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A Treatise on Islamic Mysticism & Spiritual Wayfaring

# Risalah Al Wilayah



Praise be to Allah Lord of the worlds and praise and peace be upon His close vicegerents, in particular our Master Muhammad and His Pure Progeny.

This is a treatise on vicegerency which is the ultimate real perfection for mankind. It is the ultimate goal in the legislating of the true divine shariah, as is understood from prolific arguments, and explicit religious statements also give evidence to this. This discussion has been organized into five chapters and Allah Almighty is the Helper.

Chapter 1

# In the outward dimension of this religion there is an inward dimension, and there are realities within the true form of this religion

**We say:** Existents [mawjudat – things that exist] from one aspect can be divided into two kinds. Any meaning which we intellectualize has either a correspondent in the external world existing in itself, such as external substances like minerals, plants, animals and so on, whether there is an agent of intellection [aqil] or not.

Or that its correspondent exists only in terms of how we intellectualize it and does not exist without this process, such as ownership.

Concerning the matter of ownership, one does not find anything in the external world called 'ownership' beyond the actual substance of the thing owned, such as land, and the substance of the 'owner', which is the human being, and it is this relationship that is called 'ownership'.

Therefore, the meaning of ownership is rooted in the process of intellection and thus had the process of intellection not existed, the concept of 'ownership', 'owner' and 'the owned' would not have existed and there would have only been a man and a piece of land.

The first kind of existent is called 'real' [haqiqi] and the second kind is called a 'mental construct' [itibari]

We have proven in our book al-I'tibarat that every mental construct is subsistent [mutaqawwim] of a reality behind it.

If we were to investigate and contemplate, we would find that all the notions determined by human beings and the relationships that exist between these very notions, like ownership and other specialties, leadership, relationships and issues related to them, etc., are all mental constructs and imaginary ideas which, through their subjective import, compel men to consider them as his primary requirements for social life and civilization in order to secure what is good and beneficial, and to ward off evil and harm.

Just as a plant has a natural system operating within the cycle of its existence from organized natural properties that are extrinsic to it which protects its substance through nourishment, growth and reproduction, so too does the human being. For example, the human being also has a natural system of properties that protects its substance, with the difference that this human system is mentally constructed system behind which is the natural system. The human being outwardly lives according to a mentally constructed system and inwardly lives according to a natural system. Understand this.

In generally: This mentally constructed system is a existent within the context of society and civilization to the extent that if there was no society, there would have been no such mental constructs. This is an obverted contra positive of what has been mentioned above.[2]

Moreover, sincere reflection can prove that religion has presented and explained all the teachings related to the Origin and thee laws, and also the teachings regarding the world hereafter in a mentally constructed way. Since socializing and co-operating cannot be considered outside the context of law they would have to be expressed in a mentally constructed way also. There are the other realities that are elucidated by this form of expression, as well as the levels of law.

In other words: In matters that precede this social life in worlds prior to the existence of social man and worlds succeeding this social realm that man faces after death where there is no civil society in it, these mentally constructed meanings do not exist.

Therefore, the teachings that are explained in religion which are related to these worlds speak about other realities, but are expressed through mental constructs, just as they do on the level of religious law. This is because the divine religion considers existent things that come after this life as consequential to the stage of laws and actions, and are also related and connected to them in reality. The existence of a connection between two things is real, and it necessitates their unity with respect to the type of existence and origin, as we have proven in its proper place in other writings.

As these existents are real and external, there is a relationship or connection between them and the reality behind these mentally constructed things, and not between the things themselves. It has now therefore been proven that for the outward aspect of religion there is an inner aspect to it, and this is the desired conclusion.

## Addendum

### Evidence from the Holy Quran and Traditions regarding the aforementioned

We Say: It is indisputable among all who refer to both the Book and the Sunnah that there are teachings, secrets and hidden sciences that are concealed from us that no one knows except Allah, may His name be exalted, and those whom he wills and accepts. The divine Book has many examples of this, and it suffices to only mention His saying:

*"The life of the world is just a play and diversion." Quran 47:36*

*"But the abode of the Hereafter is indeed Life, had they known." Quran 29:64*

Meaning, it is only the life hereafter that is the real and true life, by virtue of the fact that He Almighty mentioned this worldly life as a life of 'play and diversion'. He has done this by confining life only to the life of the hereafter and negating anything that might be considered similar to it or it being similar to anything. His words bear witness to this:

*"They know just an outward aspect of the life of this world, but they are oblivious of the hereafter." Quran 30:7*

This verse indicates that the life of the world has something else besides its outward characteristics and this is the life of the hereafter because of the usage of the word 'oblivious'. It is similar to what a friend understands when you tell him: "You have grasped the outer meaning of what I said but you are unaware of something else". This saying of yours demonstrates that the friend was unaware of the hidden and intended part of your words which was something else.

The divine saying of Allah also proves this:

*"So avoid those who turn away from Our remembrance and desire nothing but the life of the world. This is the ultimate reach of their knowledge. Indeed your Lord knows best those who stray from His way, and He knows best those who are [rightly] guided." Quran 53:29-30*

It is understood from this verse that remembrance of Allah the Almighty is the path towards Him, and to turn away and avoid Him is to stray from His path. Remembrance of Allah Almighty can only be achieved by turning away from the life of the world, and those who turn away from His remembrance will only attain the knowledge of this world. Furthermore, knowledge of this world cannot transcend and go beyond anything further in comparison to that which can be achieved only through remembrance. Therefore, there is something other than this worldly life that is vertical to it, and one could acquire knowledge of it or one could remain in this life of this world.

For more explanation, refer to what is written towards the end of this book, by the will of Allah the Glorious.

Among the traditions mentioned in this regard is a narration in Bihar al-Anwar, from al-Mahasin, narrating from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) who said:

*"We are the kinsfolk of the Prophets; we speak to people according to the capacity of their intellect." Bihar al-anwar, vol. 1, p.106, h.4.*

I say: This expression can only be correct if people were not able to understand what they were listening to and this is evident. The Prophet (s.a.w) said: 'We speak…' and He did not say *'we say'*, *'we explain'*, *'we mention'* and words like this. This confirms that the teachings given by the prophets (a.s) have been presented according to the capacity of the intellects of their people, changing these teachings from being hard to being easy. However, this does not mean that a great amount of knowledge has been restricted out of leniency towards the [weak] intellects and limiting its accessibility to some and not to rest of the society.

In other words: The expression is dealing with quality and not quantity, and this shows that the realities these teachings have are beyond these intellects that follow teachings by demonstrative arguments (burhan), dialectics (jadal), and rhetoric (khitabat). The prophets (as) have perfectly explained their statements in every intellectual manner, from demonstrative arguments to debating and preaching, covering every possible way of teaching the people.

From what has been elucidated above, it can be understood that their sayings are on a level beyond the level of literal statements, and if they were to descend to the level of statements the common intellect would reject them, either because they are contrary to necessity in the view of people or because they would conflict with the statements that have been presented to the people which their intellects have accepted.

It also becomes clear that the manner of perceiving these teachings in their real form is different from the intellect's method of perception, which is through 'thought perception' [al-idrak al-firi]. So, understand this!

Here is another well-known, abundantly-mentioned tradition:

"Truly our speech is hard and difficult. No one can bear it except a near-stationed angel, a sent prophet or a believer whose heart has been tested by Allah for faith."

Bihar al-anwar, vol 2, p.189-192, h. 21-35.

This following tradition is more explicit than the previous tradition. It is narrated in al-Basa'ir from Abu al-Samit who said he heard Abu Abdillah al-Sadiq (a.s.) say:

"Truly amongst our uttering's are things that cannot be endured by a near-stationed angel, a sent prophet, or a believing servant."

I asked: "Then who can endure it?"

He said: "We endure it."

**I say:** There are numerous traditions mentioned in this regard, some of which say: "And who can endure it, may I be sacrificed for you?" and He (a.s.) says: "Those who we want to".

It has also been stated in *al-Basa'ir,* narrating from al-Mufadil who said: "Abu Jafar al-Baqir (a.s.) said:

"Our speech is hard and difficult, incendiary and unembellished; a near-stationed angel cannot endure it, or a sent prophet, or a believing servant whose heart has been tested by Allah for faith. As for the hard, it is something that has not yet been ridden. The difficult is that which one would flee from it if it is seen. The incendiary is the flaring up of the believers. The unembellished is that to which nothing is attached, not in front of it or behind it. It is as Allah says: "*Allah has sent down the best of discourses."* So, the best of discourses is our discourses. It cannot be endured by any intelligent being in its completeness without that person limiting it. And the person limiting it must be greater than it [the limited]. And praise is to Allah for success and denial is disbelief."

His saying from 'cannot endure' until 'without that person limiting it' and what is mentioned earlier on in the (previous) tradition about not being able to endure indicates that the sayings of the Imams (a.s.) have different level, some of which can be endured by limiting them. The expression 'from our sayings…' in the tradition of Abu al-Samit proves what we have just mentioned, and therefore the purpose of these traditions and the first tradition that states, 'No one can endure it other…', all imply the same thing, that these sayings each have different levels of graduated intensity. In this vein one can also include the earlier Prophetic (s.a.w.) tradition, which says:

"We are the kinsfolk of the Prophets; we speak to people according to the capacity of their intellect."

