are many more such verses in Quran.

One of the Sheikhs has said that one who cannot declare his spiritual state he is not actually blessed with a real state, for the state proclaims itself.

لسان الحال افصح من لسان وصمتي عن سوالي ترجماني

“The tongue of the state is more eloquent than my tongue,

And my silence is the best interpreter of my question.”

One day while Shibli was passing through populated area of Karkh, in Baghdad, he heard an imposter who was saying that Silence was better than speech. Shibli said to him, “your silence is better than your speech, for your speech is vanity and your silence is an idle jest but my speech is better than my silence, because my silence is gentleness and my speech is knowledge.”

I opine that speech is of two kinds and silence is also of two kinds. The speech is either real or unreal, and the silence is either on attainment of an object or because of forgetfulness. At the time of speech or silence one must look within oneself for if he speaks the truth, his speech is better than his silence, but if one speaks falsehood, his silence is better than his speech. Similarly, if silence is because of the attainment of objective or contemplation is better than speech and if silence is because of heedlessness or veil in that case speech is better.

The people are still amazed and trying to find its true meanings. Some pretenders among Sufism because of their greed and lust are only found of meaningless words and expressions and prefer speech over silence. Similarly, some ignorant who even cannot judge from the signs that there is pit on their way and they might fell into it, prefer silence over speech. Both groups have identical nature and they may make some to speak or may keep some silent, does not matter. The reality is that which we have described. One who speaks is either right or wrong, but one who is made to speak (through Divine aid) is safe from fault and disorder. Thus when Iblis (Satan) spoke at his own said,

أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ

I am better than he (Adam):” (Q 38:76).

In consequence of this uttering what happened to Iblis is known to all. But Adam was made to say,

our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: (Q 7:23), and he was blessed among the elects.

The preachers of Sufism when speak are commanded or compelled to speak, and when they are silent there too they are helpless and abashed, as it is said,

من كان سكوته حياً كان كلامه حيوة

"he whose silence is because of modesty, his speech is life of the hearts."

Their speech is the result of vision, and speech which is without vision appears to them despicable. They prefer silence to speech so long as they are within themselves, but when they are beside themselves at the station of annihilation their words are written on the hearts of men. Some noble elder said,

من كان سكوته له ذهباً كان كلامه لغيره مذهباً

"he whose silence is gold, his speech is alchemy."

The seeker of the Truth, while absorbed in servanthship, must remain silent, until speech of his tongue which proclaims Lordship, may speak and by his utterances may captivate the hearts of his disciples.

The rule in speaking is not to speak unless bidden, and the rule in silence is not to be ignorant or satisfied with ignorance or forgetfulness. The disciple must not interrupt the speech of Sheikhs, or let his personal judgment intrude therein, or use far-fetched expressions while talking to them. He must never tell a lie, or speak ill of the absent, or offend any Muslim with that tongue which has made the profession of faith and acknowledged the unity of Allah. He must not address dervishes by their bare names or speak to them until they ask a question. It behooves the dervish that he must not remain quite on falsehood and should speak only the truth. This principle has many derivatives and innumerable refinements, but I will not pursue the subject, lest this book should become too lengthy.

The Rules of Sufis about Requesting

Allah has said:

لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِلْحَاقًا

"They beg not importunately from all:" (Q 2:273),

i.e. they do not ask from people but if anyone of them ask should not be repulsed, for Allah said to Prophet (peace be upon him),

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَهِزْ

nor repulse the petitioner (unheard);" (Q 93:10).

As far as possible they do not beg from anyone save Allah only, for begging involves turning away from Allah to another, and when a man turns away from Allah there is danger that Allah may leave him in that predicament. Some worldling asked Rabia (may Allah have mercy on her) to request something of him that he might procure for her. Rabia replied, "I feel ashamed to ask any worldly thing from the Creator of the world, how then can I ask anything of a fellow-creature?"

In the time of Abu Muslim, the head of the (Abbasid) propaganda, an innocent dervish was seized on suspicion of theft, and was imprisoned in a cell. On the same night Abu Muslim dreamed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to him and said, "Allah has sent me to tell you that one of His friends without committing any offence is put in your prison. Get up and set him free." Abu Muslim bare

feet and head immediately ran to the prison, got its door opened and released the dervish. He begged his pardon and bade him ask a boon. The dervish replied, "O Amir! One whose Master rouses Abu Muslim at midnight, and sends him to deliver a poor dervish from affliction, it is not worthy of him that he asks for his needs from others." Abu Muslim started weeping, and the dervish went on his way.

Some however hold that a dervish may beg of his fellow creatures, since Allah says that

لَا تَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِلْحَاقًا

they beg not importunately from all:" (Q 2:273), i.e. they may ask but should refrain from importunity.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

اطلبوا الحوائج عند حسن الوجوه

seek your wants from those whose faces are comely."

The *Sufi* Sheikhs allow begging under following three circumstances:

Firstly, with the object of freeing one's mind from preoccupation. They say that the value of two breads is not so much that they wait for it day and night, for eating habits consume ones maximum time. Therefore, when the disciple of Shaiq visited Bayazid, and in answer to Bayazid's question as to the state of Shaiq, informed him that he was entirely disengaged from mankind, and was putting all his trust in Allah. Bayazid said:

"When you return to Shaiq, tell him to beware of again testing Allah with two loaves of bread, for if he is hungry, let him beg of his fellow-creatures and should do away with his trust on Allah so that his dwelling area and city may not sunken because of the misfortune of his acts."

It is permissible to beg with the object of training the *nafs* (lower soul), so that they may endure the humiliation of begging, and may perceive what is their worth in the eyes of other men, and may not be proud. When Shibli came to Junaid, he said to him, "O Abu Bakr, you are still filled with conceit that you are the son of the Caliph's principal chamberlain and the governor of Samara. No good shall come from you until you go to the bazaar and beg of everyone whom you see, that you may know your true worth." Shibli obeyed and he begged for three years, with ever decreasing success. One day, having gone through the whole bazaar and got nothing, he returned to Junaid and told him the whole story, who said, "Now, you see that you have no worth in the eyes of people, so you also do not fix your heart on them. This all was for the sake of discipline of your *nafs* (lower soul), and not for the sake of any livelihood."

Dhu al-Nun told that he had a friend. Allah called him to Himself and he was blessed with Eternal Beneficence. After his death I saw him in dream, and asked him how Allah had dealt with him. He answered that Allah had forgiven him. I asked on account of what virtue? He replied that Allah raised him to his feet and said, "My servant, you suffered with patience much contumely and tribulation from base and avaricious men, to whom you stretched out your hands, therefore I forgive you."

The third state of allowable begging is that to beg from mankind because of their reverence for Allah. They recognize that all worldly possessions belong to Allah, and the mankind is His agents, therefore, they ask through the agent for their needful. He, who begs something from Allah through His agent, is more honored than one who directly begs from Allah. To ask through agent is a sign of presence and good fortune and not a veil or turning away from Allah.

One day the daughter of Yahya b. Maud asked her mother for something. The mother said that she should ask that from Allah. The girl replied to her mother that she was ashamed of asking a material want from Him. What you give me is His too and is my allotted portion.

The rules of begging are as follow:

- If you beg unsuccessfully you should be more cheerful than when you succeed, and
- One should not keep eye on people, and avoid begging from women or market-folks

- One should tell his wants only to that about which one is sure that his money is lawful.
- As far as possible one should beg unselfishly, and should not use the takings for worldly show and for house keeping, or convert them into property.
- One should live in the present, and let no thought of future enter in his mind; else he will incur everlasting perdition.
- One should not make Allah a net to catch alms, and should not display piety in order that more alms may be given to him on account of his piety.

I once met an old venerable *Sufi*, who had lost his way in the desert and hunger stricken came into the market place at Kufa with a sparrow perched on his hand, crying:

“Give me something for the sake of this sparrow!”

The people asked him why he said like that. He replied, “It is impossible that I should ask for any thing for the sake of Allah, one must employ the intercession of an insignificant creature to obtain worldly goods.”

This is but small part of the obligations involved in begging. I have abridged the topic for t fear of its extra ordinary length.

The Rules in Marriage and Celibacy

Allah hath said:

هُنَّ لِيَابِسٌ لِّكُمُ وَأَنْثَىٰ لِيَابِسٌ هُنَّ

“They (women) are your garments and ye are their garments,” (Q 2:187).

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

تَنَاقَحُوا وَتَكَاثَرُوا فَإِنِّي أَبَاهِي بِكُمْ الْاَمْرُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَوْ بِالسَّقَطِ

“Marry, that you may multiple, for I will boast against all other nations on the Day of Resurrection, even in respect of the still-born.”

And he also said:

اِنَّ اعْظَمَ النِّسَاءِ بَرَكَةً اِحْسَنُهُنَّ وَجُوهَهُنَّ وَاَرْخَصَهُنَّ مَهْرًا

“The women who bring the greatest blessing are they whose faces are comeliest, and whose dowries are cheapest.”

Marriage is lawful to all men and women, and is obligatory on those who cannot abstain from what is unlawful, and is a *Sunnah* for those who are able to support a family.

Some of the *Sufi* Sheikhs hold that marriage is desirable as a means to suppress lust, and acquisition is desirable as a means of freeing the mind from anxiety. Others hold that the marriage is must to have children and to safeguard the race. If the child dies before its father, it will intercede for him (before Allah), and if the father dies first, the child remains to pray for him.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) sent a message to Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) to marry with his daughter Umme Kalthum (daughter of Fatima, may Allah be pleased with them)). Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) replied that the girl was still adolescent and you were aged and otherwise also he wanted to marry her with his nephew. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) sent the message to Ali that:

“There is no dearth of women, the object behind asking Umme Kalthum for marriage is not to satisfy desire of *nafs* (lower soul) but to generate the race because I have heard Prophet (peace be upon him) saying,

كل سبب ونسب ينقطع الا لسببي ونسبي

every lineage will extinct except mine.”

I have a pedigree but I want that my lineage also mingle with my friend so that I become his true follower from both the sides. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) consented to his proposal and married her daughter with him. Zaid b Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was born from them.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

تنكح النساء علي اربعة: علي المال والحسب والحسن والدين.

وعليكم بذات الدين فانهما استفاد امرء بعد الاسلام خيرا من زوجة مومنة ليس ربهما اذا نظر اليها

“Women are married for four reasons:

- wealth,
- nobility,
- beauty, and
- religion.

You marry with one that is religious, for, after Islam there is nothing that profit a man so much as a believing and obedient wife who gladdens him whenever he looks on her.”

For a Muslim after the wealth of Islam the agreeable pious wife is the best delight, so he has intimacy with her and she may be cause of strength for him in religious matters and he be blessed with love. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Satan is the associate of lonely,” because when man or woman is alone Satan becomes their host and decks out lust and present it to their minds. To safeguard against lustfulness and to keep a watch over honor and piety no companionship is more in harmony than binding of marriage. But there must be love, affection and mental equilibrium amongst the married couple. There is no torment and anxiety as great as association of an uncongenial wife. Therefore the dervish must, in the first place, consider what he is doing and picture in his mind the evils of celibacy and of marriage, in order that he may choose the state of which he can more easily overcome the evils.

There are two evils of celibacy, the neglect of *Sunnah*, and the fostering of lust in the heart and the danger of falling into unlawful ways. Similarly the marriage has also two evils, the preoccupation of mind with other (than Allah), and the distraction of the body for the sake of sensual pleasure. The root of this matter lies in solitude or companionship. Marriage is proper for those who prefer to associate with mankind, and celibacy is an ornament to those who seek seclusion from mankind.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

سير واسبق المفردون

“hurry up, the single ones have taken lead over you,”

and Hasan Basri said,

نجا المخفون وهلك المثقلون

the lightly burned shall be delivered and the heavily laden shall perish.”

Ibrahim Khawwas related:

I went to a village to visit a reverend elder who lived there. When I entered his house I found it neat and clean like a saint's place of worship. There were two niches at the worship place, one was occupied by the elder and in the second a graceful pious old woman was seated. Both had become weak through much devotion. They showed great joy at my coming, and I stayed with them for three days. When I was about to depart I asked the old man about his relation with that chaste woman. He told that she was his cousin and wife. I pointed out to him that during my stay with them I found their intimacy towards each other of strangers. He said yes, for the last sixty five years it has been like that. When I asked him the cause to this he told:

"We were in love with each other in our childhood, but her father was reluctant to marry her with me because he had discovered our fondness for each other. We remained separated for quite some time until after her father's death my father, who was her uncle, married her with me. On the wedding-night she said to me, see how big happiness Allah has bestowed upon us in bringing us together and taking all fear away from our hearts. Let us therefore tonight refrain from sensual passion and worship Allah in thanksgiving. I agreed to her pious idea. Next night she bade me to do the same. On the third night I said to her that we had given thanks for two nights for her sake, tonight let us worship Allah for my sake. Sixty five years have passed since then, and we have never touched one another, but spent our lives in giving thanks for our happiness."

When a dervish chooses to marry a woman, it behooves him that until he provides his wife with lawful food and pays her dowry out of lawful property, and fulfills obligation towards Allah and his wife, should not indulge in sensual pleasure. He should only approach to his wife when he has finished up with his devotion. When he is about to go to bed, he should say, as in secret converse with Allah:

"O Lord, Thou hast mingled lust with Adam's clay in order that the world may be populated, and Thou in Thy knowledge hast willed that I should have this intercourse. Cause it to be for the sake of two things: firstly, to guard that which is unlawful by means of that which is lawful; and secondly, vouchsafe to me a child, saintly and acceptable to Thy, not one who will divert my thoughts from Thee."

It is related about the son of Sahl b. Abdullah al-Tustari that whenever the child asked his mother for food, she used to bid him to ask Allah. While he used to be in prayer mother would put some eatables in front of him without letting him to know. Thus he grew accustomed to turn unto Allah. One day he came back from school when his mother was absent, and bowed himself in prayer. Allah caused the thing that he sought to appear before him. When his mother came in she asked, "From where did you get this?" The boy answered, "From the place whence it comes always."

Similarly Zakarriya (may blessings of Allah be on him) when ever he visited Mary used to find unseasoned fruit with her. Amazed, he would ask her that from where they had come. Mary would answer, from Allah.

Beware that the practice of *Sunnah* must not lead the dervish to seek worldly wealth and unlawful gain or preoccupation of his heart, for the dervish is ruined by the destruction of his heart, just as the rich man is ruined by the destruction of his house and furniture; but the rich man can repair his loss, while the dervish cannot. It is impossible in our time for anyone to have a suitable wife, whose wants are not excessive and whose demands are not unreasonable. Therefore many persons have adopted celibacy and take guideline from this Hadith. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

خير الناس في اخر الزمان خفيف الحال

"The best of men in later days would be one with light back."

The companions asked who the lights of back were. He said:

الذي لا اهل له ولا ولد له

"who has neither wife nor child."