The reason behind the limiting of their sayings (a.s.) by every individual of creation is because the capacity of every person in bearing something is limited in its own essence, thus making that which is borne to also being limited. This is the reason for the impossibility of enduring their sayings in their most complete form, because their sayings are

unlimited and therefore outside the limitations of possibility. This is their status given to them by Allah Almighty in which there is no limit restricting it, and this is the 'Absolute *Wilayah*'. This will be discussed more elaborately in the later chapters, by the will of Allah.

There are other traditions that support the aforementioned. It is stated in al-Basa'ir, narrating from Marazim that Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"Our affair is the truth, the truth of the truth. It is the manifest, the inner of the manifest, and the inner of the inner. It is the secret, the secret of the secret, the hidden inner secret and the secret veiled by a secret."

Another traditions says:

"The Quran has an outward and an inward, as for its inward there is an inward until (it reaches) seven inwards."

And:

"Its outward is a rule, and its inward is knowledge."

It is mentioned in some traditions on predestination and freewill, as is quoted in al-Tawhid, narrated from Mahzam who says while having a discourse with Imam Sadiq (a.s.): I asked him:

"So what is it? May Allah make you more virtuous."

He turned about his hand twice or thrice, and then said: "If I was to answer you, you will become a disbeliever!"

It is ascribed to Imam Sajjad (a.s.) as having said in a poem:

"And if I reveal some of the substance of knowledge;

It will be said to me: You are of those who worship the idols!"

There are also the traditions concerning the appearance of the Awaited Savior Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten His reappearance) that after He appears he will disseminate the secrets of the shariah and the Quran will verify what He says.

It is stated in *al-Basa'ir*, quoting Mas'adah ibn Sadaqah who narrated from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) who narrated from His Father Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) who said:

"One day I mentioned dissimulation *(taqiyyah)* to Ali ibn al-Hasan (a.s.) and he said: "By Allah if Abu Zarr knew what was in the heart of Salman, he would kill him, even though the Prophet (s.a.w.) had made them brothers."

In a tradition it states that Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) uttered some words to Jabir, and then said to him:

"If you make public my statements then upon you will be the curse of Allah, His Angels and all humankind."

There is another tradition in *al-Basa'ir* narrated by al-Mufadal from Jabir, and the summary of it as follows:

"He (Jabir) complained to Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) of distress in his self in enduring and concealing the sayings after Abu Jafar al-Baqir (a.s.). So the Imam ordered him to dig a hole, lower his head into it, speak what he endured, and then cover the hole again for the earth would conceal it for him."

**I Say:** The Traditions mentioned on this subject are extremely numerous. Some of the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Imams (a.s.) were considered to be among the Bearers of Secrets, like Salman al-Farsi, Uwais al-Qarani, Kumail ibn Ziyad, al-Nakhai, Meesam al-Tammar al-Kufi, Rashid al-Hijri, and Jabir al-Jufi, may Allah Almighty be pleased with them all.

Chapter 2

## If the system of creation is not mentally posited, how could its reality be?

In other words: Of what kind are these hidden secrets that are concealed in the shariah?

**We Say:** Intellectual arguments unanimously agree that causality and effect are like perfection and deficiency, and diffusion is like the diffusion of a shadow from the object that casts it.

They also agree that deficiencies are among the exigencies of the level of effect, and that this world has other worlds prior to it in a cause and effect manner, until it arrives at the First Almighty Truth.

What can be concluded from this discussion in general is that all perfections that exist in this world exist in what is above it in a higher and nobler form and the deficiencies in this world are specific to this world, do not exist in the levels above it, and of course are not transferred to them.

This is a short explanation, and to explain and comment on this subject to its full capacity and afford it the credibility it deserves is very difficult, or impossible.

**An example:** The perfections of this world, like delicious food, quenching drinks, beautiful pictures, and the like are some of the greatest things one enjoy in this realm. The first thing about them is that they do not exist permanently; they appear only for a limited time and are beset by myriads of natural afflictions and external defects or possible deformities which, if one of them is experienced the beauty of these perfections would disappear.

The pleasure sought in these things, and indeed the pleasure itself and the subject of pleasure are all posited between thousands and thousands of negating factors which if [any of these three] incline towards them, the pleasure will become nullified and be ruined.

Moreover, if we contemplate enough we will find that all of these deficiencies and negative factors like physical and delusional deficiencies, go

back to matter, whether from the beginning or through the mediation of something else. Accordingly, if there was no matter then there would have been no deficiency to go back to.

Therefore, these pleasures are restricted to this world only, and the world that is above this one is devoid of these deficiencies and free of these defects. For indeed without argument, they are forms without matter and are imaginal pleasures.

What we mean by matter is non-sensual that is disposed towards passivity and not corporeality which is a non-material form, so understand this.

Furthermore, if we contemplate again we will find that the limits of the imaginal are deficient in their very selves, and the limited in itself has a rank that is free from limitation, as it is external to its essence. This has been demonstrated in its proper place.

Therefore, there is another world in which these same pleasures and perfections exist in pure form, meaning free from limitations. For example, the pleasure of eating, drinking, sex, hearing and seeing in the realm of the imaginal all have levels that they do not go beyond. For example, you will not find the pleasure of sex in hearing or in eating; or the perfection of eating in drinking; o what one individual desires in food and what is desired in it by another individual. One can compare the other pleasures in the same way.

The reason for this is because of existential limitations where the capacity of existence is concerned. The world that is above the world of the imaginal is a realm in which limitations disappear and all these perfections and pleasures are found in a unitary, integrated, universal and unlimited form.

All of these matters are truths that are the ramifications of principles that have been intellectually demonstrated in their proper places and are agreed upon by the specialists.

All of this is related to that which exists before this material world. As for its relationship to what is after the world, it involves the same argument as has already been explained, with the difference that from our existential standpoint, the imaginal realm in its return comes before the intellectual and immaterial realm, whereas from the standpoint of the beginning and the origin, the intellectual realm comes before the imaginal.

Indeed, there is another difference between the origin and the return, and that is that the ground of imaginal forms is the soul *(nafs)* in which these forms are brought about for it, by the will of its Lord. The imaginal forms exist in the material realm for a period of time and are attached to

it, and this is also the realm of the illusory and the mentally posited where it acquires ingrained habits and states that may or may not be in conformity with its previous realm. Therefore, this realm is both immersed in and veils what exist beyond it. The ingrained habits that were acquired in this world might become entrenched and become veils when the heart becomes focused on this world and neglects the truth. These aptitudes could also be the opposite, for example, in abandoning the adornments of this world, renouncing this vile world and cutting the attachments to it –as the necessity of attachment to the material world demands-, and turning towards what exist beyond the material world and becoming intimately acquainted with it.

Therefore, this soul, after detaching itself from materiality, spiritually surveys the forms in the world of the imaginal and spiritual lights that are in harmony with its essence. This soul had been familiar with these forms in the past and so it has become cognizant of *"ease, abundance and a garden of bliss," Quran 56:89,* and the forms of perfection of the soul and its spiritual pleasures will multiply and increase in relation to the descending imaginal world that is prior to the material world.

The completely immaterial realm is also similar to this by necessity with respect to the increase of acquired knowledge in the material realm. Accordingly, it witnesses lights, secrets, imaginal angels, spirits whose forms are of the intermediate world and in the most desirable way possible, all kinds of pleasures that the soul had witnessed while being attached to materiality in its realm, like eating, drinking, clothes, sex, hearing, seeing and other things. All these pleasures in this realm will be acquired through representative forms higher than them in capacity and in the same manner as the levels below it.

In the immaterial world there is no suffering, whether material or imagined nor is there any pain or sickness, for all of these [deficiencies] do not exist in the imaginal world.

If the self *(nafs)* has certain aptitudes that are not veiled from the universals, it will in certain times oversee the lights of the immaterial world and its existence, and it will acquire radiance, sublimity, beauty and perfection in a way that cannot be compared by forms or cannot be measured with imaginal measurements. This overseeing of the self repeats itself until the self completely masters itself and takes it as its station *(maqam),* elevating it level by level until it then oversees the realm of the Names *(al-Asma')*, which is the realm of the pure nature *(mahd)* of all meanings and the sheer form of all radiance and sublimity. It will witness everything sheer and pure; like pure knowledge, pure power, pure

life, existence and consistency, radiance and sublimity, beauty and majesty, perfection and felicity, dignity, happiness and delight. This pure witnessing will continue until the self connects with the Names and Attributes and then it will merge in the Transcendent Essence, and will vanish in its vanishing, annihilate in the annihilation of its self and will stay with the subsistence of Allah, may Thee be Exalted from any deficiency:

*"And that the terminus is toward your Lord."Quran 53:42*

*"Indeed to your Lord is the return." Quran 96:8*

The achievement of this status is possible if the aptitudes of the self are holy and compatible with the realm of the Holy *(alam al-quds)*.

However, if the self is more complementary with the material realm, and not complementary with the realm of the Holy, then it will be the opposite. Whatever the self experiences, it will endure pain and punishment in its various forms, and whenever it seeks o escape from this sorrowful situation, truing to use the impure habits it has, it will always return to that same state and it will be said to it:

*"Taste the punishment of the burning."Quran 3:181*

It is not, as the common people might claim, that the heavens of the felicitous is nothing but a garden and the hell of the wretched is only a hole of fire. Rather, it is a complete and vast realm, vaster than this world to such an extent that it cannot be described.

It has become clear from what we have presented that from two aspects, there is a difference between the beginning and the return [of the self]:

The first: The return is vaster than the beginning in that the self is vaster in its acquisition of knowledge in the material realm.

The second: The self in returning [ascending] is different to the beginning [descending], in that it is given two paths: the felicitous and the wretched, pleasure and pain, heaven and hell contrary to the beginning.

This of course does not conflict with the matter of the precedence of the wretchedness of the wretched and that there is no interference from Divine Providence.

Know that in the meanings of these things, some are self-evident and do not require validation, and some can be proven through arguments which have been accomplished where it is necessary.

From what has been explained above, the relation between the acts and exercises according to the shariah and that which has been promised and pledged by Allah Almighty through the teachings of the sent prophets become clear, and this will soon be explained in detail.

## Addendum

### References from the Holy Quran and Traditions regarding the aforementioned

**We Say:** If we contemplate upon the particulars of the shariah of Islam, or rather all the divine religions, we will find that the ultimate goal they have is to steer humankind towards the world beyond this natural realm. This is their method, which is to call to Allah with insight, thus this is the absolute objective of religion in all its perspectives and which encompasses this criterion in any way possible.

People, according to their level of devotion to Allah and their abandonment of this material realm, are divided into three levels:

The first level: Those that are completely prepared, who are able to detach their hearts from this world with complete certainty in the essentials of the divine teachings and with submission to the Almighty Truth. This enables them to witness what is beyond this material realm and, like the prophets (a.s) they become able to oversee the divine lights. This is the level of 'Those brought near' *(al-muqarrabin).*

The second level: Those with complete certainty but not with complete detachment from the material world. They are still under the influence of mental states and despairing thoughts that make them lose hope in yielding to the possibility of submitting to what is beyond this material realm while being in it.

This group worships Allah as if they see Him. They worship with truth and without amusement, but behind a veil believing in the unseen, and they are benevolent in their actions.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) was asked about benevolence *(ihsan)* and He said:

"It is to worship Allah as if you see Him and if you do not see Him, He sees you."

The difference between this level and the previous one is like the difference between the word 'verily' and 'almost'.

The third level: Those who belong to neither of the two former levels and who comprise the remainder and majority of people. This group, with the exception of obstinate and stubborn deniers, is a group that has the capacity to believe in true doctrines related to the Beginning and the Hereafter and act according to it, but in an overall general form, and not in the particulars.

This is because of their attachment to this earth, their submission to desires and to their personal love of this world. Love of this world and its adornments will inevitably make one become excessively occupied

with it and hence makes one obsessed with it and take it as the goal in all his movements and actions.

This necessitates the self becoming devoted to this world and limits it to being concerned about the world alone. It [the self] will become inattentive to the world of the hereafter and to the states and deeds that come about from true beliefs. This will necessitate the slackening of the self and it becomes inactive in becoming acquainted with true beliefs in their proper forms. It is not affected by them nor does it become active in this regard. Physical activity and exercises will be stagnant in their outer forms and appearance without transmitting their outward states, effects and actual conditions to the heart. What is mentioned here is evidently clear and sufficient.

An example: If we were to be in the presence of a king we would find that our inner state would change and this change in our [internal] state will appear in our outward physical actions. But complete focus, humility and submissiveness are things that we would certainly not find in our prayers although we are in the presence of the Lord of kings.

If a king was to oversee what we were doing, our souls would be in an unusual state, one that we would not have been in before, yet we believe that Allah Almighty sees and hears and that He is closer to us than our jugular veins. We rely on normal causes that are sometimes correct and sometimes incorrect in such a way that we won't find Him in our hearts, yet we believe that all affairs are in the hands of Allah; He does according to what He wishes and rules what He wants.

We would place great reliance upon people's promises or certain actions of theirs, yet we would not rely on one part in a thousand of the promises of Allah Almighty concerning life after death and the resurrection.

Examples of this contradiction in our beliefs and actions are infinite, and all of this is because of our reliance on this world. This is because the total devotion of the self to worldly ways will result in the self achieving the power of assuming worldly forms upon itself which would make worldliness dominate it. The world both excludes forms from being assumed by the self and creates forms and continues to do so repeatedly.

This will force the forms of these true fundamentals and teachings to weaken, which in turn would weaken the souls acquisition of the prerequisites of these fundamentals and teachings:

"Love of this world is the origin of all sins".

This third group is not able to acquire any absolute attachment to Allah Almighty more than having true beliefs in the general sense, and

performing certain physical actions which do bring, to a certain extent, a kind of general attentiveness and direction to the Origin Almighty in acts of worship.

Moreover, if we were to contemplate the state of these three levels, we would find that they converge on certain things and diverge regarding others, thus there are types of attentiveness and devotion that exist on the third level and which can exist on the second and first, but the opposite is not the case. Likewise, what exists in the second also exist in the first, but again not the opposite.

It therefore becomes clear that: The disciplining of these three levels share convergent and divergent things. It is for this reason we find that the sacred Islamic shariah stipulates general theoretical and practical laws, and none of these levels can neglect any of them, for they comprise obligatory or forbidden acts.

Then, as id appropriate to the taste of the third level, the Islamic shariah then establishes all the acts outside those two according to the particulars and universals of things, as recommended *(mustahab)*, disliked *(makruh)*, and neutral *(mubah)*. These rules are strengthened in their essence by the promises and threats of heaven and hell, and this, in turn is protected by the practice of the enjoining of good and the forbiddance of the wrong, as repetition is the best arguments among the common people.

These laws and methods are applied to the second group the same way as that of the third group, with particular additions of moral laws and other dimensions. As you now, the main difference between the two groups is in the strength and weakness of knowledge and its effects.

This rule applies to the first group in a more precise way than the second and the third. An act might be neutral, recommended or disliked for the second and the third, and might be an obligatory or prohibited act for the first group, because [the Prophet (s.a.w.) said] *'the good deeds of the righteous are the sins of those who are near'*, so this station is for those of the first group and not of any other.

There are other issues and laws that are particularly exclusive to this group which do not exist in the second and third, and these other levels would not understand anything concerning these specialties and will not be guided to the path of learning them.

All the differences this group has with the others are due to the fact that its foundation is based on the Divine Love they possess and not on love of the self. The difference between this group and the other two

groups is in the form of knowledge and perception they have, and not in the strength and weakness of knowledge and its effects and non-effects.

If you would like to comprehend in general any of this then you must deeply contemplate the states of unification *(ittihad)*.

Relationships have laws, and so do friendship, amity, and such subjects like love, passion, ecstasy, enthrallment and what is called annihilation, each of which has its own laws. Each law is special for the level it is designated for and does not ever go beyond its level into another.

In summary, the Divine shariah, and in particular the shariah of Islam in all its general and particular dimensions aim towards this goal, which is directing people towards Allah and having them turn only to Him Almighty.

This goal is achieved by acquiring the appropriate aptitudes and states through the appeal to true beliefs and the performance of deeds that produce pure inner states that will make one attain sacred aptitudes.

This will be manifested in its most complete way to those who follow the contents of the Quran and Traditions, and it is clearly understood from this that the criterion is obedience and defiance, and nearness and remoteness in relation to the Exalted Truth with differences in the kind of laws and duties.

Moreover, what Allah Almighty has promised them in His Book and through the tongue of His Messenger (s.a.w.) is clearly stated in the shariah concerning stations (*maqam),* miracles *(karamat)* and other qualities, in accordance to their different states and aptitudes. These stations being related to aptitudes means that the soul attains stations and miracles through these states and habits, and these stations and miracles have been explained by the sacred Islamic shariah within the teachings on the Origin and End.

It has been explained in the addendum of the end of the first chapter that it is these teachings that have realities and inner secrets that are above the level of explanation and that they are beyond the endurance of common people whose mind cannot tolerate, which has also been explained.

Chapter 3

## Connecting to the metaphysical realm and the secrets of the unseen are not restricted to the Prophets, but are possible for all

There is no doubt among the followers of Divine religions that the prophets (a.s.) have connections with the supernatural realm and knowledge of hidden matters in accordance to their different levels.

However, is this status theirs alone and exclusive to them as a Divine gift? Or it is not restricted to them and it is possible for others to have it as well?

In other words: Is this matter something specifically for them and cannot be found with anyone else in this world until after death, or is it something that can be acquired?

It is the second point that is correct.

**We say:** This is because the relation between this realm and the realm beyond it is a relationship of cause and effect and perfection and deficiency, and this is what we call the relation of the *outward (al-zahir)* and the *inward (al-batin)*. As the outward is witnessed by necessity and witnessing the outward cannot be without witnessing the inward because its existence [the outward] is one dimension of the existence of the inward and is medium in relation to it. Therefore the inward is also actually witnessed when witnessing the outward. Moreover, as the outward is the limit of the inward and its entification *(the action of giving **objective existence** to something)*, then if a human was to disregard the limit by forgetting it through the performance of acts and spiritual exercises, he will certainly witness the inner, and this is the point we have desired to establish.

**Explanation:** The attachment of the soul *(nafs)* to the body and its uniting with it is what leads the self to concede that it is the very body itself. What the body witnesses through the senses it considers as separate in existence from its soul. This is because it sees what it is seeing as separate from the body (and thus separate from itself since it identifies with the

body). Being fixated on the level of the body necessarily results in the soul's forgetfulness of its own level which is higher than the level of the body. This level of the soul is the imaginal level and other levels higher than that.

With the self forgetting each level, it forgets all its special qualities and the existents in its realm, but even so, it still witnesses its own ipseity *(inayah)*, which is what is expressed as the 'I' which is a necessary witnessing inseparable from the soul itself.