Similarly he said:

سبروا سبق المفردون

“Hurry up, the single ones have preceded you,”

The Sheikhs have unanimous opinion that the celibates are the best if their hearts are uncontaminated and if their natures are not inclined to sins and lusts. The common people to gratify their lusts refer to this Hadith:

حبب الي من دنيا كم ثلث الطيب والنساء وجعلت قرعة عيني في الصلوة

“The three things of your world have been made favorite for me, scent, women, and prayer.”

The one who likes women more, for him act of marriage is better. I ask them that the Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

لي حرفتان الفقر والجهاد

“I have two trades, poverty and *jihad* (war against infidels),”

why, do they run away from these? If he loved that (viz. marriage), this (viz. poverty and *jihad*) was his trade. Since your desires have a greater tendency to the former, but it is absurd on that ground to say that he loved what you desire. Anyone who follows his desires for fifty years and supposes that he is following the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is in grave error.

A woman was the cause of the first calamity that overtook Adam in Paradise, and also of the first quarrel that happened in this world, i.e. the quarrel of Abel and Cain. A woman was the cause of the punishment inflicted on the two angels (*Harut* and *Marut*) and down to the present day all mischief, worldly and religious, have been caused by women.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

ما تركت بعددي فتنة اضر علي الرجال من النساء

“There is no worse danger for the men than the evils of women.”

After Allah had preserved me for eleven years from the dangers of matrimony, it was my destiny to fall in love with the description of a woman whom I had never seen, and during a whole year my passion so absorbed me that my religion was near being ruined, until at last Allah in His bounty gave protection to my wretched heart and mercifully delivered me.

The foundation of Sufism depends on being remain celibate. The things change after marriage. There is nothing more dangerous in the world than the force of lust. This incursion of lust can only be checked with similar vigorous effort and struggle. Whatever vice proceeds from ones ownself, its cure also lies within him. Nothing from outside can vanish this fault. The removal of lust may be effected by two things, i.e. through self-constraints and while the other lies outside the sphere of human action and mortification. The attempt through self constraint is hunger and the later is an agitating fear or a true love, which slowly travels to all parts of the body and overwhelms them. It after divesting all the senses absorbs them in itself and cleanses it from all useless things.

Ahmad Hammadi of Sarkhasi, who went to Transoxania and lived there, was a venerable man. On being asked whether he desired to marry, he answered:

“No, because I am either absent from myself or present from myself, when I am absent, I have no consciousness of the two worlds; and when I am present, I keep my lower soul in such state that when it gets a loaf of bread it thinks that it has got a thousands houris. It is a great thing to occupy the mind, let it be anxious about whatever you will.”

Others again recommend that neither state (marriage or celibacy) should be regarded with preference, in order that we may see what the decree of Divine providence will bring to light. If celibacy be our lot,

we should strive to be chaste, and if marriage be our destiny, we should comply with the custom of the Prophet and struggle our hearts (of worldly anxieties).

When Allah ordains celibacy unto a man, his celibacy should be like that of Yusuf (may blessings of Allah be on him), who, although was able to satisfy his desire for Zulaikha, turned away from her and busied himself with subduing his passion and considering the vices of his lower soul at the moment when Zulaikha was alone with him. And if Allah ordains marriage unto a dervish, his marriage should be like that of Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him), who by reason of his absolute confidence in Allah put aside all care for his wife and when Sarah became jealous he took Hagar and brought her to a barren valley and committed her to the care of Allah.

A man is not ruined by marriage or by celibacy, but the mischief consists in asserting one's authority and in yielding to one's desire. The married man ought to observe the following rules.

- He should not leave any act of devotion undone, or let not any state be lost or any "time" be wasted.
- He should be kind to his wife and should provide her with lawful expenses, and he should not pay court to tyrants and governors with the object of meeting her expenses.
- He should behave thus in order that if a child is born, it should also follow the same path.

One day Ahmad b. Harb of Nishapur, when he was sitting with the chiefs and nobles of Nishapur who had come to offer their respects to him, his son entered the room, drunk and singing passed by insolently without paying any heed to them. All the audiences felt sad. Perceiving their tolerance Ahmad asked what was the matter. They replied that they were ashamed on that lad should pass by you in such a state. Ahmad said:

"He is excusable. One night my wife and I shared some food that was brought to us from a neighbor's house. Same night this son was begotten, and we fell asleep and let our devotions go. Next morning we inquired of our neighbor as to the source of the food that he had sent to us, and we found that it came from a wedding feast in the house of a government official."

The following rules should be observed by the celibate.

- He must not eye on improper.
- Should not listen which is harmful to hear and should not look at which is unworthy to sight.
- He should keep his mind free from evil thoughts.
- He must put out the flames of lust by hunger.
- Should guard his heart from the worldly preoccupations.
- He must not call the desire of his lower soul "knowledge" or "inspiration".
- Must not make the wiles of Satan a pretext (for sin).

If he acts thus he will be approved on the Path of the Truth.

These were the manners of companionship and conduct in brief, for a little is sufficient reasoning to understand better.

Chapter XXIV

The Uncovering of the Tenth Veil

Phraseology and Meanings of the Terms

&

Verities of the Ideas Signified

May Allah bless you felicity. Be obvious that in every craft and business while discussing its mysteries with one another, make use of certain words and expressions of which the meaning is known only to them. Such expressions are invented for two reasons. Firstly, in order to facilitate the understanding of difficulties and bringing them nearer to the comprehension of the novice. Secondly, in order to conceal the mysteries of that science from the uninitiated. The Sufis also have technical terms for the purpose of expressing the matter of their discourse and in order that they may reveal or disguise their meaning as they please. I will now explain some of these terms and distinguish between the significations attached to various pair of words, so that you and all readers are benefited.

Hal حال and Waqt وقت

Waqt وقت (time) is a familiar term with *Sufis*, and concerning which much have been said by the Sheikhs, but my object is to establish the truth, not to give long explanation.

Waqt is that state whereby a man becomes independent of the past and the future. When Divine influence descends into his soul and makes his heart collected he has neither memory of the past nor any thought of the future. It is not within the capabilities of everyone. The common persons do not know that what had been their past and what their future will be. The holders of *waqt* say:

“When our knowledge cannot apprehend the past and the future, the present *waqt* is excellent for us. If we occupy ourselves with the thoughts of coming or the past day we shall be veiled (from Allah), and a veil is a great distraction. So it is absurd to think of unattainable.”

Abu Said Kharraz says:

“Do not occupy your precious time except with the most precious of things and the most precious thing of man is the moment between the past and the future.”

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

لي مع الله وقت لا يسعني فيه ملك مقرب ولا نبي مرسل

“I attain a particular *waqt* (time) from Allah in which none of the trusted angels nor does any Prophet have any room,”

that is to say, in which the eighteen thousand worlds do not occur to my mind and have no worth in my eyes. Therefore, on the night of the Ascension, when the beauties of the earth and heaven were arrayed before him, he did not look at anything. As in the Quran,

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى

(his) sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong!’ (Q 53:17),

for Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a beloved, and the beloved are not engrossed save by that which is beloved.

The Unitarian has two times, the state of loss and the state of gain, i.e. one in the place of union and one in the place of separation. At both these times he is overpowered, because while in these states he is under the command and subjugation of the Truth without such volition or acquisition on his part as would make it possible to invest him with any attribute. When a man's power of volition during his state is cut off from him, whatever he does or experiences is subjected to the Truth.

Junaid narrated:

Once while I was on my way to Pilgrimage, I saw a dervish in the desert, sitting under a mimosa tree at a hard and uncomfortable spot. I asked him what made him sit there so still. He answered: "I had a time and lost it here; now I am sitting and mourning." I inquired how long he had been there. He answered: "Twelve years. Will not the Sheikh offer up a prayer on my behalf, that perchance I might find my time again?" I left him, performed the pilgrimage and prayed for him. My prayer was granted. On my return I found him seated at the same place. I asked him that why he had not gone from there, since his wish was obtained? He replied:

"This is the place where I suffered and afflicted. Here I lost my capital and here I found it back. Therefore I don't feel like leaving this place. I have started loving this place, leave me at my own and you please go. I have a desire that after death my dust should mix with this dust, so I may rise at the Resurrection from this dust which is the *Qibla* of my heart and from where I found my lost wealth."

فكل امرء يولي الجميل محبوب وكل مكان ينبت العزطيب

"All that received from beloved is beautiful: Place where one is honored is agreeable."

The *waqt* (time) is that state which cannot be attained by exerting one's own choice, neither it is acquirable from the bazaar that that anyone should give his life in exchange for it. The man has no power either to attract or to repel it, for both its shades are equal to him. The will of the man is incompetent to establish or be constant with it. The Sheikhs call it,

الوقت سيف قاطع

"time is a cutting sword,"

because it is characteristic of a sword to cut, and time cuts the roots of the future and the past, and obliterates worry of yesterday and tomorrow from the heart. Thus to keep companionship with sword is a dangerous thing, for either it makes its master a king or it kills him. Although one should serve the sword and carry it on one's own shoulders for a thousand years, in the moment of cutting it does not discriminate between its master's neck and the neck of another, for violence is its characteristic, and violence will not depart from it at the wish of its master.

Hal (state) descends upon time (*waqt*) and adorns it, as the spirit adorns the body. Compulsorily *waqt* has dependency on *hal* (state), for *waqt* is purified and beautified by *hal*. Thus existence of *waqt* depends on *hal*. When the holder of *waqt* comes into state of *hal*, he becomes independent of any change. He gains strength in his states. *Waqt* may be lost without *hal* and when *hal* attaches with it, his all states become *waqt* and that cannot be lost. Whatever comes either it goes back or subsists and these are the states of manifestation and concealment. The state of *waqt* temporarily used to descend on possessor of *waqt* before *hal*, as he was in heedlessness. After the descending of *hal*, *waqt* gets stability. Heedlessness is possible for possessor of *waqt* but not possessor of *hal*.

The tongue of the possessor of *hal* is silent concerning his *hal*, but his actions proclaim the reality of his *hal*. Hence an elder said, "to question about *hal* is absurd," because *hal* is the annihilation of speech.

Abu Ali Daqqaq says:

"In this or the next world, in joy or woe the portion of *waqt* is that (feeling) in which you are. But *hal* is not like this, for it is such an occurrence from Allah that when it comes on a man, it banishes all feelings from his heart."

Jacob (may blessings of Allah be on him) was a holder of *waqt*. Sometimes he was blinded by woe of separation, and sometimes he was restored to sight by union. And sometimes he was weak like a hair by mourning and like a brush hair by wailing and sometimes he was subtle like a spirit by delight and calm and joyful by pleasure. But Abraham (may blessings of Allah be on him) was a possessor of *hal*. He was not conscious of separation, that he should be stricken with grief, nor of union, that he should be filled with joy. The sun, moon and stars, all contributed to his *hal*, but while he gazed, was independent of them, for whatever he looked on, he saw only Allah, and he said,

لَأُحِبُّ الْآفِلِينَ

I love not those that set” (Q 6:76).

Sometimes, the world becomes hell to the possessor of *waqt*, because he is veiled from contemplation and his heart is distressed by the loss of his beloved. And sometimes his heart is like a Paradise in the blessedness of contemplation, and every moment in the shape of *waqt* descends to him a gift and a glad message from Allah. On the other hand, it makes no difference to the possessor of *hal* whether he is veiled by affliction or unveiled by happiness, for he is always in the place of actual vision.

In short, *hal* is an attribute of the object desired, while *waqt* is of the desirer. The desirer is with himself in the pleasure of *waqt*, while the former is with Allah in the delight of *hal*. How far apart are the two degrees!

Maqam مقام (station) and Tamkin تمكين (steadfastness)

Maqam (station) denotes the perseverance of the seeker in fulfilling his obligations towards the object of his search with strenuous exertion and flawless intention. Every seeker of the Truth has a *maqam* (station), which, in the beginning of his desire of this way, becomes a means of his desire. Although the seeker passes through all the stations and derives benefit, but finally he rests at one station, because the *maqam* and desire are linked with natural form and it has nothing to do with practice. Allah says:

وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ

“(Those ranged in ranks say): none one of us but has a place appointed;” (Q 37:164).

The *maqam* (station) of:

- Adam was repentance (*tauba* توبه),
- Noah was abstinence (*zuhd* زهد),
- Abraham was resignation (*taslim* تسلیم),
- Moses was penitence (*inabat* انابت),
- David was sorrow (*huzn* حزن)
- Jesus was hope (*raja* رجا),
- John was fear (*khawf* خوف),
- of our Prophet (peace be upon him) was praise (*dikr* ذكر).

Although everyone has accessibility to all the stations, but each of them returned at last to his original station. In discussing the doctrine of Muhasibis, I gave explanation of the stations and distinguished between *hal* and *maqam* also. However, it is necessary to further elaborate it here also.

You must know that the Way to Allah is of three kinds:

- maqam مقام (station),
- hal حال (state),
- tamkin تمكين (steadfastness),

Allah sent the prophets to show the Way to Him and to elucidate the principles of different stations. One hundred and twenty four thousand apostles came with as many stations. On the advent of Muhammad (peace be upon him), amongst the possessors of *maqam*, everyone was graced with *hal* and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) attained a pitch where all human acquisition was left behind, until religion was made perfect unto men, as Allah has said,

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي

“this day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favors upon you;” (Q 5:5).

Then the tamkin تمكين (steadfastness) of the steadfast appeared.

Tamkin تمكين denotes the residence of spiritual adepts in the abode of perfection and in the highest grade. It is possible that possessors of *maqam* may pass ahead of *maqam* but it is impossible for them to pass beyond *tamkin*, because *maqam* is the grade of beginners, whereas *tamkin* is the resting place of adepts. One can travel to destination but beyond destination there is no way. *Maqamat* (stations) are stages on the way, whereas *tamkin* is presence in the court of the Holy. The friends of Allah are only observer on the way and are strangers (to themselves) in the stages. Their hearts are in the presence of Allah, and the existence of means and motives therein is cause of destruction and veil.

In the era of Paganism the poets used to praise men for noble deed, but they did not recite their panegyric until some time had elapsed. When a poet came into the presence of the person whom he had to celebrate, he used to cut feet of his ride and then would break his sword, as though to say:

“I needed a ride to bring me from a far distance to your presence, and a sword to repel the envious that would have hindered me from paying homage to you. Now that I have reached to you, the ride is of no purpose and since I have no intention to ever depart from you, therefore, what for do I need the sword, for I will not admit into my mind the thought of being detached from your court.”

For this reason Allah said to Moses that since he had attained to *Tamkin* after traversing stages and *maqam*, therefore he needed no unsettled means and bade him to *فاخلع نعليك* put off thy shoes” (Q 20:12), and *والق عصاك* throw away your staff, for these being articles of travel and while in the presence of Holy there was no danger of being veiled.

The beginning of love is search, but the end is repose at one place. The water flows while it is in the river, but when it reaches the ocean it ceases to flow and changes its taste, so that desirer of water avoids it. Now only that person approaches it who desire pearls. They devote themselves to death and fasten the load of the jewels of search to their feet and plunge headlong into the sea, that they may either gain the hidden pearl or lose their dear lives. One of the Sheikhs says:

التمكين رفع التلويين

“*tamkin* is the removal of talwin تلويين”.