Moreover, the detachment of the soul from the body means that no veil or obstacle will remain for it [the soul]. Therefore, if a person was to return to his soul and his ipseity through acquiring beneficial knowledge and performing righteous deeds, he would certainly witness the reality of his soul, its level, the entities inhabiting its world and the inner secrets of the existents of that world.

It has become clear that it is possible for a human in this material world to become acquainted with the concealed hidden realities that he will generally encounter after his death.

## Addendum

There are numerous quranic verses and traditions that support this view which we will narrate by the will of Allah Almighty.

However, the main argument most of the deniers have against this bliss is directed at the witnessing of the Almighty Truth. They claim that it is impossible and their evidence for this is that the existence of the Almighty Truth is an existence free of accidents, dimensions and locations, and it is therefore impossible for Him to be physically seen because it will necessitate Him having a body, characterized by qualities, modality and a particular positioning.

Their advocates hold on to traditions that negate the possibility of vision and they interpret all the verses and traditions that affirm the possibility as being metaphorical, and so on.

You surely know that their evidence is specifically focused on negating the possibility of physically seeing Allah which no one has claimed other than a few sunni theologians and the literalists among them, according to what has been attributed to them. These negating traditions refute them, as it would be clear for whoever refers to the debates and arguments of the infallibles (a.s.)

Those who maintain that Allah can be seen and witnessed want to prove something else, which is that a possible existent that is needy and totally dependent is able to witness the existence of its absolutely self-sufficient Originator with all its possible existence, not with actual sight or by acquired mental thinking.

This is something that indisputable rational arguments prove, along with evidence from the literal meanings of the book [Quran] and the Traditions. Moreover, the general conclusion of these rational demonstrations is that it is impossible to separate possible existence from such witnessing, and that which is sought after is knowledge by witnessing, which is inner-knowledge *(marifat)*, and not the necessary witnessing of itself, which is knowledge by presence.

In summary, as their refutations of witnessing is mainly founded on this [idea of vision], we have limited ourselves only to mention some of its arguments and the rest will be presented later, by the will of Allah Almighty.

Allah Almighty said:

*"Some faces will be fresh on that day, looking at their Lord."Q 75:22-23.*

*"And that the terminus is towards your Lord." Q 53:42.*

*"And to Him you will be returned." Q 29:21.*

*"Indeed we shall return to Our Lord." Q 43:14.*

*"And toward Him is the destination." Q 5:18, 42:15, 64:3.*

*"Verily! To Allah do all matters return."Q 42:53*

*"And to Him you shall be brought back." Q 2:245, 41:21, 43:85.*

*"Certainly We gave Moses the Book, [declaring], 'Do be not be in doubt about the encounter with Him." Quran 32:23.*

*"Whoever expects to encounter Allah [should know that] Allah's [appointment] time will indeed come." Quran 29:5.*

**I say:** These two words, meeting *(liqa)* and returning *(ruju)* have been constantly used in the Quran and in traditions.

*"Soon We will show them Our Signs in the horizons, and in their own souls, until it becomes clear to them that He is the Real. Is it not sufficient that your Lord is witness to all things? Verily! They are indeed in doubt about the meeting with their Lord! Verily! He indeed comprehends all things!" Quran 41:53-54.*

The context of the first verse, which is: *"We will show them Our Signs in the universe"* up to *"until it become manifest"* shows that the meaning of a witness is the witnessed and not the witnesser.

Similarly, His saying: *"Verily! They are in doubt about the meeting with their Lord?"* This is like an objection, and its answer is: *"Verily! He indeed comprehends all things!"*

The context of the last verse, which is: *"Verily! They are…"* contradicts those who say that the meeting (liqa) is metaphorically used to mean death or the resurrection. The reason for this contradiction is because of the emergence of His signs and the manifestation of His Almighty Truth that will occur on that day in such a way that without doubt He will be seen and witnessed. He the Exalted has refuted their doubts about meeting Him by His encompassment of everything and this encompassment is the same whether it be in this world, at the time of death or on Judgement day. Therefore, there is no reason why they should interpret 'meeting' as meaning His encompassment of death or Resurrection.

This verse is therefore not related to the previous verse, but rather the meaning of the verse – and Allah knows best – is that it suffices that in Hid reality and immutability Allah the Almighty is witnessed over everything, but He shows them His signs in the universe and in their selves because of the doubts they have in witnessing and meeting Him. Such a doubt is not permissible, for how can they have doubt and suspicion when He encompasses everything? He is he First, the Last, the Manifest, the Hidden in all things, and whichever way you turn, there is the face of Allah. There is no secret conversation among three, but He is

their fourth [companion], nor among five but He is their sixth, and He is with you wherever you may be.

One who has such a position can never be doubted with regard to being witnessed or met. However, it is permissible to have doubt that His signs will manifest in an undoubted manifestation, so understand.

What we mention here does not contradict what is narrated in *al-Tawhid* in a tradition from Imam Ali (a.s.), stating that the meaning of the term encountering/meeting in the Quran means Resurrection.

What we are saying here falls within the operational concept in the verse as, for example, when we look at the literal import of a word and not its referent. It thus becomes clear that Resurrection is one of the denotations of 'meeting', as some of the verse and traditions to follow will show such, as the literal meaning of His words:

*"… and warning you of the encounter of this Day?" Quran 6:130*

And,

*"When we have been lost in the dust, shall we indeed be created anew? Rather they disbelieve in the encounter with their Lord!" Quran32:10*

There are many denotations in the traditions, such as what has been narrated from Imam Ali (a.s.) as the Path *(sirat),* the Way *(sabil),* the Trustworthy *(al-sadiq),* the Credible *(al-musadaq)* and the believer in the Quran.

Among these traditions it is narrated in al-Mahasin, narrating from Zurarah from Imam Jafar al-Saqiq (a.s.) concerning Allah's saying:

*"When your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants and made them bear witness over themselves."*

The Imam said:

It was seeing Allah, and He made them forget what they saw. He established acknowledgement in their breasts and without this no one would have been able to know their Creator and Provider, which is Allah's saying:

*"If you ask them, 'Who created them?' they will surely say, 'Allah'." Quran 43:87.*

Another tradition is stated in Tafsir al Qummi, narrating from Ibn Muskan, from Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) in relation to Allah's saying:

*"When your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins… 'Yes indeed!"*

He asked the Imam: "Was this seeing?"

The Imam said: "Yes. Knowledge was retained and they forgot the position, but they will remember it and if this was not the case no one would have known who their Creator and Provider was. Some of them

had only acknowledged Him with their tongues in the realm of the Atom (al-zaar) and did not believe with their hearts, thus Allah said:

*"… but they would not believe something they had denied before."Quran 10:74*

Another tradition is stated in Tafsir al-Ayyashi, narrating from Zurarah who said:

"I asked Abu Jafar [al-Baqir] (a.s.) about Allah's saying: *When your Lord took from the children of Adam… ,*until*, themselves."*

He said: "Allah had taken from the loin of Adam his offspring until the Day of Judgement, and they came out like tiny particles, so He introduced and showed Himself to them, and had it not been the for this no one would have known his Lord, as He Almighty says:

*"And if you ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they will surely say, 'Allah'. Quran 31:25.*

In al-Tawhid, narrating from Abu Basir, who narrates the following from Abu Abdullah [al-Sadiq] (a.s.):

I asked: "Tell me about Allah Almighty, will the believers see Him on Judgement Day?"

The Imam replied: "Yes, and they have seen Him before Judgement Day."

I asked: "When?"

He said: "When He asked them, "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes indeed."

He kept quiet for a while and then said: "The believers see Him in this world before Judgement Day. Do you not see Him right now?"

Abu Basir then said: "So I said to Him: "May I be sacrificed for you, may I speak to others of what you have said?"

The Imam then said: "No, for if you narrate it a denier who does not know what you mean would deny it and presume what you say to be anthropomorphism *(tashbih)* and disbelief *(kufr)*. Seeing with the heart is not like seeing with the eyes. Far be Allah from what the anthropomorphist and heretics describe Him to be."

It says in al-Tawhid, narrating from Hisham in a tradition about an atheist who asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.) regarding what he said about the descending of Allah to the heaven of this world, and the Imam said that it is not like the descent of a material body or from a material body to another material body, until He said: "Rather, He descends to the heaven of this world without sufferance or motion. He is the same way in the Seventh Heaven on the Throne as He is in the heavens of this world. He will only manifest His Magnitude and will show Himself however He

wills to His vicegerents *(awliya).* He will display His Power as He wills, and seeing Him from close up or from far away would be the same."

It is also stated in al-Tawhid in a tradition narrating the following saying from the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (a.s.):

"With the praise of Almighty flowing on His tongue Moses (a.s.) asked: *"My Lord, show [Yourself] to me, that I may look at you."* His request was something incredible, and he asked for something physical, so he was punished. Allah Almighty said to him: "You will not see Me in this world until you die, but you will see Me in the hereafter."

There are numerous traditions concerning heaven that Allah Almighty manifesting to His vicegerents in Heaven and will say to him: "And on every Friday you will be visited."

In a tradition narrated in Jami al-jawami, it says:

*"You will see your Lord like you see the full moon."*

There are other traditions concerning the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s) and the Imams (a.s.) that also speak in such tones, thus in al-Tawhid it is narrated from Muhammad ibn al-Fudayl who had said:

"I asked Abu al-Hasan [al-Reza] (a.s.): "Did the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) ever see his Almighty Lord?"

He (a.s.) said: "Yes, he say Him with his heart. Have you not heard Allah Almighty say: "*The heart did not deny what it saw."* He did not see Him with His eyes, but rather He saw Him with his heart.

It is also narrated in al-Tawhid that Imam Reza (a.s.) has said in a tradition:

"When he [the Messenger of Allah] (s.a.w.s.) looked to his Lord with his heart, he would put it in a light like the light of veils until whatever was behind the veil became clear."

In Ibn Qulawayh's Kamil al-Ziyarat there is a narration from Ibn Abu Yafur who narrates from Abu Abdullah [al-Sadiq] (a.s.) as saying:

"While the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) was in the house of Fatima (s.a.) and Imam Husain (a.s.) was on His lap, He (s.a.w.s.) began to weep and fell prostrating to the ground and said: "O Fatima (s.a.), O Daughter of Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), The High most Exalted showed Himself to me in your house here, in this hour, in the best of forms and best of states and said to me: "O Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), do you love Husain (a.s.)?

I said: "Yes, He is the delight of my eye, my sweet basil, the fruit of my heart and the skin between my eyes."

Allah said to me: "O Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) and he [Muhammad] put His hand on the head of Husain (a.s.) when Allah continued and said:

“Blessed be the newborn who has My blessings, prayers, mercy, and satisfaction.”

The Commander of faithful Imam Ali (a.s.) has said in an oft-narrated tradition:

“I have not worshipped a Lord I have not seen.”

He also said:

“I have never seen something without seeing Allah before it.”

In general, there are numerous traditions that refer to this meaning, reaching the stage of mustafid and mutawatir.

What is meant in the traditions regarding sight is not the power of discursive knowledge, for this is reflective knowledge [and not intuitive knowledge].

The many other traditions refute this seeing as being knowledge by reality let alone it being a sight and an intuitive witnessing. As a result, what has been sought for is affirmed, and praise is to Allah.

Chapter 4

## What is the way towards perfection after knowing that it is possible?

**We say:** The relation of the realities to what exists in this material realm and the physical self is the relation of the outward *(zahir)* to the inward *(batin)*.

Every existing characteristic connected with the outward is in reality attached to its inward and to the outward itself by its accident and in conformity with it. Thus, the self-evident perception of the self in relation to itself is primarily and in reality related to its inward aspects, and then by accident and concordance *(agreement)* related to its self.

The reality which is the inward aspect of the self is more immediately perceived by the self than the actual self and is more self-evident than it, and that which is inward to this inwardness is even more prior and evident than this inwardness, and this continues until it reaches a reality to which all realities culminate.

This reality is the precedent of all things known and the most evident of all self-evident things.

Considering that existence in it is sheer and undifferentiated, a second for it or another kind of it cannot be conceptualized, therefore, regarding the perception of this existence, there is no place for a refuter to refute or a denier to deny. This argument is of course complete and flawless.

**We then say:** Every existing reality necessitates that it be complete in its self, both in its essence and accidents, and this is a necessary self-evident premise, but it is in need of complete conceptualization *(tasawwur)*. So, if we were to suppose a reality, **A**, which has accidents **B**, **C,** and **D**, then this reality necessitates, in its essence, that **A** should not be lacking in **A**, for if **A** is deficient in **A** it would no longer be **A**, given that we have supposed it to be **A**.

Moreover, it also necessitates that accidents **B**, **C** and **D**, be their very selves, which, if they were lacking in **B**, **C** and **D**, given that we have

already supposed them to be **B**, **C** and **D** and nothing more, as is apparent.

This is what every reality necessitates in its essence and accidents, and this is what we call perfection *(kamal)* and happiness *(saadah)*

The reality of every perfection is that which is not qualified in its essence by a qualification of non-existence, for this would be a deficiency *(naqs)*. This is because every perfection in its essence has its essence. Thus there is nothing missing from its existence other than from the aspect of a qualification of non-existence *(i.e. the quiddity that circumscribes that existent and distinguishes it from other)* that accompanies it of necessity.

Therefore, the reality of **A**, for example, has that which would be assumed for **A**. Thus the separation in existence of this individual instance of **A**, from that instance of **A** could only be because of the existence of qualifications of non-existence in each of the two individuals. A deficiency in the reality of **A** in both of them would require a deficiency of something from their essences and not from their accidents. This would be impossible as it will necessitate a reversion (inquilab) or be self-contradictory (khulf) with reference to the essence of **A** which we have taken as given in its essence. Thus the factor that is lacking (i.e. the qualification of non-existence) for the particularity of this individual instance of **A** is the particularity of that individual instance of **A**.

Therefore, the reality of **A** has two levels: One level is its essence where it lacks nothing concerning that essence. The other level is the level of the individual, which with respect to the other individual, something of its perfection will become deficient.

Of course, this does not mean that this is a result of gradation in any way, because if we were to suppose one of the levels of **A** for the individual, it would also be **A**, and this would turn to being impossible. Rather when a reality is supposed for an individual, it will become this particular individual, and when we do not suppose that reality there would be nothing. So, nothing will stay with it other than the non-existence qualification. This reality is itself with the individual and nothing less than that, and there is nothing in the individual other than reality, while the individual is something non-existent, imaginary and nominal.

This meaning is what we term as manifestation *(zuhur)*, so understand.

From here it becomes evident that the reality of al perfection is that which is absolute, unqualified and permanent. The closeness of every perfection to its reality is according to the degree of the manifestation of its reality in it, meaning its connection to qualifications and limits since

the more qualifications there are , the weaker the manifestation will be, and vice versa.

It also becomes clear that the Almighty Truth is the ultimate reality for all perfection, as He has the sheerness *(sirf)* of every perfection and beauty *(jamal)*, and the proximity of any existent to Him depends upon the extent of its qualifications of non-existence and limits.

It is concluded from this that the attainment of every existent to its real perfection necessitates its annihilation *(faana)*, since this necessitates the annihilation of the qualifications and limits in its essence or in its accidents alone. The opposite is also true, where the annihilation of every existent necessitates the subsistence of its reality only in its self. Allah the Almighty said:

*"Everyone on it is ephemeral; yet lasting is the Face of your Lord, Majestic and Munificent."Quran 55:26-27.*

The real perfection for every possible existent is that which will perish within its self. So, the real perfection for the human being is what becomes absolute and free from any restrictions, and hence the human being will be annihilated and have nothing of perfection other than this.

It has already been mentioned in the previous argument that the human being witnessing his own very essence is in fact his essence witnessing all its realities and its ultimate reality, and while being annihilated in that station he will also be witnessing his own annihilation.

In other words: The reality of the human essence is the witnessing of its self while the human being is being annihilated.

Real human perfection is its achievements of its real perfection in its essence and its accidents, meaning its achievement of its ultimate perfection in its essence, attributes, and actions, which is its annihilation in essence, attributes and actions in the Almighty Truth. This is the meaning of monotheism (Tawhid) of the essence, of attributes and of actions, which is the ability to intuitively witness that there is absolutely no essence, no attribute and no action other than Allah the Almighty, according to what is befitting the sanctity of His Eminence, may His Greatness be magnified. Of course, this is without it becoming incarnated or undergoing divine unification, may He be exalted from such.

This argument is one of the endowments of Allah the Almighty, mentioned specifically only in this treatise, and thanks is to Allah.

The conclusion from the argument mentioned in the beginning of this chapter is that the witnessing of these realities and knowing them is embodied in the witnessing of the self and knowing it.

The closest way there is for mankind is that of knowledge of the self, and it has already been mentioned that this can be accomplished by abandoning anything other than Allah and turning towards Him the Almighty.

## Addendum

If we were to observe the Quran and traditions and deeply contemplate them, we will discover that the criterion of reward and punishment is obedience and submission, and rebellion and obstinacy.

What is indisputably understood from the Quran and Traditions is that the commission of sins, even major sins, does not necessitate punishment if it is performed by someone who does not realize that he is committing it, or any case similar to this. Obedient acts do not necessitate reward if they are performed without the intention of sincerity or submission to Allah, unless the deed is something that cannot be separated from submission, like certain noble and moral acts.

Furthermore, the commission of sin by someone who is not conscious of it being a sin, if done with the intention of an obedient act, will be considered a good deed; and also doing something obedient with the intention of being rebellious or being vain will be considered wrong. The levels of obedience and sin also differ according to the difference between submission and rebellion, which exists on both sides.

It is said in a tradition:

"The best of deeds is the hardest of them."

This has been narrated in many traditions on different aspects of the subject of obedience and sins, the different levels of virtue and vileness, and the reward and punishment for them, which the sound intellect also confirms. Most Quranic verses direct people to what the intellect prescribes them to do, and the scale and criterion according to the intellect is obedience to the truth or rebellion against it and nothing else. These are by necessity two different things according to their levels.

In addition, as happiness and wretchedness are related to these two scales, they therefore have an expanded indication in accordance with the levels that exist in obedience and rebellion.

It becomes evident here that happiness for a person who has accepted the True religion is the attainment of perfection, but absolute happiness is not only for those who have accepted the True religion, rather it might be found in someone who has not accepted the religion if he has some kind of obedience or does not have some kind of rebellion on whatever level it might be.

This is what the intellect prescribes and is apparent in religion, for religion designates the limits of what the intellect has judged, as the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) says in the famous tradition:

"Verily, I was sent to complete the noble traits of character."

It has been narrated that the ancient Persian king Kasra and the Arabian Hatim Tai will not be punished because they had in themselves the traits of justice and generosity.