Talwin تلويين is a technical term and is closely connected in meaning with *tamkin*, just as *hal* is connected with *maqam*.

The signification of *talwin* is change and turning from one state to another. The above mentioned saying means that one who is *mutamakin* متمكن (established) is not hesitant, for he has already

presented all his possessions in the court of the Holy and has erased every thought of other than Him from his mind. No act that passes over him alters his outwardly behavior and no state changes his inwardly state. Moses was subject to *talwin*. When Allah revealed His glory to Mount Sinai, “وَحَزَّ مَوْسَىٰ صَوْبًا” and Moses fell down in swoon,” (Q 7:143), but Muhammad (peace be upon him) was *mutamakin* متمكن (established). He suffered no change, although he was in the very revelation of glory from Mecca to space of two bow-lengths; and this is the highest grade.

Tamkin متمكن is of two kinds, i.e. one referring to the dominant influence of one's self and the other referring to the dominant influence of the Truth.

He whose *tamkin* is of the former kind retains his attributes unimpaired, but he whose *tamkin* is of the later kind he is annihilated by his attributes. The terms effacement, sobriety, attainment, destruction, annihilation, subsistence, being, and not being are not properly applied to one whose attributes are annihilated, because a subject is necessary for the maintenance of these qualities, and when the subject is absorbed he loses the capacity of maintaining them.

Muhadarat محاضرة (Presence) and Mukashafat مكاشفة (Revelation)

Muhadara محاضرة (presence) in the subtleties of demonstration denotes the presence of the heart, while *mukashafa* مكاشفة (revelation) denotes the amazement of the inward on manifestation of actual vision. *Muhadara* refers to the evidences of Allah's signs, and *mukashafa* to the evidences of contemplation. The mark of *Muhadara* is continual meditation upon Allah's signs, while the mark of *mukashafa* is continual amazement at Allah's infinite greatness. There is a difference between one who meditates upon the Divine acts and one who is amazed at the Divine Majesty, for the one is at the abode of friendship, the other is at the place of love.

When the friend of Allah (Abraham) looked on the kingdom of heaven and meditated on the reality of their existence, his heart was made present thereby, therefore, through beholding the act he became a seeker of the Agent and his presence made the act a proof of the Agent, and in perfect gnosis stage he exclaimed,

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا

for me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth,” (Q 6:79).

But when the beloved of Allah (Muhammad (peace be upon him)) was borne to heaven he shut his eyes from the sight of all things. He saw neither act nor created being nor himself, until the Agent manifested Himself to him. And in that revelation his desire increased manifold, in vain he sought vision but not attained, desired proximity that was made impossible and union was also denied. In proportion as the transcendence of purity of his beloved (from all the conceptions) became more manifest to him the more did his desire increase. He could neither turn back nor go forward, amazement at the friendship stage looked infidelity, and union at the *maqam* of love looked polytheism, hence he fell into amazement. But in love the object of amazement was nature and quality, and this amazement is unification (*tawhid*). Because of this reason Shibli always used to say:

“O Guide of the amazed, increase my amazement!” for in contemplation (of Allah) the greater one's amazement the higher one's degree.

Abu Said Kharraz and Abu al-Qasim Mervasi saw a friend of Allah on the river bank and they asked him “Which is the Way to Allah?” He answered that there are two ways to Allah, one for the common people and one for the elect. When they desired him to explain he said:

“The way of the common people is that which you are following. You follow this way for some cause and you leave it for some other cause. But the way of the elect is to see only the Causer, and not to see the cause.”

Qabd قَبْض (contraction) and Bast بَسْط (expansion)

Qabd قَبْض (contraction) and *bast* بَسْط (expansion) are two states which are out of ones capability i.e. one cannot induce them by any of his act or banish them by any human exertion. Allah hath said,

وَاللَّهُ يَقْضِي وَيَبْسُطُ

its Allah that giveth (you) want or plenty,” (Q 2:245).

Qabd قَبْض denotes the contraction of the heart in the state of being veiled, and *bast* بَسْط denotes the expansion of the heart in the state of revelation. Both states proceed from Allah without effort on the part of man. The *qabd* of Gnostics is like the fear of novices, and the *bast* of Gnostics is like the hope of novices. This is the sense in which the *Sufis* use the terms *qabd* and *bast*.

Some Sheikhs hold that for two reasons *qabd* is superior in degree to *bast*:

- *qabd* is mentioned before *bast* in Quran,
- *qabd* involves dissolution and oppression, whereas *bast* involves caress and kindness.

It is undoubtedly better to dissolve one's humanity and oppress one's *nafs* (lower soul) than to foster and favor them, since they are the greatest veil between man and Allah.

Some Sheikhs hold that *bast* is superior to *qabd*. They say that *qabd* is mentioned before *bast* in the Quran shows the superiority of *bast*, for the Arabs are accustomed to mention in the first place that which is inferior in merit, e.g. Allah hath said:

فَمَنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَمَنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ يُأْتِنَ اللَّهُ

“But there are among them some who wrong their own souls; some who follow a middle course, and some who are by Allah’s leave foremost in good deeds;” (Q 35:32),

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

“For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.” (Q 2:222),

يَا مَرْيَمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَاسْجُدِي وَارْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ

“O Mary! Worship thy Lord devotedly: prostrate thyself, and bow down (in prayer) with those who bow down.” (Q 3:43).

Moreover, they argue that in *bast* there is joy and in *qabd* grief. Gnostics do not feel joy without union and their grief is possible only in separation from the object of desire, therefore rest in the abode of union is better than rest in the abode of separation.

My Sheikh used to say that both *qabd* and *bast* are the result of one spiritual influence, which descends from Allah on man, and either fills the heart with joy and subdues the *nafs* (lower soul) or subdues the heart and fills the *nafs* (lower soul) with joy. In the latter case contraction (*qabd*) of the heart is expansion (*bast*) of the lower soul, and in the former case expansion of the heart is contraction of the lower soul. He who interprets this matter otherwise is wasting his time.

Bayazid said,

“The contraction of hearts consists in the expansion of souls, and the expansion of hearts in the contraction of souls.”

The contracted soul is guarded from injury, and the expanded heart is restrained from falling into defect, because jealousy is the rule in love, and contraction is a sign of Allah's jealousy; and it is necessary that lovers should reproach one another. The expansion is a sign of mutual reproach. It is well-known tradition that John (may blessings of Allah be on him) never laughed ever since he was born, while Jesus (may blessings of Allah be on him) never wept ever since he was born, because John was in state of contraction and Jesus in expansion. When they met John used to say, "O Jesus, hast thou no fear of being cut off (from Allah)?" And Jesus used to say, "O John, hast thou no hope of Allah's mercy? Neither thy tears nor my smiles will change the eternal decree of Allah."

Therefore, there is neither contraction nor expansion, neither effacement nor intimacy, neither helplessness nor struggle, all is from Allah and only that will happen which has been written and predestined.

Uns انس (Intimacy) and Haibat هيبت (awe)

Uns انس (intimacy) and *haibat* هيبت (awe) are two states of the dervishes who travel on the path of Truth. When Allah manifests splendor of His Majesty to a man's heart, he is engrossed by *haibat* (awe), but when Allah manifests splendor of His Beauty he attain *uns* (intimacy). Those who feel awe are distressed due to His Majesty, while those who feel intimacy are happy because of His Beauty. One's heart burns in the fire of love of His Majesty and while the heart of other illuminates in the splendor of contemplation of His Beauty. There is a difference between them.

Some Sheikhs have said that *haibat* is the *maqam* of Gnostics and *uns* the degree of novices, because one who is more steadfast in the presence and purity of the attributes of the Truth the more his heart is overwhelmed with awe and the more averse he is to intimacy, for one intimates with of his own kind, and intimacy with Allah is inconceivable, since no homogeneity or resemblance can possibly exist between Allah and man. If intimacy is possible, it is possible only with the *dikr* (remembrance) of Him, which is something different from Him, for it is an attribute of man. In love to be satisfied with another than the Beloved is falsehood and pretension and self-conceit. *Haibat*, on the other hand, arises from contemplating Greatness of the Lord, which is an attribute of Allah.

There is a vast difference between one whose act proceeds from himself through himself and one whose act manifests the subsistence of Allah through the annihilation of his self. Shibli said that for a long time he used to think that he was rejoicing in the love of Allah and was intimate with contemplation of Him but later on he found that intimacy was impossible except with a congener.

One group is of the opinion that *haibat* is a consequence of separation and punishment, while *uns* is the result of union and mercy, therefore, the friends of Truth must guard themselves from the consequences of *haibat* and get nearer to *uns*. *Uns* (intimacy) involves love and as homogeneity is impossible in love (of Allah), so it is impossible in *uns*. My Sheikh used to say, "I wonder at those who declare intimacy with Allah to be impossible, after Allah has said,

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ

"When my servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them)," (Q 2:186),

إِنِّي قَرِيبٌ

as for My servants" (Q 17:65),

قُلْ لِعِبَادِي

say to My servants" (Q 17:53),

يَا عِبَادِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَا أَنتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ

"My devotees! No fear shall be on you that day, nor shall you grieve--" (Q 43:68).

When a man sees the Grace of Allah, he turns to love Him and from love intimacy generates. The awe of one's beloved is separation, whereas intimacy is sign of oneness. It is characteristic of men to become intimate with their benefactors, inasmuch as Allah has conferred on us so great benefits and we have knowledge of Him, it is impossible that we should talk of awe.

I say that both the parties inspite of the controversy are right, because the power of *haibat* is exerted upon the *nafs* (lower soul) and its desires, and tends to annihilate human nature, while the power of *uns* is exerted upon the heart and tends to foster gnosis in the heart. Therefore Allah annihilates the souls of those who love Him by revealing His Majesty and endows their hearts with everlasting life by revealing His Beauty. The followers of annihilation (*fana*) regard *haibat* as superior, but the followers of subsistence (*baqa*) prefer *uns*.

Qahr قهر (violence) and Lutf لطف (kindness)

These two expressions are used by the Sufis to interpret their own state. By *qahr* قهر (violence) they signify to annihilate their desires and to restrain *nafs* (lower soul) from its desires by the aid of Allah, without mingling any personal object therein. By *lutf* لطف (kindness) they signify the subsistence of their hearts, the continuance of contemplation and permanence of ecstasy in the degree of steadfastness by the help of Allah. The adherents of *lutf* say divine grace is the attainment of one's desire, but the others say that divine grace is that Allah save His desire should restrain a man from all his desires and should overpower him through keeping him objective less, so that if he was thirsty and plunged into a river, the river would become dry.

There were two eminent dervishes in Baghdad, the one a believer in *qahr* and the other a believer in *lutf*. Both were always pulling and hauling and each would prefer his own state to that of his contemporary. One would say that *lutf* is superior as Allah has said,

اللَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِعِبَادِهِ

Gracious is Allah to His servants:" (Q 42:19).

The other would call *qahr* superior by quoting the following verse of Quran,

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ

He is the irresistible, (watching) from above over His worshippers;" (Q 6:18).

The dervish who preferred *lutf* set out for Mecca but on his way struck up in the desert, and never reached his destination. For many years no one heard about him, until he was seen by a traveler on the road between Mecca and Baghdad. The dervish asked the traveler to convey the following message to his friend at Karkh in Baghdad:

"If he wishes to see a desert with all its hardship, like Karkh of Baghdad, with all its marvels, let him come here, for this desert is Karkh to me!"

When the traveler arrived at Karkh he delivered this message to the other dervish, who said:

"On your return, tell him that there is no superiority in the fact that the desert has been made like Karkh to him, in order that he may not flee from the Court (of Allah); the superiority lies in the fact that Karkh, with all its wonders and magnificence has been made to me like a painful desert, and that nevertheless, I am happy here."

Shibli said, in his secret converse with Allah:

"O Lord, I will not turn from Thee, although Thou shouldst make the heaven a collar for my neck and the earth a shackle for my foot and the whole universe a thirst for my blood."

My Sheikh narrated:

“There was a meeting of the saints of Allah which took place in the midst of a desert, and I accompanied my Sheikh Husri, to that spot. I saw some people approaching on camels, some borne on thrones, and some flying, but Husri paid no heed to them. Then I saw a youth with torn shoes and a broken staff. His feet could scarcely support him, and his head was bare and his body emaciated. As soon as he appeared Husri got up and ran to meet him and led him to a lofty seat. This astonished me, and afterwards I questioned the Sheikh about the youth. He replied that he was one of Allah’s saints who do not follow saintship, but saintship follows him and he pays no attention to miracles.”

In short what we choose ourselves is a cause of affliction. I desire only that Allah should desire for me, and therein preserve me from the evil thereof and save me from the wickedness of my soul. If He keeps me in *qahr* I do not wish for *lutf*, and if He keeps me in *lutf* I do not wish for *qahr*. I have no choice beyond His choice.

Nafy نفى (negation) and *Ithbat* اثبات (affirmation)

The Sheikhs of this Path gives the names of *nafy* (negation) and *ithbat* اثبات (affirmation) to the effacement of the attributes of humanity and affirmation of Divine aid. By *nafy* they signify the negation of the attributes of humanity, and by *ithbat* they mean the overwhelmingness of the power of the Truth, for object of effacement is to abolish the total and total negation is applicable only to the attributes because while the humanity subsists the negation of essence is impossible. It is necessary, therefore, that blameworthy attributes should be negated by the affirmation of praiseworthy qualities, i.e. the pretension to love of Allah is negated by affirmation of the reality, for pretension is one of the vanities of the *nafs* (lower soul). But the *Sufis*, when their attributes are overpowered by the might of the Truth, habitually say that the attributes of humanity are negated by affirming the subsistence of Allah. This matter has already been discussed in the chapters on poverty and purity and in that on annihilation and subsistence.

They also say that the terms signify the negation of man’s free will by the affirmation of Allah’s authority. Some elder said:

اختيار الحق بعيدة مع علمه بعيدة خير من اختيار عبده لنفسه مع جهله بربه

“Allah’s choice for His servant with His knowledge of His servant is better than His servant’s choice for himself with his ignorance of his Lord,” because love as all agrees, is the negation of the lover’s choice by affirmation of the Beloved’s choice.

A dervish was drowning in the river, when someone cried, “Brother, do you wish to be saved?” The dervish said: “No.” “Then do you wish to be drowned?” “No,” said dervish. “It is a wonder that you will not choose either to die or to be saved.” The dervish said:

“What have I to do with safety, that I should choose it? My choice is that Allah should choose for me.”

The Sheikhs have said that negation of one’s own choice is the least grade in love. The authority of Allah is Eternal and cannot possibly be negated, but man’s choice is temporary and admits negation, and it must be trodden under feet so that the Eternal choice of Allah may subsist for ever. When Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him) in the state of *bast* (expansion) came on mount Tur, he desired for the vision of the Truth by keeping his own choice and Allah replied, “لن تراني” by no means canst you see Me (direct). Moses said, “O my Lord! vision is Truth and I qualify for that, then why this hurdle? Allah said:

“Vision is Truth, but in love choice is not allowable.”