It is mentioned in al-Khisal, narrating from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) from His father, from His grandfather, Imam Ali (a.s.) who said:

"Heaven has eight doors. One door in which the prophets and righteous will enter, a door that the martyrs and pious will enter and five other doors which are for those who follow and love us. I will continuously be standing on the sirat, supplicating and saying: "O Lord, protect my followers, lovers, companions, vicegerents and those who had been devoted to me in this world."

Then a call from within the Throne will be heard, saying: "I have accepted your prayer and intercession for your followers."

Every one of my followers and those who are devoted to me, defend me, and who fight those who fight against me by actions or by words will also intercede for seventy of their neighbors and relatives. And there is another door that will be used for the rest of the Muslims who testify that there is no God but Allah and there is not even the size of an atom of hatred in their hearts towards us the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)."

It is stated in Tafsir al Qummi, narrating from Durais al-Kanani who asked Abu Jafar [al-Baqir] (a.s.):

"May I be sacrificed for you, what is the state of the monotheists who acknowledge the prophethood of Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) who are sinning Muslims and die and do not have a leader and do not know your authority (wilayah)?"

The Imam (a.s.) said: "As for these people, they will stay in their holes [graves] and will not leave them. As for those who have righteous deeds and have not shown hatred, He will trace for them a path to heaven which He created in the west. The soul will stay in its hole until Judgement Day comes and it will meet Allah and He will judge its good and bad deeds, so either to Heaven or to Hell. These people are awaiting the Order of Allah."

He then said: "The weak, the foolish, the infants and the children of the Muslims that have not reached the age of puberty will also be treated the same way.

As for the Muslims who are hostile towards the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), a path has been made for them all the way to Hell which Allah created in the east. Flames, sparks, smoke, and boiling liquid will all be thrown with them until the coming of Judgement Day and then after that their destiny will be Hellfire."

It says in the Supplication of Kumail, narrated by Imam Ali (a.s.):

"So I declare with certainty that were it not for what you have decreed concerning the chastisement of Your deniers and what You have foreordained concerning the everlasting home of those who stubbornly resist, You would make all of the fire cool and safe, and no one would have a place of rest or abode within it. But You, holy are Your Names, have sworn that You will fill it with the unbelievers, both jinn and mankind, and that You will place those who stubbornly resist therein forever."

Most of the Quranic verses make a promise to those who have been informed with evidence and proof and it confines disbelief to the act of denying and obstinacy.

Allah the Almighty said:

*"As for those who are faithless and deny Our signs, they shall be the inmates of Hell." Quran 5:10*

*"So that he who perishes might perish by a manifest proof, and he who lives may live on by a manifest proof."Quran 8:42*

In general, the whole criterion for happiness and wretchedness, and reward and punishment is the sincerity of the heart and the purity of the self.

*"… the day when neither wealth nor children will avail, except him who comes to Allah with a sound heart." Quran 26:88-89.*

*"… on the day when the secrets are examined." Quran 86:9.*

All divine religions aim to train people in a particular way. This is indisputably seen in their dispositions and what they taught, and this is also what the previous divine philosophers advocated.

As for the shariah of Islam, it is much clearer concerning these matters, however, as was stated towards the end of chapter two, Islam calls to any kind of happiness possible, but knowledge of the Lord by way of knowledge of the self is the closest way and brings the most complete result. This way is the most effectual way and it is the way that Islam emphasizes. The Quran and traditions both have this aim and call to this way in every possible language.

He Almighty says:

*"O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah, and let every soul consider what it sends ahead of tomorrow, and be wary of Allah. Allah is indeed well aware of what you do. And do not be like those who forget Allah, so He makes them forget their own souls. It is they who are the transgressors." Quran 59:18-19.*

This is the obverted contra positive of the following saying of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), as has been narrated by both schools of thought:

"He who knows his self knows his Lord."

He the Almighty said:

*"Take care of your own souls. He who goes astray cannot hurt you if you are guided." Quran 5:105.*

Al-Amudi has narrated more than twenty traditions regarding knowledge of the self in his book al-Ghurar wa al-Durar which is a compilation of the short sayings of Imam Ali (a.s.)

"A clever person is someone who knows his self and does things with sincerity."

"Knowledge of the self is the more beneficial of the two forms of knowledge."

"A Knower *(arif)* is someone who knows his self, and releases it and repels it from anything that would farther it away [from Allah]."

"The greatest of ignorance is a person's ignorance of his self."
"The greatest of wisdom is a person's knowledge of his self."
"People who have the most knowledge of their selves have more fear of their Lord."
"The best of the intellect is a person's knowledge of his own self. So, whoever knows his self will be more knowledgeable and he who is ignorant of his self will fall astray."
"It surprises me that someone who has lost something searches for it while he has lost his self but does not look for it."
"It surprises me that a person is ignorant of his self. How can he know his Lord."
"The goal of knowledge is for a person to know his self."
"How can one who does not know others know his own self."
"It is sufficient in knowledge for a person to know his self."
"It is sufficient in ignorance for a person to have ignorance of his self."
"He who knows his self will become immaterial."
"He who knows his self will struggle with it."
"He who is ignorant of his self will neglect it."
"He who knows his self knows his Lord."
"He who knows his self will increase in status."
"He who is ignorant of his self will be more ignorant in knowing others."

"He who knows his self will be more knowledgeable of others."

"He who knows his self has reached the ultimate goal of every knowledge and science."

"He who does not know his self will become far away from the path of salvation and he will fall into aberrance and ignorance."

"Knowledge of the self is the most beneficial form of knowledge."

"Those who gain knowledge of the self will have achieved the greatest triumph."

"Do not be ignorant of your self, for the he who is ignorant of knowing his self is ignorant of everything."

**I say:** As you can see, these traditions prove the falsity of the interpretation of some scholars regarding the Prophetic (s.a.w.s.) saying, 'He who knows his self knows his Lord' that it is impossible to know the self, because it is related to knowledge of the Lord, which is impossible. The literal understanding of the previously mentioned traditions refutes this, and furthermore, so does the saying of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.):

"The more knowledgeable you are of your self the more knowledgeable you are of your Lord."

If knowledge of Allah the Almighty is considered to be impossible, then it would be conceptual knowledge by way of thought and not by way of intuitive witnessing. Given this impossibility, it would mean that one cannot have absolute comprehension of Allah the Almighty, but knowledge within the contingent capacity of human beings is not impossible.

On the whole, knowledge of the self is the best and closest path to perfection, and this should not be doubted. However, it is the method of proceeding on this path that is the issue of discussion.

Some have claimed that the way to journey on this path has not been explained in the shariah and some writers have even claimed that this spiritual path in Islam is similar to the monastic way the Christians innovated, which was not designated as a divine law, but Allah Almighty accepted it from them.

Allah Almighty said:

*"But as for Monasticism, they innovated it –We had not prescribed it for them –only seeking Allah's pleasure. Yet they did not observer it with due observance." Quran 57:27.*

They say (in summary): "The path to knowledge of the self has not been stated in the shariah; however it is an acceptable way to perfection."

It is possible from here that there might exist among some of the people of this path different kinds of exercises and certain ways that do not exist in the Quran and in the traditions nor have they seen in the way of life of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) and the Imams (a.s.) from his household.

This is all in accordance with what was previously mentioned that the objective is to pass and reach in any way possible after maintaining the goal.

In addition to this are the methods that are used by non-muslims, like the transcendent philosophers and the people of spiritual exercises, as is evident to those who refer to their books or to what is known about them.

However, the reality that is upheld by the people of the truth – which is evident from the Quran and traditions – is that the shariah of Islam does not permit one who journeys towards Allah to turn in any way towards anything other than Him the Almighty, and it does not permit one to seek reliance on anything other than Allah the Almighty, unless it is a way the shariah has ordered to be observed and followed.

Indeed, the shariah of Islam has not neglected the slightest thing with regard to happiness and wretchedness without explaining it and did not exclude anything from the necessities of journeying towards Allah the Almighty, whether easy or dangerous, without clarifying them. Therefore, whatever [good] every soul earns is to its benefit, and whatever [evil] the soul incurs is to its harm.

Allah the Almighty says:

*"We have sent down the Book to you as a clarification of all things." Quran 16:89.*

*"Certainly we have drawn for mankind in this Quran every [kind of] parables."Quran 31:58.*

*"Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you." Quran 3:31.*

*"In the apostle of Allah there is certainly for you a good example." Quran 33:21.*

There are many more examples from the Quran illustrating this point and likewise, the traditions narrated from the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) with reference to this meaning are abundant, or rather they are recurrently transmitted.

What is evident here is that the amount of perfection every person has is in accordance with how much he follows the shariah, and as you already know, this perfection is something that is graded by having

different levels. What an excellent expression it is when some of the people of perfection say:

"The tendency of turning from the shariah towards observing difficult spiritual exercises is actually running away from the hardest to the easiest."

Indeed, following the shariah is a continuous killing of the self and this is gradual and consistent as long as the self exists, and difficult exercises are a swift killing and are much easier.

In general, the shariah has not neglected the explanation of how to journey [to Allah] by the path of the self.

**Explanation:** Worship can be divided into three kinds:

One: Worship out of greed.

Two: Worship out of fear of hell.

Three: Worship solely for sake of Allah, without fear or greed.

There is another kind of worship different from the third: this is where the goal of worship is to succeed in gaining comfort, or to flee from punishment, as the ultimate goal of this kind is to attain the desires of the self.