There has been much debate on this matter, but my sole aim is that you should know the signification of the terms used by the *Sufis*. I have mentioned some of these, e.g., *jama* and *tatriq*, and *fana* and *baqa*, and *ghaybat* and *hudur*, and *sukr* and *sahw*, in the chapter treating doctrines of the *Sufis*, and you must look there for the explanation of them.

Musamarat مسامرة (nocturnal discourse) & Muhadathat محادثة (conversation)

These are two states of the perfect *Sufis*. *Muhadatha* محادثة (conversation) is spiritual talk conjoined with silence of the tongue, and *musamara* مسامرة (nocturnal discourse) is continuance of delight combined with concealment of the inward state.

The *musamara* is a spiritual state existing between Allah and man at night, and *muhadatha* is a similar state existing by day, in which there is exoteric and esoteric conversation. Hence secret prayers (*Manajat*) by night are called *musamara*, while invocations made by day are called *muhadatha*. The daily state is based on revelation, and the nightly state on osculation.

In love *musamara* is more perfect than *muhadatha*, and is connected with the state of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), when Allah sent Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) to him with *Buraq* and conveyed him by night from Mecca to a space of two bow-length from His presence. The Prophet (peace be upon him) conversed secretly with Allah, and when he reached the goal his tongue became dumb before the revelation of Allah's Majesty, and his heart was amazed at His infinite Greatness, and he said, "لا احصي ثناء عليك" *I cannot tell thy praise.*"

Muhadatha is connected with the state of Moses (may blessings of Allah be on him), who when wished to seek *waqt* (time) from the Court of the Lord, after forty days waiting came to Mount Sinai and heard the speech of Allah and when went into state of gladness happened to ask for vision of Him. When he could not meet his desire, went into swoon and on recovering from that state said, "تبت اليك to Thy, I turn in repentance."

There is a plain difference between one who was conducted, i.e. "Glory to (Allah) Who did take His servant for a journey by night," (Q 17:1) and one who came, "when Moses came to the place appointed by Us," (Q 7:143).

Thus, night is the time when lovers are alone with each other, and the day is the time when servants wait upon their masters. When a servant transgresses he is reprimanded, but a lover has no law by the transgression of which he should incur blame, for lovers cannot do anything displeasing to each other.

Ilm al-Yaqin علم اليقين (Knowledge of Faith)

Ayn al-Yaqin عين اليقين (Undoubted Faith)

Haq al-Yaqin حق اليقين (Truth of Faith)

Principally all these expressions denote knowledge. The knowledge which is devoid of faith on its reality and accuracy is not knowledge itself, but when knowledge is gained the hidden appears as actually seen. The believers who shall see Allah on the Day of Judgment shall see Him then in the same perceptive as they know Him in this world. If they shall see Him otherwise, either their vision will be imperfect then or their knowledge is faulty now. Both these are in contradiction with unification, because if men's knowledge of Allah is sound today only then their vision of Allah should be sound tomorrow and his knowledge would become certain. Hence knowledge of faith will become undoubted Faith and Truth of Faith will become knowledge of faith. Some have said that *ayn al-yaqin* عين اليقين is the complete absorption of knowledge in vision, but this is impossible, because vision is an instrument for the attainment of knowledge, like hearing, etc. as knowledge does not absorb in hearing, so its absorption in vision is equally impossible.

By *ilm al-yaqin* علم اليقين the *Sufis* mean knowledge of (religious) practice in this world according to the Divine commandments. And by *ayn al-yaqin* عين اليقين they mean knowledge of the state of last breaths at the time of death and the time of departure from this world. And by *haq al-yaqin* حق اليقين they mean intuitive knowledge of the vision (of Allah) and to know about the state of the inhabitants of Paradise. Therefore *ilm al-yaqin* is the rank of theologians on account of their being steadfast in observance of the Divine commands, and *ayn al-yaqin* is the station of Gnostics, for they are everready for death, and *haq al-yaqin* is the annihilation point of lovers on account of their rejection of all created things. Hence *ilm al-yaqin* is obtained by self-mortification, and *ayn al-yaqin* by intimacy and love, and *haq al-yaqin* by contemplation. The first is common, the second is elect, and the third is super-elect.

Ilm علم (Knowledge) and Marifat معرفت (Gnosis)

Theologians have made no distinction between *ilm* علم (knowledge) and *marifat* معرفت (Knowledge of Allah) except when they say that Allah may be called *Alim* عالم (knowing), but not *arif* عارف (Gnostic). The *Sufi* Sheikhs give the name of *marifat (gnosis)* to knowledge that includes both religious practices and states, and the knower of which could express his state, and the knower thereof they call *arif* عارف.

On the other hand, knowledge devoid of states and practice is called *ilm* علم and knower of it is called *Alim* عالم (knowing). In short one who knows merely the verbal expression and keeps it in his memory without keeping the spiritual reality they call him *Alim*, and one who has the knowledge of meaning and reality of a thing they call him *arif* (Gnostic)

For this reason, when the *Sufis* wish to laugh at a rival they call him *Danishmand* (possessing knowledge). The common people consider this objectionable, but the *Sufis* do not intend to blame the man for having acquired knowledge, they blame him for neglecting the practice of religion, because the *Alim* depends on himself, but the *Arif* depends on his Lord. This question has been discussed at length in the chapter entitled "The removal of the Veil of Gnosis".

Shariat شريعت (Religious Law) and Haqiqat حقيقت (Truth)

From *Shariat* شريعت *Sufis* mean soundness of the outwardly state and from *Haqiqat* حقيقت they mean maintenance of the inwardly state. Two groups err in this matter. Firstly, the formal theologians, who assert that there is no distinction between *Shariat* (religious law) and *Haqiqat* (Truth), since the Religious Law is the Truth and the Truth is the Religious Law. Secondly, some heretics, who hold that it is possible for one of these to subsist without the other, and declare that when the Truth is revealed the Religious Law is abolished. This is the doctrine of the *Carmathians* and the *Mashiaha* and their satanically inspired followers. They argue that the *Shariat* is separate from the Truth, lies in the fact that in faith belief is separate from verbal profession, and the proof that the Law and Truth are not fundamentally separate, but are one, lies in the fact that belief without profession is not faith, and conversely profession without belief is not faith; and there is a manifest difference between profession and belief.

Thus *Haqiqat* signifies a reality which does not admit of abrogation and remains in force from the time of Adam to the end of the world, like knowledge of Allah and like religious practice, which is made perfect by sincere intention.

The *Shariat* signifies a reality which admits of abrogation and alteration, like ordinances and commandments. Therefore *Shariat* is man's act, while *Haqiqat* is Allah's keeping and preservation and protection. Whence it follows that *Shariat* cannot possibly be maintained without the existence of *Haqiqat*, and *Haqiqat* cannot be maintained without observance of *Shariat*. Their mutual relation may

be compared to that of a body and spirit, for when the spirit departs from the body the living body becomes a corpse and the spirit vanishes like wind, therefore, their value depends on their conjunction with one another. Similarly, the Law without the Truth is ostentation, and the Truth without the Law is hypocrisy. Allah has said:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

“And those who strive in Our (Cause) – We will certainly guide them to Our Paths:” (Q 29:69).

Devotional practice is *Shariat* and guidance it's *Haqiqat*. The former consists in a man's observance of the external ordinances, while the latter consists in Allah's maintenance of a man's spiritual feelings. Hence the *Shariat* is one of the acts acquired by man, but the *Haqiqat* is one of the gifts bestowed by Allah and difference between both is self evident.

Another class of terms and expressions are used by the *Sufis* metaphorically. These metaphorical terms are more difficult to analyze and interpret, but I will explain them concisely.

Al-Haq الحق: By *Haq* the *Sufis* mean Allah, for *Haq* is one of the names of Allah, as He has said,

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ

this is so, because Allah is the Reality” (Q 22:6).

Al-Haqiqat الحقيقة: Man's abode in the place of union with Allah, and the rest of his heart in the place of abstraction.

Al-Khatarat الخطرات: The states which pass through heart while in observance of religious law.

Al-Watnat الوطنات: Divine influence in regards to *marifat* that descends on the heart.

Al-Tams التمس: Negation of a substance in such totality that it leaves no marks on the heart.

Al-Rams الرمس: Negation of a substance in such a way that its influence subsists.

Al-Alaiq العلائق: Such causes because of which seekers of the Truth fail to gain the object of their desire.

Al-Wasait الوسائط: Such causes because of which seekers of the Truth gain the object of their desire.

Al-Zawaid الزوائد: The excess of splendor in the heart (spiritual illumination).

Al-Fawaid الفوائد: The understanding of own inward influences.

Al-Malja الملجاء: The confidence of the heart in the attainment of its desire.

Al-Manja المنجاء: The liberty of the heart from the place of affliction.

Al-Kulliyat الكلية: The absorption of the attributes of humanity in the Universal.

Al-Lawaih اللوائح: Affirmation of the object of desire but advent of negation thereof.

Al-Lawami اللوامع: The manifestation of (spiritual) light to the heart while its beneficence continues to subsist.

Al-Tawali الطوالع: The descending of the splendors of (mystical) knowledge on the heart.

Al-Tawariq الطواريق: That which comes into the heart, either with glad tidings or with rebuke, in secret converse (with Allah) at night.

Al-Lataif اللطيفة: A symbol of subtleties of feeling presented to the heart.

Al-Sirr السر: Concealment of the feelings of love.

Al-Najwa النجوي: Concealment of trials and afflictions from the knowledge of others (than Allah).

Al-Isharat الاشارة: Giving information to another of the object of desire through tongue of state.

Al-Ima الایما: Addressing anyone allusively, without spoken or unspoken explanation.

Al-Warid الواريد: The descending of spiritual meanings upon the heart.

Al-Intibah الانتباه: Warning to the heart on its heedlessness.

Al-Ishtibah الاشتباه: Perplexity felt in deciding between truth and falsehood.

Al-Qarar القرار: The departure of indecisiveness from the reality of one's feeling.

Al-Inziaj الانزعاج: Agitation of the heart in the state of ecstasy.

Another class of technical terms is those which the *Sufis* employ, without metaphor in unification (*tawhid*) and in setting forth their firm belief in spiritual realities.

Al-Alam العالم: It denotes the creatures of Allah. It is said that there are 18000 or 50000 worlds. Philosophers say that there are two worlds, heavenly world and lower world, while theologian say that *alam* is whatever exists between the Throne of Allah and the earth. In short, *alam* is the collective mass of created things. The *Sufis* speak of the world of spirits and the world of souls, but they do not mean the same thing as the philosophers. What they mean is the collective mass of spirits and souls.

Al-Muhdath المحدث: Posterior in existence, i.e. it was not and afterward was.

Al-Qadim القديم: Anterior in existence, i.e. it always was, and its being was anterior to all beings. This is nothing but Allah.

Al-Azal الازل: Which has no beginning.

Al-Abad العبد: Which has no end.

Al-Dat الذات: The being and reality of a thing.

Al-Sifat الصفة: That which does not admit of qualification, because it is not self-subsistent.

Al-Ism الاسم: That which is not the object named.

Al-Tasmiyat التسمية: Information concerning the object named.

Al-Nafi النفي: That which entails the non-existence of every object of negation.

Al-Ithbat الاثبات: That which entails the existence of every object of affirmation.

Al-Shiyyan الشيان: The possibility of the existence of one thing with another.

Al-Didan الضدان: The impossibility of the existence of one thing simultaneously with the existence of another.

Al-Ghairan الغيران: The possibility of the existence of either of two things, notwithstanding the annihilation of the other.

Al-Jawhar الجوهر: The basis of a thing that which is self-subsistent.

Al-Arad العرض: That which subsists in *jawhar* (substance).

Al-Jism الجسم: That which is composed of separate parts.

Al-Swal السؤال: Seeking a reality.

Al-Jawab الجواب: Giving information concerning the subject-matter of a question.

Al-Husn الحسن: That which is conformable to the (Divine) command.

Qubh البقيع: That which is not conformable to the (Divine) command.

Al-Safah السفه: Neglect of the (Divine) command.

Al-Zulm الظلم: Putting a thing in a place that is not worthy of it.

Al-Adl العدل: Putting everything in its proper place.

Al-Malik الملك: He with whose actions it is impossible to interfere.

Another class of terms requiring explanation is that which are commonly used by the *Sufis* in a mystical sense that is not familiar to philologists.

Khatir خاطر (passing thought)

By *khatir* the *Sufis* signify the occurrence of something in the mind which is quickly removed by another thought, and which its owner is able to repel from his mind. Those who have such phenomena

follow the first thought in matters, for they perceive it comes directly from Allah to man without any cause.

A thought occurred to Khair Nassaj that Junaid was waiting at his door, but he wished to repel it. The same thought returned twice and thrice, whereupon he went out and discovered Junaid, who said to him:

“If you had followed the first thought and tradition of Sheikhs it would not have been necessary for me to stand here all this time.”

How was Junaid acquainted with thought which occurred to Khair? This question was asked, and answered by the remark that Junaid was spiritual director of Khair, and a spiritual director is always acquainted with all that happens to his disciples.

Al-Waqia الواقع

It signifies a thought which descends in ones mind and unlike *khatir* remains there, and which the seeker under no circumstances is able to repel. Thus they say,

“It descended in my mind”, but “it sank into my mind.”

All minds are subject to *khatir* (passing thought), but *waqia* is possible only in a mind that is entirely filled with the notion of Allah. Hence, when any obstacle appears to the novice on the Way to Truth, they call it “a fetter” and say, “a *waqia* has befallen him.” Philologist’s means by this term “*is to get entangled in some question*” and when it is solved satisfactorily they say, “the *waqia* is solved.” But the mystics say that *waqia* is that which is insoluble, and that whatever is solved is a *khatir* not a *waqia*, for *waqia* is an important event. The *Sufis* do not consider a thing valuable which has continually varying judgments and which is also subject to variation.

Al-Ikhtiyar الاختيار

By *ikhtiyar* they signify resigning from their preference and accepting of Allah’s choice to their own, i.e. they are content with the good and evil which Allah has chosen for them. And then man’s preference of Allah’s choice is again because of Allah’s choice for him, for has it not like this he would never have let his own choice go. When Abu Yazid was asked that who was the ruler? He replied, “He to whom no choice is left, and to whom Allah’s choice has become the only choice.”

Once Junaid, having caught fever and when he implored Allah to give him health, a voice spoke in his heart:

“Who are you to plead in My kingdom and make a choice? I can manage my kingdom better than you. Do you choose My choice instead of coming forward with thine.”

Al-Imtehan الامتحان

By *imtehan* they signify the probation of the hearts of the saints by diverse afflictions which come to them from Allah, such as fear, grief, contraction, awe, etc. Allah has said:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَى لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

“Their hearts has Allah tested for piety: for them is forgiveness and a great Reward.” (Q 49:3).

This is a lofty grade.