Therefore, attentiveness to Allah the Almighty in worship is only to satisfy the cravings of the self, and accordingly the Almighty Truth made worship become a way to achieve one's desires.

This way or this medium, inasmuch as it is a medium, is not sought after or intended primarily, but is in pursuance and correspondence to it, as this in reality will be nothing other than the worship of desire itself.

The third kind remains which is real worship, and this type of worship has been expressed in different names and ways.

It says in Al-Kafi, narrating from Harun who narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) who said:

"Worshippers are of three kinds:

One group worships Allah the Glorious out of fear, and that is the worship of slaves.

Another group worships Allah the Almighty wanting rewards, and that is the worship of wageworkers.

And another group worships Allah the Almighty out of love for Him, and that is the worship of free people, and this is the best form of worship."

In Nahjul Balaghah, Imam Ali (a.s.) says:

"Some people worship Allah out of desire, and that is the worship of merchants. Some people worship Allah out of fear and terror, and that is

the worship of slaves. And some people worship Allah thanking Him, and that is the worship of free people."

It is narrated in 'Ilal al-Sharai, al-Majalis, and al-Khisal, narrating from Yunis, from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) who said:

"People worship Allah in three ways: One type worships Him in desire of His reward and that is the worship of the covetous, which is greed. Others worships Him fearing hellfire, and that is the worship of the slaves, which is terror. However, I worship Him with love for Him Almighty, and that is the worship of the honorable, as He Almighty says:

*"… and they shall be secure from terror on that day." Quran 27:89*

*"Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you." Quran 3:31*

"So, those who love Allah the Almighty, Allah will love them, and whoever is loved by Allah they will be among those who are safe, and this is the hidden status which *'no one can attain unless they are pure.'"* Quran 56:79.

It is stated in al-Manaqib:

"He [the Holy Prophet] (s.a.w.s.) would cry until He would faint, so he was asked: "Has not Allah forgiven all your past and future sins?"

He said: "Shall I not be a thanking servant?".

**I say:** Both thanking and loving return to one thing. Thanking is the praising of benevolence inasmuch as it is benevolence, and worship would be attentiveness and humility towards Him the Almighty. He is the Benevolent in His Essence, and therefore it is He, the Almighty who is sought after in Himself and not for something else, as He, the Almighty said:

*"I did not create the jinn and the humans except that they may worship Me." Quran 51:56.*

The ultimate goal in the creation of mankind, meaning mankind's existence, is the perfection of their existence, which is to worship Allah the Almighty and turn towards Him alone, and turning towards Him is a medium which is not, in its essence the goal, as He Almighty is the ultimate goal of their existence. This is why worship here has been interpreted in the traditions as being knowledge (marifat).

He also said:

*"Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship anyone except Him." Quran 17:23*

*"He is the Living One; there is no god except Him. So supplicate Him, putting exclusive faith in Him." Quran 40:65.*

Moreover, love is the attraction of the self towards beauty in itself, and only He Almighty has absolute beauty.

He the Almighty said:

*"Say , 'If you love Allah, then follow me… "*

And

*"But the faithful have more ardent love for Allah." Quran 2:165.*

A tradition narrated by al-Daylami will soon be mentioned.

It is mentioned in the supplication of Kumail:

"And make [O Lord] my heart enthralled with the love of You."

In the intimate munajaat of Imam Ali (a.s.), it says:

"O Allah put me among the people of your vicegerency *[wali]* the station of those who hope for abundance in loving You."

Love and its role have been mentioned very often in many supplications.

And if you are surprised then it would be more surprising to hear those who say: "Love does not pertain to Him the Almighty in reality, and that which has been mentioned in the traditions of the shariah is only meant in a metaphorical sense in that it means to obey, to order and to refrain from the forbidden." This claim is contrary to that which is self-evident and is obstinacy towards that which is evident.

By my soul, is there not a big difference between those who say: "Love cannot be associated with Allah the Almighty" and those who say: "Love cannot be associated with anything other than Allah the Almighty?"

Returning to the discussion at hand, we say: As worship, which is turning towards Allah the Almighty, cannot be achieved without a certain kind of knowledge, even though it itself is an introduction or a prerequisite for knowledge, observing it in its possible reality would require one to traverse through knowledge (marifat).

Knowledge and worship are even regarded as two correlative things, as is mentioned in the tradition of Ismail ibn Jabir, narrating from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.):

"Knowledge is connected with practice, so he who knows, acts and he who acts, knows."

In other words: It is necessary for worship to be based on knowledge (marifat) in order for the worship to produce knowledge, as is said in the prophetic (s.a.w.s.) tradition:

"He who practices what he knows will be granted by Allah knowledge he had not known."

This is referring to what Allah the Exalted says in the holy Quran:

*"Whosoever desires the tillage of the hereafter, We will enhance for him his tillage, and whosoever desires the tillage of the world, We will give it to him, but he will have no share in the hereafter." Quran 42:20*

And,

*"To Him ascends the good words, and He elevates righteous conduct." Quran 35:10*

Intellectual consideration also supports our arguments, as love and yearning for something makes someone turn towards it. Turning towards something, which is action and practice, establishes love, yearning, and knowledge. Moreover, it confirms the establishment of something, and if the establishment of that thing has been confirmed, its signs and traces and everything related and connected with it will manifest.

In summary: This knowledge that needs practice can be conceived as being acquired in two ways: The external journey of the cosmos, and the journey of the inner self.

The first: This way is through thinking, contemplation and reflecting on the cosmological existents that are external to the self that are the creations of Allah and His signs in the heavens and the earth. This will lead to certainty in Allah and His Divine Names and Actions, this is because these things are clues and evidence, and knowledge of the evidence inevitably necessitates knowledge of that which is experienced.

The second: This is the return towards the self, and knowing the Truth Almighty through the self. The self does not exist absolutely independently, and to know such a thing cannot be detached from knowledge of that which is independent and which maintains it. In one aspect, both types of knowledge can be considered as one here.

So, these are the two ways. However, the truth is that the cosmological journey by itself does not necessarily bring about real knowledge or real worship. This is because establishing cosmological existents will only bring acquired knowledge of the existence of the Almighty Creator and His Attributes for they are clues and signs. This knowledge is connected to propositions which have predicates and subjects, both being conceptual.

Arguments have been given that the Truth Almighty is a pure existence that does not have quiddity. It is impossible for Him to be in the mind because it will necessitate a quiddity in itself void of the two existences; existence in the mind and existing externally, and this cannot be so here.

So, whatever the mid visualizes and conceptualizes to be necessary and judges with its predicates, like names and features, would certainly be something other than Him Almighty.

A tradition in the book, al-Tawhid refers to this meaning, narrating from Abd al-Ala who narrates from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) who said:

"He who claims that he knows Allah through a veil, a picture or an image is a polytheist, because a veil, a picture and an image are all things other than Him. He is One and united, so how can someone consider Him one if they claim that they know Him through something else? Someone will know Allah only if they know Him through Him, and if someone does not know Him through Him, they do not know Him, they know something other than Him. There is nothing between the Creator and the created, and Allah is the Creator of all things, but these things are not from a name of His, for their names are something other than Him, and names are different to Him. The noun is different to the adjective. He who claims he believes in something he does not know is aberrant from knowledge. Creation cannot perceive anything other than through Allah, and Allah is devoid of His creations, and His creations are devoid of Him."

The Imam (a.s.) saying 'He is One and United', which means pure oneness without plurality in Him, points to the argument of the impossibility of having knowledge of something that results in the gaining knowledge of Allah the Almighty. It is like saying: 'knowledge is essentially the very same as the known', as is demonstrated in its relevant place. It is impossible to have knowledge of something which will lead you to having knowledge of something else that is contradictory to it, or else contradictory things will become one, which is impossible.

Therefore, the necessity of knowing something prompting the knowing of something else requires a kind of unity between the two things.

When we suppose two things, they would have an aspect they share and an aspect they differ in, each one would be composed of two aspects, but the Truth Almighty is One and Simple in essence and He does not have any composite nature an any way. Therefore, it is impossible to know Him through something other than Him.

This is what the Imam (a.s.) means when He says: 'There is nothing between the Creator and the created.'

His saying: 'he who claims he believes in something he does not know is aberrant from knowledge' is the continuation of what he said before, that: 'someone will know Allah only if they know Him through Him'.

His saying: 'creation cannot perceive anything other than through Allah' is the same as demonstrating an argument for Allah in that everything is known by Allah who is the Light of the heavens and the earth, so how can one know through something other than Him. He is the Constituent of every essence, but is not composite in essence, and knowledge of something that is not essentially dependent comes after knowledge of the dependent thing that it constitutes.

This is because the occurrence of knowledge requires the independence of the known by necessity. Knowledge of the non-independent follows the independent that is with it.

As this might encourage erroneous illusions of incarnationism or pantheism, far is He from such, the Imam (a.s.) added after saying: 'and Allah is devoid of his creations, and His creations are devoid of Him'.

When we say the creation's perception of everything is done through Allah, this does not contradict the beginning of the tradition which states that knowing something necessitates the knowledge of something else, because the knowledge which is in the beginning of the tradition is acquired knowledge, and the knowledge at the end of the tradition is knowledge by presence.

There are numerous traditions that describe acquired knowledge as not being real knowledge.

Concluding from the aforementioned, there is no way of achieving the knowledge of reality other than through knowledge of the self.