Al-Bala البلاء

By *bala* (affliction) they signify the probation of the bodies of Allah's friends by diverse troubles, sickness and tribulations. The more severely a man is afflicted the nearer does he approach unto Allah, for affliction is the clothing of the saints and cradle of the pure and nourishment of the Prophets. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

اشد البلاء الانبياء ثم الاولياء ثم الامثل ثم الامثل نحن معاشر الانبياء اشد الناس بلاء

"The prophets are the most afflicted then the saints, and then others who are close to them. We the Prophets are the most afflicted of mankind."

Bala is a tribulation, which descends on the heart and body of a true believer. It is really a blessing, although the mystery thereof is concealed from him, and he is divinely recompensed for bearing the pains thereof. Tribulation that befalls on unbelievers is not affliction, but misery, and unbelievers never get relief from misery. The degree of *bala* is more honorable than *imtehan*, for *imtehan* affects the heart only, whereas *bala* affects both the heart and the body.

Al-Tahalli التحلي

To imitate of praiseworthy people in word and deed is called *tahalli*. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

ليس الايمان بالتحلي والتمني ولكن ما وقرب بالقلوب وصدقته العمل

"Faith is not acquired by *tahalli* (adoring one's self with the qualities of others) and wishes but it is that which sinks deep into the heart and is verified by actions."

In short *tahalli* is to imitate people without really acting like them. Those who seem to be what they are not will soon be put to shame, and their secret character will be revealed.

Al-Tajalli التجلي

Tajalli is the blessed effect of Divine splendor on the hearts of the blest, whereby they are made capable to have vision of Allah with the eyes of their hearts.

The difference between spiritual vision and actual vision is that those who experience *tajalli* (manifestation of Allah) see or do not see, accordingly as they wish, or see at one time and do not see at another time, while those who experience actual vision in Paradise cannot but see, even though they wish not to see; for it is possible that *tajalli* should be hidden, whereas *ruyat* (vision) cannot possibly be veiled.

Al-Takhalli التخلي

Takhalli is turning away from distractions which prevent a man from attaining proximity to Allah. The distractions are:

- The foremost is this world, of which one must empty his hands.
- The desire of the next world, of which he must empty his heart.
- Then frequent indulgence in vanity, of which he must empty his spirit and his association with created beings, of which he should empty himself and from the thought of which he should disengage his mind.

Al-Shurud الشُرود

Shurud is to seek the Truth restlessly by escaping from worldly corruption, veils and anxiety, for all the misfortunes of the seeker arise from his being veiled. Thus all the efforts of the seeker like struggle, traveling etc to remove veils, falls under this term. The one who at the initial stage feels more anxiety he at the end attains proximity of the Truth and becomes more steadfast.

Al-Qusud القُصود

By *qusud* (aims) they signify perfect resolution to seek the reality of the object of search. The aims of the *Sufis* do not depend on motion and rest, because the lover, he may be at rest in love, is still pursuing an aim. This is contrary to the aim of common people, as their aims produce some affects on them outwardly or inwardly, whereas the lovers of Allah seek Him without any cause and pursue their aim without movement of their own, and all their qualities are directed towards that goal.

Al-Istina الاصطناع

By this term they mean that Allah makes a man faultless through the annihilation of all his selfish interests and sensual pleasures and transforms in him the attributes of his lower soul, so that he becomes selfless. This degree belongs exclusively to the Prophets, but some Sheikhs hold that it may be attained by the saints also.

Al-Istifa الاصطفاء

This signifies that Allah makes a man's heart empty to receive the knowledge of Him, so that His knowledge diffuses its purity through his heart. In this degree all believers, the common people as well as the elect are alike, whether they are sinful or pious or saints or Prophets, for Allah has said:

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ

“Then We have given the Book for inheritance to such of Our servants as We have chosen: But there are among them some who wrong their own souls; some who follow a middle course; and some who are, by Allah's leave, foremost in good deeds.” (Q 35:32).

Al-Istilam الاصطلام

Istilam is the manifestations of splendor of Allah which causes a man to be entirely overpowered by a merciful probation, while his will is reduced to naught. *Qalb-al mumtahan*, “a proved heart,” and *qalb-al mustalam*, “a destroyed heart,” bear the same meanings, although in the current usage of *Sufi* phraseology *istilam* is more particular and exquisite than *imtehan*.

Al-Rayn الرين

It is a veil on the heart, which cannot be removed except by faith. This is the veil of infidelity and deviation. Allah has said, describing the hearts of the unbelievers,

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

“By no means! But on their hearts is the stain of the (ill) which they do!” (Q 83:14).

Some says that *rayn* is that veil which cannot be removed by any manner, for the infidel does not embrace Islam and that who embraces Islam is already a true believer.

Al-Ghayn الغين

Ghayn is that veil on the heart which can be removed by asking pardon of Allah. It is of two kinds, i.e. it may be either thin or may be dense. The latter is for those who forget (Allah) and commit great sins. The former is for all, including saints and prophets. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

لاستغفر الله في كل يوم مائة مرة

“Verily, some times my heart is obscured, and I ask pardon of Allah one hundred times every day.”

For removing the dense veil a proper repentance is necessary, and for removing the thin veil a sincere return to Allah is must. Repentance is turning back from disobedience to obedience, and return is a turning from self to Allah. Repentance is made from sins. The sin of common men is opposition to Allah’s command, while the sin of lovers (of Allah) is opposition to Allah’s will. Therefore, the sin of common men is disobedience, and that of lovers in consciousness of their own existence. If anyone turns back from wrong to right, they say, “he is repentant (*taib*);” but if anyone turns back from what is right to what is more right, they say, “He is returning (*aaib*).” All this I have set forth in the chapter on repentance.

Al-Talbis التلبيس

The appearance of a thing when its appearance is contrary to its reality is named *talbis*, as Allah has said:

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُمْ مَلَائِكَةً لَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ رِجَالًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَا يَلْبِسُونَ

“If We had made it an angel, We should have sent him as a man, And We should certainly have caused them confusion in a matter which they have already covered with confusion.” (Q 6:9).

This quality of deception cannot possibly belong to anyone except Allah, who shows the unbeliever in the guise of a believer and the believer in the guise of an unbeliever, until the time shall come for the manifestation of His decree and of reality in every case. When a *Sufi* conceals good qualities under a mask of bad, they say, “He is praising deception,” but they use this term in such instances only, and do not apply it to ostentation and hypocrisy, which are fundamentally *talbis*, because *talbis* is not used except in reference to an act performed by Allah.

Al-Shrub الشرب

The *Sufis* call the sweetness of piety, the delight of miraculous grace and the pleasure of intimacy *shrub* (drinking), and they can not do anything without the delight of *shrub*. As water is the drink of the body, so the heart’s drink is *spiritual* pleasure and sweetness. My Sheikh used to say that a novice without *shrub* and a Gnostic with *shrub* are strangers to gnosis. Someone has said that the novice must derive some pleasure from his actions in order that he may fulfill the obligations of a novice who is seeking the Truth, but the Gnostic ought not to feel such pleasure, lest he should be transported with that pleasure instead of with Allah, for if he turn back to his lower soul he will not rest (with Allah).

Dhawq الذوق

Dhawq resembles *shrub*, but *shrub* is used solely in reference to pleasure, whereas *dhawq* is applied to pleasure and pain alike.

It is said,

ذقت الحلاوة وذقت البلاء وذقت الراحة

“I tasted sweetness, I tasted affliction, and I tasted delight also.”

And they also say,

شربت بكأس الوصل وبكأس الود

“I drank the cup of union, and I drank the cup of love,”

Allah said,

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا

“(To them will be said) eat and drink ye, with profit and health,” (Q 52:19)

and

ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ

“taste thou (this) truly wast thou Mighty, full of honor!” (Q 44:49),

and also said,

ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ

“taste ye the touch of Hell!” (Q 54:48).

Chapter XXV

The Uncovering of the Eleventh Veil

Audition (Al-Sama السمع)

The means of acquiring knowledge are five, hearing, sight, taste, smell, and touch. Allah has created these doors for the mind, and all the knowledge is acquired through them. The knowledge of voice and news is attained through hearing, the knowledge of colors and shapes is obtained through sight, the knowledge of sweet and bitter is through taste, the knowledge of odor and stink is through smell and the knowledge of hardness and softness is through touch. Four of the five senses have their own places to reside, but one, namely touch is diffused over the whole body. Ears are for hearing, eyes for seeing, palate to taste and nose is to smell, but the fifth sense is diffused in the whole body. We cannot see without eyes, or cannot hear without ear, or cannot smell without the nose and cannot taste without tongue but the whole body has the capability that it can distinguish between soft or hard and cold and warm. It is possible, however, that the diffusion, which is characteristic of touch, may be shared by any of the other senses as well. The *Mutazilites* hold that no sense can exist but in a special organ, theory which is contradicted by the fact that the sense of touch has no such organ. Since one of the five senses has no special organ, it follows that, if the sense of touch is generally diffused, the other senses may be capable of the same diffusion. Although it is not my purpose to discuss this question here, I thought of a brief explanation necessary.

Leaving aside sense of hearing, out of rest of the four senses, one sense see, the other smell, the third one taste and the fourth touches. It is incumbent and lawful that after seeing the marvels of the nature, after smelling its pleasant stuff, after tasting its delicious viands and after touching its fine and delicate things, the mind should pursue the way to Allah because it is clear before him that the world is mortal and it is subject to changes and that which accepts changes is a created. Since it is created therefore, there must be its creator which can not be from its genus. He is the creator and the universe is created. He is the Giver of the body and universe is body. The creator of the universe is Eternal and the universe is created. The Creator is infinite and universe is finite. He is the Omnipotent, and the Knower of all. He rules over everything and can do what He wills. He sent Prophets with true evidences, but belief in His Prophets became obligatory only when mankind ascertained the knowledge of Allah by means of hearing. Thus, it is hearing that makes religion obligatory, and for this reason the *Sunnis* (orthodox Muslims) regard hearing as superior to sight in the domain of religious obligation. If it be said that audition is the station of hearing and sighting is station of seeing, and the vision of Allah is better than hearing His word, I reply that our knowledge of Allah's vision to the faithful in Paradise is derived from hearing. It is a matter of indifference whether the understanding allows that Allah shall be visible or not, inasmuch as we are assured of the fact by oral tradition. Hence hearing is superior to sight. Moreover, all religious ordinances are based on hearing and could not be established without it. All the prophets on their appearance first spoke in order that those who heard them might believe, then in the second place they showed miracles, which also were confirmed by hearing. What has been said proves that anyone who denies audition denies the entire *Shariat* and he intentionally hides the ordinances of *Shariat*.

Audition of Quran and its Related Matters

The most beneficial audition to the mind and the most delightful to the ear is that of the Words of the Lord, which all believers and unbelievers, human beings and Genii alike are commanded to hear.

It is a miraculous quality of the Quran that one never grows weary of reading and hearing it, as its recitation is very touching. The Quraish of Mecca used to come secretly by night and listen to the Prophet (peace be upon him) while he was praying and marvel at his recitation. For example Nadir b.

al-Harith the most elegant of them in speech, Utba b. Rabi very eloquent, and Abu Jahl b. Hisham a wondrous orator, one night when Prophet (peace be upon him) was reciting a Sura of Quran, Utba swooned on hearing it and he said to Abu Jahl, "I am sure that these are not the words of any created being."

Allah commanded Genii and they came in groups and heard the Quran from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and they said,

إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا

we have really heard a wonderful Recital!" (Q 72:1).

Then Allah repeated their saying that Quran guides to the right path:

يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا

"It gives guidance to the right, and we have believed therein: we shall not join (in worship) any (gods) with our Lord." (Q 72:2).

The methodology of Quran to counsel is the best and it has valued vocabulary. It has very subtle way of command and its prohibitions are extremely affective. Its vows are the most pleasant and its denunciations are the most life melting. Its narrations are the most affective and its similitude's are the most eloquent. Thousands of hearts are its hunts and thousands lives are captivated by its subtleties. It shows the real face of everyone.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) while he was still infidel heard that his sister and brother-in-law had embraced Islam. He left to kill them but Allah by His Grace had placed a force to ambush him in the garb of Sura Ta-Ha. When he reached his sister's house she was reciting following verses:

طه - مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى - إِلَّا تَذَكِيرًا لِمَنْ يَخْشَى

"We have not sent down the Quran to thee to be (An occasion) for thy distress, But only as an admonition to those who fear (Allah)," (Q 20:1-3).

He was captivated by the delicacies and subtleties of Quran; he threw away the garb of enmity, selected peace and adopted the path of conformity.

It is related that when following verse was recited before the Prophet (peace be upon him) he went into unconsciousness:

إِنَّ لَدَيْنَا أَنْكَالًا وَجَحِيمًا - وَطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

"With Us are Fetters (to bind them), and a Fire (to burn them), and a Food that chokes, and a penalty Grievous." (Q 73:12-13).

Someone recited

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ

verily, the Doom of thy Lord will indeed come to pass, " (Q 52:7)

before Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). Hearing this verse, he shrieked aloud and went into swoon and he had to be lifted to his house. He remained very sick for complete one month.

Somebody recited in the presence of Abdullah b. Hanzla (may Allah have mercy on him),

لَهُمْ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَمِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ

for them there is Hell, as a couch (below) and folds and folds of covering above: such is Our requital of those who do wrong" (Q 7:41),

Abdullah began to weep so violently that, it looked as he might lose his life. After sometime he recovered and stood to his feet. People bade him to sit down, but he refused and said that the awe of that verse prevented him from sitting down.

When the following verse was recited in the presence of Junaid,

لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

why say ye that which ye do not?" (Q 61:2),

he said:

"O Lord, if we say, we say because of Thee, and if we do, we do because of Thy blessing: where then, are our sayings and doings?"

When the following verse was recited before Shibli,

وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ

and call thy Lord to mind when thou forgettest," (Q 18:24),

he said, "Remembrance (of Allah) involves forgetfulness (of self), and all world have stopped short at the remembrance of Him;" He said this and then shrieked and fell senseless. When he came to himself, he said,

"I wonder at that heart who hears Words of Allah and remains unmoved and I wonder on that soul who hears the words of Allah and does not leave its abode."

Some Sheikh says once while he was reciting,

وَاقْفُوا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ جُنُودًا لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

and fear the Day when ye shall be brought back to Allah." (Q 2:281),

a heavenly voice called to me and said, "Recite slowly! four Genii have died from the terror inspired in them by this verse."

A dervish said that for the last ten years he had read that much Quran which was sufficient for the performance of prayer. Beside that neither he had read nor heard the Quran. On being asked why, he answered, "For fear lest it should be cited as an argument against me."

One day I came into the presence of Abu al-Abbas Shaqani and found him reciting,

صَرََبَ اللَّهُ مَمْلَأَ عَيْنًا أَمَلُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَدِمُوا عَلَى شَيْءٍ

Allah sets (another Parable of two men: one of them dumb, with no power of any sort: (Q 16:77),

and weeping and shrieking, so that he swooned and I thought he was dead. When he came to his own I asked him what ailed him. He said:

"In eleven years I have reached this point of the Quran and I am unable to proceed further."

Abu al-Abbas b. Ata was asked how much Quran he recited daily. He answered that formerly he used to read the whole Quran twice in a day and night, but then after reading for four years he had only reached the Sura al-Anfal.

Abu Abbas Qassab asked a *Qari* to recite:

لَا تَنْزِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

"This day let no reproach be (cast) on you: Allah will forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!" (Q 12:92).

Next he asked him to recite:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ مَسَّنَا وَأَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضَاعٍ مُتَّجِرَةٍ

“O exalted one! Distress has seized us and our family: we have (now) brought but scanty capital:” (Q 12:88),

Then he asked him to recite the following verse also:

قَالُوا إِنْ يَسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخٌ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ

“They said: `If he steals, there was a brother of his who did steal before (him).” (Q 12:77).

On hearing that Abu Abbas cried:

“O Lord, I am more unjust than Yousaf’s brethren, and You are more kind than Yusaf, deal with me as Yusaf dealt with his wicked brethren.”

All Muslims, pious and disobedient alike, are commanded to listen to the Quran, for Allah has said:

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

“When the Quran is read, listen to it with attention, and hold your peace: that you may receive Mercy.” (Q 7:204),

i.e. when somebody is reading Quran, the presents should listen it quietly and attentively. Allah says,

فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادَ - الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ

to My servants, those who listen to the words,” (Q 39:17-18), i.e. obey its commands and listen with respect.

And Allah also said:

الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ

“To those whose hearts, when Allah is mentioned, are filled with fear,” (Q 22:35),

i.e. the hearts of the listeners of words of Allah trembles.

And it is further said:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction.” (Q 13:28).

There are many more such verses which command about hearing of Quran attentively.

In contrary to this those who do not hear Quran wholeheartedly and neither open doors of their hearts are scorned.

Allah said:

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ

“Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil;” (Q 2:7),

لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ

“Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we should not (now) be among the Companions of the Blazing Fire!” (Q 67:10)

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ

“Of them there are some who (pretend to) listen to thee; but We have thrown veils on their hearts, so they understand it not,” (Q 6:25),

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ

“Nor be like those who say, `we hear` but listen not.“ (Q 8:21).

There are many more such verses in Quran.

Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Ibn Masud (may Allah be pleased with him) to recite the Quran to him. Ibn Masud said astonishingly that should he recite to whom it was revealed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered:

“I get more delight by hearing it from another.”

This is a clear proof that the hearer is more perfect in state than the reader, that’s why Prophet (peace be upon him) said these words. The reader would recite with or without true feeling, whereas the hearer feels truly, because speech is a sort of pride and hearing is a sort of humility.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said that the Sura Hud had whitened his hair. It is mentioned that he said this because of the

فَأَسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أُمِرْتُ

Therefore stand firm (in the straight Path as thou art commanded,“ (Q 11:112).

The Man is weak to be really steadfast in fulfilling the Divine commandments, as he cannot do anything without Allah’s help. The Prophet (peace be upon him) got amazed with this commandment “be steadfast”, and thought that how it was possible to remain steadfast. He took it in his heart which affected his health so much that that he had to take help to be raised from the ground. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) asked what had gone wrong with him although he was still healthy and young. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that the Sura Hud had made him aged. Its subject had put so much influence on his heart that he had lost his strength.

Abu Said Khidri (may Allah be pleased with him) related:

I was sitting with a group of aged migrants among the companion and some of them were covering others with their cloths. *Qari* was reciting Quran and we were hearing. In the mean time the Prophet (peace be upon him) came there. The *Qari* stopped reciting. He inquired what we were doing. We told him that *Qari* was reciting the Quran and we were listening. He said:

“All Praise to Allah! There are such people in my *Ummah* with whom I have been commanded to be patient.”

Then he settled down with us as if he was part of us. Then he asked all to gather around him and said, “O poor migrants! I give you happy tidings of complete success. You will enter Paradise half a day before the rich and half day will be equivalent to five hundred years.”

The same tradition has differently been conveyed by other sources. The difference lies only in words and not in meanings.

Zarara b. Abi Awfa (may Allah be pleased with him), one of the chief companions, while he was leading the prayer, recited a verse of the Quran, uttered a cry and died.

Abu Jafar Juhin, an eminent follower (may Allah have mercy on him), on hearing a verse which Saleh Marri (may Allah have mercy on him) read him, gave a loud moan and departed from this world.

Ibrahim Nakhai relates that while he was passing through a village in the neighborhood of Kufa he saw an old woman standing in prayer. As the marks of holiness were manifest on her countenance, he waited until she finished praying and then saluted her in hope of gaining a blessing thereby. She

asked him whether he remembered Quran, of which he gave an affirmative reply. She asked him to recite some verse for her. He did so, whereupon she cried aloud and her soul flew forth to meet the vision of Allah.

Ahmad b. Abi al-Hawari relates that he saw a youth in the desert. He was clad in a coarse frock, standing at the mouth of a well. He said to me, "O Ahmad you have come in good time, for I hear Quran that I may give up my soul. Read me a verse."

Allah inspired me to read,

إِنَّ الدِّينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا

in the case of those who say, 'our Lord is Allah' and further stand straight and steadfast," (Q 41:30).

The youth said, "O Ahmad you have read the same verse which an angel was reading to me just now, and with these words he gave up his soul.

Audition of Poetry and Related Matters

It is permissible to hear poetry. The Prophet (peace be upon him) heard it, and the companions not only heard it but also spoke it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

ان من الشعر لحكمة والحكمة ضالة المؤمن من حيث وجدها فهو الحق بها

"Some poetry is wisdom and wisdom is the believer's lost thing. Wherever he finds it, he has the better right to it."

He also said that the truest word ever spoken by the Arabs is the verse of Labid:-

الاكل شيء ما خلا الله باطل وكل نعيم لا محالة زائل

"Everything save Allah is vain, And all fortune is inevitably perishable."

The father of Amr b. al-Sharid related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him whether he could recite any poetry of Umayya b. Abi al-Salt, so he recited a hundred verses, and at the end of each verse he asked for more and he said that the Umayya in his poetry was very close to Islam. Many such stories are told of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the companions.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) observed that the people held erroneous views on this subject. Some declare that it is unlawful to hear all types of poetry and day and night keep on defaming their brother Muslims. Some on the contrary, hold that all poetry is lawful, and spend their time in listening to love-songs involving descriptions of the face and hair and mole of the beloved. Both the groups extend arguments against each other. My aim is not to establish their arguments. The *Sufi* Sheikhs follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who on being asked about poetry, said,

كلام حسنه حسن وقبيحه قبيح

Poetry is a speech, its good thereof is good and its bad thereof is bad,"

i.e. whatever is unlawful, like backbiting and libel and foul abuse and blame on any person and utterance of infidelity, is equally unlawful whether it be expressed in prose or in verse. And whatever is lawful in prose, like wisdom and counsels and assumption drawn from the signs of Allah and contemplation of the evidences of the Truth, is also lawful in verse.

In short, just as it is unlawful and forbidden to look at or touch a beautiful object which is a source of evil, so it is unlawful and forbidden to listen to that object or similarity to hear the description of it. Who regards such hearing lawful must also regard looking and touching as lawful, which is infidelity and heresy. If one says, that he hears the praise of Allah and seek only Him in eye and cheek and mole

and curl, it follows that another may look at a cheek and mole and say that he finds vision of the Truth therein, and he sees to seek the Truth because both the eye and the ear are sources of admonition and knowledge. Then it is also possible that a third one may say that in touching a person, whose description it is thought allowable to hear and whom it is thought allowable to behold, he too argues that he is only seeking Allah, since one sense is no better adapted than another to apprehend a reality; then the whole religious law is made null and void, and the saying of Prophet (peace be upon him) that eyes commit fornication loses all its force, and the blame of touching persons with whom marriage may legally be contracted is removed, and the ordinances of religion fall to the ground. This is absurd and open deviation.

The foolish aspirants to Sufism, seeing the adepts absorbed in ecstasy during audition, imagined that they were acting from a sensual impulse and considered it to be lawful. They argued if it was not lawful the *Sufis* would not have done so. They imitated them, taking up the form but neglecting the spirit, until they perished themselves and led others into perdition. This is one of the great evils of our time.

Audition of Melodious Voices

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

زينوا اوصالكم بالقران

“beautify your voices by reading the Quran,”

and

زينوا القران باصوات الحسن

“adorn Quran with beautiful voices.”

Allah said,

يزيدني الخلق ما يشاء

He adds to Creation as He pleases: (Q 35:1),

the commentators think, it means a beautiful voice.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that:

who wished to hear the voice of David, he should listen to the voice of Abu Musa al-Ashari.

It is stated in the *Hadith* (traditions) that the inhabitants of Paradise would enjoy audition, for there comes forth from every tree a different voice and melody. When diverse sounds are mingled together, the natural temperament experiences a great delight. This sort of audition is common to all living creatures, may it be mankind or some other creature. Since everything is alive because of the subtlety of the spirit, and there is a subtlety in the melodious sounds also, so when spirit hears, it inclines to that which is homogeneous to itself.

Physicians and those philosophers who claim to possess deep knowledge have discussed this subject at large and have written books on musical harmony. The results of their inventions are manifest today in the musical instruments which they manufactured for the sake of exciting passion and obtaining amusement and pleasure in accord with satanic ways. It is related that Ishaq Mausali while he was singing in a garden, a nightingale, enraptured with the music. It first got quiet in order to hear his song, and then fell dead from the tree. I have heard many tales of this kind, but my only purpose is to mention the theory that the sounds and melodies blended and harmonized affect on the nature of all living creatures.

Ibrahim Khawwas related:

Once I was guest of one of the Arab tribe's chief. I saw a Negro lying at the door of his tent, shackled and chained in the heat of the sun. I felt pity for him and determined to intercede with the chief on his behalf. When the food was brought I refused to eat, knowing that nothing grieves an Arab more than that. When the chief asked me the cause of refusal, I answered that I hoped his generosity would grant me a boon. He begged me to eat, assuring that all he possessed was mine. I told him that I did not want his wealth or property but was desirous that he might forgive his Negro slave. The chief said that I must first listen to his offence and then might remove his chains. The chief said that the slave was a camel-driver, and he possessed a sweet voice. He had sent him with few camels to fetch grain from his estates. He put double load on every camel and chanted so sweetly on the way that the camels ran at full speed. They reached back in a very short time, and as soon as he unloaded them they died one after another. I was amazed with that tale and said to the chieftain that a nobleman like him did not speak falsely, but I wished for some evidence of that tale. While we talked, a number of camels were brought from the desert to the wells that they might drink. The chief inquired that for how long the camels had gone without water. He was told that the camels were without water for the last three days. He then commanded the slave to chant. The camels became so occupied in listening to his song that they would not drink a mouthful of water and suddenly they turned and fled, one by one, and dispersed in the desert. The chieftain released the slave and pardoned him for my sake.

Some such happenings are in our routine observation, for example, the drivers of camels and assess when sing melodies their beasts get intoxicated. In Khurasan and Iraq the hunters when hunting deer at night beat a brass plate in order that the deer listening to the sound may stand still, and thus be caught. And it is well known in India that some people go out to the country area and sing and make a tinkling sound on hearing which the deer approach; then the hunters encircles them and sing until the deer are fully absorbed by the delightful melody and find rest in the calmness of sleep and are easily hunted.

The same effect is manifest in infants who cease crying in the cradle when a melody is sung to them and the physicians claim of such a child that he is sensible and will be clever when he grows up. On the death of one of the ancient kings of Persia his ministers wished to enthrone his son, who was a two years old child. The venerable noble on being consulted said that the child must be put to trial to ensure whether he was sensible enough to be trusted with the task. Therefore, the singers were ordered to sing to him. The child was stirred with emotions and began to shake his arms and legs. The venerable noble declared that this was a hopeful sign and consented to his succession. All the sensible people are unanimous on the affectedness of melodious sound and demand no further argument on it. Anyone who says that he finds no pleasure in sounds and music is either a liar or a hypocrite or he does not possess that subtle sense, and such person neither belongs to the human category nor beasts.

Those who prohibit music do so in order that they may keep the Divine commandment. The theologians are unanimous that it is permissible to hear musical instruments if they are not used for diversion, and if mind is not led to wickedness through hearing them. Many traditions are cited in support of this view. Thus, it is related the Aisha (may Allah be pleased with him) said that a slave-girl was singing in her presence at her house when Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) asked permission to enter. As soon as the slave girl heard the sound of his foot steps she ran away. He came in and the Prophet (peace be upon him) smiled. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) that what had made him to smile?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered: "A slave-girl was singing here, but she ran away as soon as she heard thy step." Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said that he would not depart until he heard what the Prophet (peace be upon him) had heard. So the slave girl was called back and made to sing, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) was listening to her.

Many such traditions have been related by the companions which Abdul Rahman Salami has collected in his *Kitab al-Sama*, and he has pronounced such audition to be permissible. In practicing audition, the object of *Sufi* Sheikhs is different. They say that every act must proceed with some benefit, as mere legality of something is not only the abode of common people but even of beasts also.

Therefore, it is incumbent on the seekers to do only those acts through which they might derive some spiritual benefit.

Once, when I was at Merv, one of the leaders of the *Ahl-i Hadith* (one of the sects) and the most celebrated of them said that he had composed a work on the permissibility of audition. I replied that it was a great calamity to religion that the *Imam* had made an amusement lawful which was the root of all immorality. He said that if we did not hold it as lawful then why we practice it. I answered, "Its lawfulness depends on circumstances and cannot be asserted absolutely. If audition produces a lawful effect on the mind, then it is lawful but it is unlawful if the effect is unlawful and permissible if the effect is permissible."

The Principles of Audition

The principles of audition vary with the variety of temperaments, just as there are different desires in various hearts, and it will be unjustified to lay down one law for all. The lovers of audition may be divided into two classes:

- those who hear the spiritual meaning,
- those who hear the material sound.

Both contain their good and evil effects. Listening to melodious sounds produces an effervescence of the substance molded in man. If his inward is true, the melodious sounds will produce true spiritual feelings and if it is false it will act in the same fashion. When one is overwhelmed with evil, whatever he hears will increase in his evil. This was truly illustrated by the story of David. Allah sent him as His Caliph and bestowed upon him a sweet voice and caused his throat to be a melodious pipe, so that the mountains used to be intoxicated with the melody of his voice. The wild beasts and birds would come from mountains and plains to hear him, and the water would cease to flow and the flying birds would fall from the air. It is related that during a month's space the creature in the jungle would abandon their feasts, during that period the children would neither weep nor ask for milk; and whenever the folk departed it was found that many had died of the rapture that seized them, as they had listened to his voice. And it is related that once at one time seven hundred maidens died. Then Allah wishing to separate those who listened to the voice and followed their temperament from the followers of the Truth who listened to the spiritual reality, permitted Iblis (Satan) to work his will and display his wiles. Iblis fashioned a mandolin and a flute and took up a station opposite to the place where David had his assembly. Thus, David's audience became divided into two parties. Those who were destined to felicity remained listening to the voice of David, while those destined to damnation lent ear to the music of Iblis. There was before the spiritualists neither the voice of the David nor the music of the Satan, for their eyes were only fixed on the Truth. If they heard the Devil's music, they regarded it as a temptation proceeding from Allah, and if they heard David's voice, they recognized it as being a direction from Allah. They separated from all and got free from things which were cause of establishing relation with others. They saw both right and wrong as they really were. When a man has audition of this kind, whatever he hears is lawful to him.

Some impostors say that their audition is contrary to its outward reality. This is absurd, for the perfection of saintship consists in seeing everything as they really are that the vision may be right and if one sees otherwise, the vision is wrong.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

اللهم النأحقاءق الاشياء كماهي

"O Allah, show us the things as they are."

So, when to see a thing is to see it in its true reality, similarly, the right audition which is being heard would also be only that which is right. Those who love singing or captive of their *nafs* (lower soul) and

lust, they listen other than reality. Were they listened according to the reality, they would have remained safe from evils.

Are you not aware that the people of error heard the words of Allah, and their error increased than before? Nadir b. al-Harith after hearing the Quran said,

إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ

these are nothing but tales of the ancients,” (Q 6:25),

but Abdullah b. Saad b Abi Sarah who was recorder of the revelation said,

فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

so blessed be Allah, the Best to create!” (Q 23:14).

Some of them have quoted the following verse as a reason that there shall be no vision of Allah,

لَا تَدْرِيكُهُ الْبَصَارُ

no vision can grasp Him,” (Q 6:103).

Some have cited the following verse to prove that position and direction may be affirmed of Him:

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ

then He established Himself on the Throne (of authority),” (Q 10:3).

Some have argued that Allah actually “comes”, since He has said,

وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا

and thy Lord cometh, and His angels, rank upon rank.” (89:22).

Since the error was implanted in their minds, it profited them nothing to hear the Word of Allah, whereas when a Unitarian, pursues a poem, he regards the Creator of the poet's nature and the Disposer of his thoughts, and drawing an admonition there from. The act leads him to the Causer and he sees in the act an evidence of the Agent. Thus he finds the right way even in falsehood, while those whom we have mentioned above lose the way in the midst of truth.

The Sheikhs have uttered many subtle and unique sayings on this subject and it is impossible to include all of them in this book. However some of the selected sayings are being included. Dhu al-Nun says:

السماع واهد الحق مزعج القلوب الي الحق, فمن اصغي اليه بحق تحقق ومن اصغي اليه بنفس تزندق

“Audition is a Divine influence which stirs the heart to seek Allah. One who listens to it spiritually he attains the way to the Truth, and who listens to it sensually he falls into error.”

This does not mean that audition is the cause of attaining unto Allah, but it means that the audience ought to hear the spiritual reality, not the mere sound. During audition his heart should be ready to receive the Divine influence and when such state is achieved it stirs his heart to the obedience of the Truth and such person becomes steadfast to the audition of the Truth. One who follows his *nafs* (lower soul) is veiled and is trapped in interpretation. The fruition of the former is revelation and of later is veiling.

Zandaqa (heresy) is a Persian word but in Arabic it signifies “interpretation”. The Persian calls the commentary on their Book *Zand u Pazand*. The philologists, wishing to give a name to the descendants of the Magians, called them *zindiq* on the ground of their declaration that everything stated by the Muslims has an esoteric interpretation, which destroys its external sense. Hence the

word *zindiq* came to be applied to them as proper name. Dhu al-Nun by using this term, intended to declare that spiritualists in audition penetrate to the reality, while sensualists make a far-fetched interpretation and thereby fall into wickedness.

Shibli says:

السماع ظاهرة فتنة وباطنه عبرة فمن عرف الاشارة حل له استماع العبرة والافقد استدعي الفتنة وتعرض للبيبة

“Audition is outwardly an evil and inwardly an admonition. He who is aware of the mystical signs may lawfully hear the admonition otherwise he has invited evil and calamity,” i.e. one whose heart is fully committed to the voice of the Truth, for him audition is a calamity and trial.

Abu Ali Rudbari in answer to a man who questioned him concerning audition, said, “ليتنا نخلصنا منه رائياً براس” would that we got rid of it entirely!” Because man is unable to do everything as it ought to be done, and when he fails to do a thing duly he perceives that he has failed and wishes to be get rid of it altogether.

One of the Sheikhs says,

السماع تبيينه الاسرار لما فيه من المغيبات

audition stirs the inwards to explore the secrets of the heart,”

so that it should always remain present in the proximity of the Truth. The seekers of the Truth consider absence of the inward secrets the most blameworthy quality. The lover, though absent from his Beloved, must be present with him in heart; if he be absent in heart, his claim of love is false.

My Sheikh says that

السماع زاد المضطربين فمن وصل استغني عن السماع

audition is the viaticum of the one lacked behind. One who has attained his object has no need of it,” because on attaining object of union hearing can perform no function. News is heard of the absent, but hearing is naught when two are face to face.

Husri says:

ايش اعمل بالماع ينقطع اذا قطع فمن نسمع منه ان ينبغي ان يكون سماعك متصلاً غير منقطع

“What avails an audition that ceases whenever the person whom you hear becomes silent?

It is necessary that thy audition should be continuous and uninterrupted.”

This saying is a sign of the concentration of thoughts in the field of love. When a seeker attains such degree as this he hears (spiritual truths) from every object in the universe and it is a lofty state.

The Various Opinions Respecting Audition

The Sheikhs and spiritualists hold different views on audition. Some say that it is a cause of absence, for in contemplation (of Allah) audition is impossible. The lover while united with his Beloved fixes his gaze on Him and is free of the audition of anything. Hearing involves some news and in contemplation news reflects veil and negligence, therefore audition is a faculty of beginners which they employ, when distracted by forgetfulness, in order to obtain composure, but one who is already concentrated will inevitably be distracted thereby.

Others say that audition is a faculty which leads to presence (with Allah), because love demands full absorption i.e. until the whole of the lover is absorbed in the whole of the Beloved, he is deficient in love. Therefore, as in union the heart has love and the soul has contemplation and the spirit has union

and the body has service, so the ear also must have such a pleasure as the eye derives from seeing. How excellent, though on a frivolous topic, are the words of the poet who declared his love for wine!

الافاسقني حمراً وقل لي هي الخمر ولا تسقني سرّاً اذا امكن الجهر

“Give me wine to drink and tell me it is wine.

Do not give in secret, when it can be given openly.”

i.e. O lover give me cup of wine to whom my eye sees, my hand touches, my palate tastes and my nose smells. There yet remains one sense to be gratified, viz. my hearing: tell me, therefore, this is wine, that my ear may feel the same delight as my other senses.

This is also said that audition is cause of presence with the Truth because absent is absence to himself and a skeptic, and he does not qualify for audition. Accordingly, audition is of two kinds,

- audition which is heard from a reader is a faculty of absence
- but audition of which the Beloved is the source is a faculty of presence.

It was on this account that an elder Sheikh said:

“I do not consider created of any worth to either listen about them or talk about them.”

The Different Grades of Sufis in the reality of Audition

Each *Sufi* has a particular state and degree in audition and the feelings which he has therein are in proportion to his state and degree. Thus, whatever is heard by:

- a penitent would increase his desire of contrition and regret,
- a longing lover increases his longing for vision,
- those who have certain faith confirms their certainty,
- novices verifies their elucidation (matters which perplex them),
- lovers impels them to cut off all worldly connections,
- the spiritually poor forms a foundation for hopelessness.

Actually audition is like the sun, which shines on everything but each gets its affect according to its degree and capacity. Some burns with its heat, some are illuminated; it nurtures something and dissolves something. All those discussed above can be divided into three categories, i.e., beginners, middlemen and adepts. I will now assert a section treating of the state of each of these three categories in regard to audition, that you may understand this matter more easily.

Beware audition is such an influence proceeding from the Truth which cleanse the human body from buffooneries and past time amusements. The novice is never in a perfect state to receive divine influence. The nature struggles and feels overwhelmed in grief by the descent of that spiritual reality. During the audition some loose their senses, even some die, and there is hardly anyone whose temperament keeps its equilibrium. It is well known that in one of the hospitals of Rome they invented a wonderful thing which they call *ancalyun*. It is a stringed musical instrument and the sick are brought to it for two days in a week and are made to listen it for a length of time proportionate to the problem from which they suffer. If it is desired to kill anyone, he is kept there for a longer period, until he dies, although the time of death is predestined, but its circumstances do take place. Physicians and others may listen continually to the *instrument* without being affected in any way, because it is agreeable with their temperament but it does not suit to the temperament of newcomers.

In India I have seen a worm which takes birth in a deadly poison and lived by it, because that poison is its whole being. In a town of Turkistan, on the frontiers of Islam, I saw a burning mountain, from the rocks of which fumes of ammonium chloride were boiling forth and in the midst of that was a mouse, which died when it came out of the glowing heat.

My object in citing these examples is to show that all the agitation of beginners when the Divine influence descends upon them is due to the fact that their nature feels it an alien thing but when it becomes continual the beginner's nature accepts it and his anxiety changes into peace. When Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) first time came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) he could not bear his vision as he was an alien to him, but in the end he used to be distressed if Gabriel (may blessings of Allah be on him) ever failed to come, even for a brief gap. There are many such arguments and what I have related above show that beginners get agitated and that adepts remain tranquil in audition.

One of Junaid's disciples used to get greatly agitated in audition, and would cause distraction to other dervishes. They complained to Junaid and he told the disciple that he would not remain associated with him if he displayed such agitation in future. Abu Muhammad Jurairi says that he saw that dervish during audition that he had kept his lips shut and was silent until every pore in his body opened. Then he lost his consciousness and remained in that state for a whole day. Jurairi said that he did not know whether his audition or his reverence for his spiritual director was more perfect.

It is related that a man cried out during audition. His Sheikh bade him to remain quite. He laid his head on his knee, and after some time he was dead.

Sheikh Abu Muslim Faris b. Ghalib al-Farisi said that one dervish during audition used to display extreme agitation and anxiety. One day during an audition when the dervish was passing through state of agitation, some one put his hand over him and asked him to sit down. He sat down and died at the spot.

Junaid said that he saw a dervish who gave away his life during the audition.

Abu al-Husein Darraj and Muhammad b. Kab al-Qurzi were walking on the bank of the Tigris between Basra and Ubullu. When they came to a pavilion of a palace, they saw a noble man seated on the roof and beside him a girl was singing this verse:-

في سبيل الله ود كان مني لك يبدل

كل يوم تتلون غير هذا بك اجمل

"My love was bestowed on thee for the sake of Allah;

How pleasing was thou changing countenance every day."

A young man clad in patched frock with a water leather bag in his hands was standing beneath the pavilion. He exclaimed from there and said, "O damsel, for God's sake chant that verse again, for I have only a moment to live, let me hear it and die!" The girl repeated the poetry, whereupon the youth uttered a cry and gave up his soul. The owner of the girl freed her. He came down from the roof and committed himself with preparations for the young man's funeral. When he was buried all the people of Basra said prayers over him. Then the girl's master rose and said:

"O people of Basra, I, have devoted all my wealth to pious works and have set free my slaves." With these words he departed, and so no one ever learned what became of him.

The moral of this tale is that the novice should be transported by audition to such spirituality that his audition shall deliver the wicked from their wickedness. But in the prevailing age some persons attend meetings where the wicked listen to music, yet they claim to have listening for the sake of Allah. The wicked join with them in this audition and are encouraged in their wickedness, so that they destroy themselves and also put others in the same condition.

Some one asked Junaid that might they go to the church for the purpose of admonishing themselves and beholding the indignity of their unbelief and giving thanks for the gift of Islam. He replied, "If you

possess sufficient spiritual force to lead some Christian in the way of the Truth, then go, but not otherwise.”

When a true worshipper goes into a tavern, the tavern becomes his worship cell, and when a haunter of taverns goes into a worship cell, that cell becomes his tavern.

An eminent Sheikh relates that when he was walking in Baghdad with a dervish, he heard a singer chanting:-

مبي ان تكن حقًا لكن احسني المبي والافتقد عثنا بها زمنًا رغدا

“If it be true, it the best of all objects of desire, And if not, we have lived a long life in it.”

Hearing this, the dervish uttered a cry and died.

Abu Ali Rudbari said that he saw a dervish absorbed attentively in the melody of a singer. He too inclined his ear, for he wished to know what he was chanting. The words, which he sang in mournful accents, were:

امد كفي بالخضوع الي الذي جاد بالصنيع

“I humbly stretch my hand to him who acts liberally towards me.”

Then the dervish uttered a loud cry and fell. When I went near him I found him dead.

Some one narrated that once he was walking on a mountain road with Ibrahim Khawwas, a sudden thrill of emotion seized his heart, and he chanted:

صبح عند الناس اني عاشق غير اني لم يعلموا عشقي لمن

ليس في الانسان شي حسن الا واحسن منه صوت حسن

“All are sure that I am in love, but they know not whom I love,

In man nothing surpasses beauty than a beautiful voice.”

Ibrahim asked him to repeat the verses, and he did so. In sympathetic ecstasy he danced a few steps on the stony ground and he observed that his feet sank into the rock as though it were wax. Then he fell in a swoon. On coming to himself he said to him that he had been in the garden of Paradise, and you did not observe.

I once in Azerbaijan saw a dervish walking in meditation among the mountains and chanting these verses, with tears and moans:-

الادانت مبي قلبي ووسواس

الا وذكرك مقرون بانفاس

الا واذت حدِيثي بين جلاس

الارايه خيال منك في الكاس

بجيا علي الوجه ومشبي اعلي الراس

والله ما طلعت شمس ولا غربت

ولا تنفست محزونًا ولا فرحًا

ولا جلست الي قوم احدتهم

ولا هممت بشرب الماء من عطش

فل وقد رت علي الاتبان زرا لكم

“By God, sun never rose and set

But you were my heart’s desire and my dream,

And I never mentioned you in joy or sorrow

But love for you was mingled with my breath.

And I never sat conversing with people

But you were the subject of my talk in the midst of comrades.

And I never resolved to drink water, when I was athirst,
But I saw an image of thee in the cup.
And were I able to come I would have visited you,
Crawling on my face or walking on my head.”

After uttering these verses he changed countenance and leaning his back against a cliff sat down for a while, and gave up his soul.

Some of the *Sufi* Sheikhs have objected to the hearing of odes and poems and to the recitation of the Quran in such a way that its words are intoned with undue emphasis. They have warned their disciples against these practices and have themselves avoided them and have displayed the utmost zeal in this matter. There are many groups of such objectors and each has a different reason to support their arguments. Some have found traditions declaring the practices in question to be unlawful and have followed the pious Muslims of old time in condemning these. They cite for example, the Prophet's rebuked Shirin, the handmaid of Hasan b. Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him), whom he forbade to sing. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) flogged one of the companions who used to hear music. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) found fault with Muawiya (may Allah be pleased with him) for keeping singing girls, and he did not allow his son Hasan (may Allah be pleased with him) to look at the Abyssinian woman who used to sing and he called her the Devil's mate. They say that their main argument for objecting the music is the fact that the *Ummah* (Muslim community), both now and in the past, are generally agreed in regarding it with disapproval. Some pronounce it absolutely unlawful, quoting Abu-Harith Bunani, who relates as follows:

I was very persevering in audition. One night a person came to my cell and told that a number of seekers of the Truth had assembled and desired to meet me. I went out with him and soon arrived at the place. They received me with extraordinary mark of honor. An old man around whom they had formed a circle, asked my permission to recite some poetry. I assented, and one of them began to chant verses which the poets had composed on the subject of separation (from the beloved). They all rose in sympathetic ecstasy, uttered cries and made exquisite gestures, while I remained lost in amazement at their behavior. They continued in that enthusiasm until near daybreak, and then the old man asked me that was I not curious to know who were he and his companions. I answered that the reverence which I felt towards him prevented me from asking that question. He said:

“I was once Azazil and now Iblis and all the rest are my children. I derive two benefits from such concerts: firstly, I bewail my own separation (from Allah) and remember the days of my prosperity, and secondly, I held holy men astray and cast them into error.”

From that time I have never had the least desire of audition.

I have heard Imam Abu Abbas Ashqani that one day, being in an assembly where audition was going on, he saw naked demons dancing among the members of the party and breathing upon them, so that their emotions were further engulfed.

Some others neither heard audition nor attended such gatherings on the ground that, if they indulge in it, their disciples would conform with them and thereby run a grave risk of falling into mischief and of returning from penitence to sin and of having their passions violently roused and their virtue corrupted.

Jurrairi at the time of his repentance was advised by Junaid:

“If you wish to keep your religion safe and to maintain your penitence, do not indulge, while you are young, in the audition which the *Sufis* practice. When you grow old, do not let yourself be the cause of guilt in others.”

Some say that there are two categories of audiences, those who are playful and those who are divine. The former are in the very centre of mischief and do not shrink from it, while the latter keep themselves remote from mischief by means of self-mortification and austerities and spiritual renunciation of all created things. We belong to neither former category nor we are among the latter

category. It is better for us to abstain from audition and to occupy ourselves with something that is suitable to our state.

Others say that since audition is dangerous to the common people and their belief is disturbed by our taking part in it, therefore, it is incumbent on us to extend our sympathies to common people and give sincere advice to the elect and unselfishly decline to indulge in audition. This is a laudable course of action.

Some others say that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said:

من حسن إسلام المرء ترك ما لا يعينه

“The excellence of one’s belief of Islam is not to indulge in irrelevant things.” Accordingly, we renounce audition as being unnecessary, for it is a waste of time to busy one’s self with irrelevant things, and time is precious between lovers and the Beloved.

Others of the elect argue that audition is hearsay and its pleasure consists in gratification of a desire, and this is mere child’s play. What value has hearsay when one is face to face? The act of real worth is contemplation (of Allah).

Such, in brief, are the principles of audition.

تواجد Tawajud وجود Wajud وجد Wajd

Wajd وجد and *wajud* وجود are verbal nouns. The *wajd* means “grief” and *wajud* means “attaining”. These terms are used by *Sufis* to denote two states which manifest in audition. One state is connected with grief, and the other with gaining the object of desire. The real sense of grief is loss of the Beloved and failure to gain the object of desire, while the real sense of attaining is attainment of the desired object.

The difference between *hazan* حزن (sorrow) and *wajd* (grief) is that the term *hazan* is applied to a selfish grief, whereas the term *wajd* is applied to grief which one gets from other as token of love. These changes are the attributes of seeker. Allah is free from any change. It is impossible to explain the nature of *wajd* in words, because *wajd* is a hidden pain and pen is incapable to describe such agony and pain. Hence *wajd* is a mystery between the seeker and the Sought, which only a revelation can explain. It is not right to indicate the nature of *wajud*, because it is a thrill of emotion in contemplation of Allah, and emotion cannot be reached by desire. Therefore, *Wajud* is grace bestowed by the Beloved on the lover, a grace of which no symbol can suggest the real nature. In my opinion, *wajd* is painful affection of the heart, arising either from jest or earnest, either from sadness or gladness and *wajud* is the removal of a grief from the heart and the attainment of the object that was its cause. He who feels *wajd* is either agitated by ardent longing in the state of veil, or is calmed by contemplation in the state of revelation. Some times he sighs and lament and sometimes he complains in distress and some times he cries and weeps and sometimes he is in anger and pain and sometimes in delight and happiness.

The Sheikhs hold different views on the question whether *wajd* is more perfect or *wajud*. Some argue that, *wajud* being characteristic of novices, and *wajd* of Gnostics, and Gnostics being more exalted in degree than novices, it follows that *wajd* is higher and more perfect than *wajud*. They say that which is capable of being found is apprehensible, and apprehensibility is characteristic of that which is homogeneous with something else. It involves finite, whereas Allah is infinite, therefore, what a man finds is naught but a feeling, but what he has not found, and in despair has ceased to seek, and became helpless in its attainment, he is actually the finder of the Truth.

Some say that *wajd* is the glowing passion of novices, while *wajud* is gift bestowed on lovers, and, since lovers are more exalted than novices, for calm enjoyment of the gift must be more perfect than

passionate seeking. The following tale will make it to understand. One day Shibli came in rapturous ecstasy to Junaid. Seeing that Junaid was sorrowful, he asked what ailed him. Junaid said,

“He who seeks shall be grieved.”

Shibli cried. “No, who is grieved shall seek.”

The Sheikhs opined that Junaid referred to *wajd* and Shibli to *wajud*. I think Junaid’s view is more authenticated, for, when a man knows that his object of worship is not of the same genus as himself, his grief has no end. This topic has been discussed elsewhere also.

The Sheikhs agree that the overwhelmness of knowledge should be greater than the overwhelmness of *wajd*, because in the overwhelmness of *wajd* the holder of it is in a dangerous position, whereas one in whom knowledge preponderates is secure. It behooves the seeker in all circumstances to follow knowledge and religious law, for when he is overcome by *wajd* he is deprived of distinction, and is not liable to recompense for good actions or punishment for evil, and is exempt from honor and disgrace alike and under such condition he therefore is in the predicament of madmen, not in that of the saints and favorites of Allah. But when a person in whom knowledge dominates over state of feeling (*hal*) remains in the bosom of the Divine commands and prohibitions, and is always praised and rewarded in the palace of glory. But a person in whom state of feeling dominates over knowledge is outside of the ordinances, and dwells, having lost the faculty of discrimination in his self imperfection.

This is precisely the meaning of Junaid’s words that there are two ways, one of knowledge and one of action. Action without knowledge, although it may be good, because of ignorance is imperfect, but knowledge, even if it be devoid of action, is glorious and noble. Hence Abu Yazid said,

كفر اهل الهممة اشرف من اسلام اهل المنية

the disbelief of the generous is nobler than the faith of the covetous;” because unthankfulness is not possible from generous, but still if fate lead them to such situation they remain better off than the covetous.

Junaid said about Shibli that,

سكران ولو اناق من سكرة لجا منه امام ينتفع به

“He is intoxicated; if he becomes sober he would prove to such an Imam from whom lot of benefit can be derived.”

Once, Junaid, Muhammad b. Masruq and Abu al-Abbas b. Ata were together in an audition assembly. When the *qawal* (orator) started chanting the verses, Junaid remained calm while his two friends fell into a forced ecstasy. After the audition they asked Junaid, for his being remained calm and composed. Junaid recited the word of Quran:

وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدًا وَهِيَ كَالْعُخَابِ

“Thou seest the mountains and thinkest them firmly fixes; but they shall pass away as the clouds pass away: (Q 27:88).

Tawajud تواجد is taking pains to produce *wajd*. This is to present grace and evidence to the heart and to think and desire of union. This is the method of the steadfast and men of path. Some carry it out in a formal manner, and imitate them by outward motions and methodical dancing and grace of gesture, such *tawajud* is absolutely unlawful. Others do it in a spiritual manner, with the desire of attaining to their condition and degree. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

من تشبه فهو منهم

“he who makes himself like unto a people is one of them,”

and he said,

“When you recite Quran, weep, or if you cannot weep then endeavor to weep.”

These traditions proclaim that *tawajud* is permissible. Hence some Sufi elder said:

“I shall go a thousand leagues in falsehood, only then I find a step of truth.”

Dancing

You must know that dancing has no foundation either in the *Shariat* (religious law) or in the Sufism; because all sensible men agree that it is an amusement and play even when it is done in earnest. None of the Sheikhs has commended it, nor have exceeded due bounds therein. The arguments cited in its favor by anthropomorphist are all false. Since ecstatic movements and the practices of those who endeavor to induce ecstasy resemble it, therefore, some frivolous imitators have indulged in it immoderately and considered it as if it was the part of the practices of Sufism and similarly another group because of this has condemned it altogether.

In short, dancing or all foot-play is bad in law and reason and is an act of ignorant. The best of mankind cannot possibly practice it. However, when the heart throbs with exhilaration and rapture becomes intense and the agitation of ecstasy is manifested and the limitations of the conventional forms are gone, that agitation is neither dancing nor foot play nor bodily indulgence, but a dissolution of the soul. Those who call it dancing are utterly wrong. Similarly he is also far away from the reality who cannot distinguish between the states which are attained by his own will and effort and that which descends on him from the Truth. It is a state that cannot be explained in words, “من لم يذوق لا يدري” what can he tells who has not tasted.”

Looking at youths

Looking at youths and association with them is a forbidden practice, and anyone who declares this to be allowable is an unbeliever. The arguments brought forward in this matter are vain and foolish. I have seen a group of ignorant, who suspected the Sufis indulging with such practices and regarded them with abhorrence, and some of them have made it a religious rule. All the Sufi Sheikhs, have recognized the wickedness of such practices, which the adherents of incarnation have left as a stigma on the saints of Allah and the aspirants to Sufism.

Rending Garments

It is the custom of Sufis to rend their garments, and they have commonly done this in great assemblies where eminent Sheikhs were present. I have met with some theologian who objected to this practice and said that it is not right to tear an intact garment to pieces, and that this is an evil and it is impossible that evil may bring forth some good. But I say that an evil of which the purpose is good must itself be good. After all everyone cut the intact cloth first and then sew it, therefore, there is no difference in that the cloth may be cut into hundred pieces and sewn or to be sewn just cutting it into five pieces. Every piece gladdens the heart of a believer, when he sews it on his patched frock, and brings about the satisfaction of his desire.

Although the rending of garments has no foundation in Sufism and certainly ought not to be practiced in audition by anyone who remains in his senses, for otherwise it will be mere extravagance. However, if the hearer be so overpowered that his sense of discrimination is lost and he becomes unconscious, then he may be excused (for tearing his garment to pieces) and it is permissible that all the persons present should rend their garments in sympathy with him. There are certain circumstances in which Sufis rend their garments:

Firstly, when a number of his friends tear their garment to pieces at the command of their Sheikh on the occasion of asking Allah to pardon an offence and repentance; or when a dervish tears his own garment to pieces through rapture caused by audition and thirdly, when they do the same in the intoxication of ecstasy.

The most difficult is to tear or throw off garments in audition. It has two aspects, i.e. it may be torn or kept intact. If it be torn, it should either be sewed together and given back to its owner or bestowed on another dervish or torn to more pieces, for the sake of gaining a blessing be divided among more people.

If it is intact, the intention of the dervish who cast it off must be considered. If he meant it for the *qawal* (orator), let he to take it and if he meant it for the members of the party, let them have it, and If he threw it off without any intention, the Sheikh present must determine whether it shall be given to those present and divided among them, or be conferred on one of them, or given to the *qawal* (orator). If the dervish meant it for *qawal* (orator), his companions need not to throw off their garments in sympathy, because the cast off garment will not go to his fellows and he will have given it voluntarily or involuntarily without their participation. But if the garment was thrown off with the intention that it should fall to the members of the party, or without any intention, they should all throw off their garments in sympathy. And when they have done this, the Sheikh ought not to bestow the garment on the *qawal* (orator), but it is allowable that any lover of the Truth among them should sacrifice something that belongs to him and return the garment to the dervishes, in order that it may be torn to pieces and distributed.

If a garment drops down while its owner is in a state of rapture, the Sheikhs hold various opinions as to what ought to be done, but the majority say that it should be given to the *qawal* (orator), in accordance with the Prophet (peace be upon him) tradition, “من قتل قتيلًا فله سلبه” the spoils belong to the slayer,” and that not to give it to the *qawal* (orator) is to violate the obligations imposed by Sufism.

Others contend that, just as some theologians are of the opinion that the dress of a slain should not be given to his slayer except by permission of the Imam, so here, this garment should not be given to the *qawal* except by command of the Sheikh. If Sheikh should not wish to bestow it on *qawal*, let no one be angry with him.

The Rules of Audition

The rules of audition prescribe that:

- It should not be practiced until it is essential, and must not be made a habit of it.
- It should be practiced seldom, in order that its reverence is not lessened. The presence of Sheikh is must during the performance and the place should be cleared of common people. The *qawal* (orator) should be a respectable person.
- The heart should be emptied of worldly thoughts, the heart should not be inclined to amusement and unnecessary excessive effort should not be made.
- One must not exceed the proper bounds until audition manifests its power, and when it has become powerful one must not repel it but follow it as it requires. If it agitates, one must be agitated, and if it calms, one remains calm. Then one must be able to distinguish a natural impulse from the ardor of ecstasy.
- The audience must have enough perception and be capable of receiving the Divine influence and of doing justice to it. And when its might is manifested on his heart he must not endeavor to repel it, and when its force is broken he must not endeavor to attract it.
- While one is in a state of emotion, he must neither expect anyone to help him nor refuse anyone's help if it be offered.

- One must not disturb anyone who is engaged in audition or interfere with him, or ponder what he means by the verse (to which he is listening), because such behavior is very distressing and disappointing to the person who is trying to hear.
- One must not say to the singer that he is chanting sweetly, and if he chants otherwise, he must not say to him that he should chant better, or shows hatred towards him; rather he must be unconscious of the singer's presence and commit himself to Allah Who hears correctly.
- And if he has no part in the audition which is being enjoyed by others, it is not proper that he should look soberly on their intoxication, but he must keep quiet with his own *waqt* (time) and establish its dominion, that the blessing thereof may come to him.

I think it more desirable that beginners should not be allowed to attend audition, lest their natures become immoral. These concerts are extremely dangerous and corrupting, because women on the roofs or elsewhere look at dervishes who are engaged in audition and in consequence of this the audiences have great obstacles to meet with. The young lads should not be permitted in the audition assembly, since some ignorant *Sufis* have made a religion of all this and truth and reality have flung from them.

I seek pardon of Allah for my sins of this kind in the past, and I implore His help, that He may preserve me both outwardly and inwardly from contamination, and I enjoin the readers of this book to hold it in due regard.