Knowledge of the self ends up with knowledge of reality, which is to turn towards the Truth Almighty and detach from anything that would divert or occupy one's self from oneself in order for them to see their selves as they are, and the self is essentially in need of the Truth Almighty.

If someone is in such a state, their witnessing o that person's self cannot be detached from the witnessing of His Creator, as you know. If that person witnesses the Truth Almighty he would have necessary knowledge and will then know his self through it in reality, as the self is dependent on Him Almighty and he will hence know everything through the Truth Almighty.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) points to this meaning in a tradition narrated in Tuhaf ul-Uqul:

"Whomsoever claims that he knows Allah through doubts of the heart, then he is a polytheist. Whomsoever claims that he worships the name without the meaning then he has committed slander, because the name is created. Whomsoever claims that he worships the name and the

meaning then he would have ascribed a partner with Allah. Whomsoever claims that he worships through the attributes, and not through perception and understanding, then he has transferred something far from the mind. Whomsoever claims that he added the substantive to the adjective then he would have belittled something that is great.

*"They did not regard Allah with the regard due to Him." 6:91./*

Someone said to him: "Then what is the way to monotheism (Tawhid)?"

He (a.s.) said: "The door of discussing and searching is possible, and accessibility to the path exists. Verily, knowledge of the witnessed and present comes before its features, and knowledge of the features of an absent person comes before seeing him.

They said: "And how do you know the essence of the witnessed before its featured?"

He (a.s.) said: "You will know it and you will know the signs. You will know yourself through it, and you will not know yourself by yourself or from within yourself. You will know that what is in it is for Him and by Him, as Yusuf's brother said to him:

*"Are you really Joseph?" He said, 'I am Joseph, and this is my brother." 12:90*

So, they knew him through his self. They did not know him through something other than him, and they did not confirm him through themselves with the doubts of their hearts."

The Imam (a.s.) saying: 'and you will know its signs' means you will know Him and you will then know His signs and features through it, and you will know yourself through it and not through something else.

After contemplating on the meaning of this noble tradition which is a very distinctive tradition, especially in its portrayal of how the brothers of Yusuf recognized him, you will be able to derive all of the principles mentioned in the previous chapters from this tradition alone, and we do not want to prolong our explanation.

In general: If one wants to witness his Lord, he will know Him, and he will know his own self and everything else through Him, and hence attentiveness in worship will be bestowed upon this person in its correct place. Without this witnessing, all of our attention towards Allah will only become some kind of mental projection whatever it may be.

This visualized concept, mental projection and the conformability of this limited imagery is something other than Him, the Almighty, and therefore the worshipped will be something other than the intended.

This is the situation of the worship of those other than the possessors of knowledge [of Allah] *(arifeen)* of those who possess this knowledge

*(ulama)* by Allah, and as you have come to know, the acceptance of this kind of worship is only by the grace of Allah the Almighty.

*"Were it not for Allah's grace and His mercy upon you, not one of you would ever be pure." 24:21*

This is the opposite of the worship of those who know Allah and are sincere to Him. They do not pay attention in their worship neither to a concept nor to something that is in conformity with a concept, rather they turn solely towards their Lord, may His Gratitude be exalted.

He the Almighty said:

*"Clear is Allah of whatever they allege [about Him], -[all] except Allah's exclusive servants." 37:159:160.*

It therefore becomes clear that the meaning of the sincere is those who have purified themselves with sincerity to Allah the Almighty with no veil coming between them and Him, if not, their depiction of Allah the Almighty would not be correct. As creation itself is a veil, and as our Master Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) said:

"There is no veil between Himself and His creation other than His creation."

So, they do not see creation, rather, their destination is the Truth Almighty.

It says in Tafsir al-Askari (a.s.): "Muhammad ibn Ali al-Baqir (a.s.) said:

"A worshipper cannot give the worship of Allah its true right unless they detach themselves from creation altogether and turn towards Him. He will then say that this is sincerely for Me, and will hence accept it with His Grace and Mercy."

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"Allah has given no blessing to a worshipper greater than not having in his heart anything other than Allah."

Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (a.s.) said:

"The best of worship is sincerity."

The meaning of the following verse in refrence to iblees also becomes clear after what has been explained:

*"By Your Might, I will surely pervert them, except Your exclusive servants among them." 38:82-83.*

And:

*"So they will indeed be arraigned [before Him]-[all] except Allah's exclusive servants." 37:127-128.*

These are people who are immersed into Him Almighty, and do not see iblees nor his satanic insinuations. They will not be asked nor will they be judged. The following hadith Qudsi points to this meaning:

"My vicegerents are concealed beneath My cloak, [or in another tradition] My sleeve."

The past tradition narrated by Yunis also refers to this meaning.

**Summary:** The path to knowledge of the self is the path that will lead to this goal, and it is the closest of paths. This is achieved by absolute detachment from everything other than Allah the Almighty, and attentiveness towards Him by occupying oneself with knowledge of the self, and this can be understood from the tradition mentioned by Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.), saying:

"There is no veil between Himself and His creation other than His creation. He is veiled, but without a concealing veil, and He is covered, but without a concealing cover."

This noble tradition is the most beautiful explanation of the best path, so to start this path in order to reach total detachment, one must begin with the means mentioned in the shariah, like repentance *(tawbah)*, turning to Allah *(inabah)*, taking account of ourselves *(muhasabah)*, self-monitoring *(muraqabah)*, keeping silent *(samt)*, hunger *(ju')*, solitude *(khalwah)*, night vigilance, and struggling with deeds and worship.

This is supported through thinking and reflection until it brings detachment from the self and attentiveness towards the Truth Almighty. Then an insight into the unseen will dawn upon one, and something of the Divine fragrance and Lordly attractions will follow which would entail love and illumination, and this is remembrance *(zikr)*.

The gleams will continue to shine, attractions will appear and yearning will drive one forward, until the dominion of love overcomes the heart and remembrance reigns over the self, and Allah will reunify everything and He will seal the matter:

*"And that the terminus is toward your Lord." 53:42*

Know that the example of such a wayfarer is like that of a person who wants to go on a trip intending to reach a certain destination. It is necessary for this person not to forget his destination, and to know the way by which he will travel and what provisions he needs to take along with him on this trip.

If this person was to forget his destination, even for a slight moment, he would wander aimlessly about and would go astray.

If the path and its scenery were to distract him, the trip would become useless and it would come to a halt. If he were to over exceed in the

provisions he carried, the trip would be delayed and he would miss the destination, and Allah the Almighty is the Helper.

If you were to say: Let us accept this long explanation that the closest way to Allah Almighty is through the path of knowledge of the self. But this has not proven that the particular exposition of such a way exists in the shariah, that explains how to enter and exit this path [of knowledge of the self], the issues concerning its wayfaring with its details, dangers, fears, threats and great possibility of going astray, and its perditions. So, where is the adequate explanation for all of these particulars and the differences between the things that save and things that cause one to perish on this path?

I would reply: We have pointed out in the second chapter of this treatise that the expositions that have been mentioned in the Quran and the traditions are all one explanation. The differences are in the way they are interpreted, and the variations are in the perception of the perceivers.

Wayfaring towards Him Almighty is also the result of understanding and knowledge, and differences and divisions come from differences in knowledge and understanding.

By my soul, this issue is very clear and evident, and we have already mentioned that people are divided into different groups, and every group understands according to the level it is on and acts according to that level.

[First group: The average people]

If were to suppose that one of the common people whose desire is this world and its allurements goes to sleep and thinks about how he can manage his profits the next day, how he can buy and sell, where he should go tomorrow and whom he will see. When he wakes up his only concern would be to manage his daily affairs and improving his situation in this world.

If he was to hear a caller to Allah who brought good news and warned of the bad, preaching forgiveness from Allah, His contentment and a heaven full of constant blessings, who warned of a hellfire in which its fuel would be people and stones and everything else Allah has prepared for the oppressors. But because of this person's lack of interest and him making his only concern that which fills him up and quenches him, he will not find any time to delve into the signs of Allah and His words.

He only believes in that which he generally hears and he only does good deeds which do not interfere with what he seeks in this world. The world for this person is the primary concern and religion is secondary,

and therefore the actions, sayings, deeds and knowledge of this person all contradict each other.

You would see him say: Allah is the All-hearer, the All-seer, but he commits all the wrong things and leaves out all the obligatory deeds. You see him believing that Allah is the Ruler and that to Him is the return, but he submits and worships every ruler other than Allah and rushes towards every satan that invites him to blazing punishment when he sees the slightest embellishment of this world. He would not know even if he were to be told for he sees nothing other than bodies and materials, not understanding that there are things beyond these illusionary matters.

He believes that Allah has a Throne and the laws for His creation emanate from it, and that the serving angels in the heavens and earth manage it, and it is His Sovereignty.

People of reasoning among His creation are His servants while they are in their physical bodies, and He has assigned them obligations and they have free choice in this world. Allah then takes the life of human beings and obliterates them after they had existed.

Then a day will come in this world when it will be in ruins and Allah will revive His creation in it. He will gather them for the Day of Judgment and will reward the righteous with heaven and all that is in it, except for the desires of the self which were only for the worldly, and He will punish the oppressors with hell and what is in it, in which there is nothing other than blazing fires and evil.

This is all done just like a king who rules over us with all of the prerequisites of pomp, dignity, the execution of law, rewarding or punishing the subjects and the politics of a king, and there is nothing more to it than this.

So, this is one level of people and their status in actions and knowledge.

[Second Group: The ascetics and the worshippers]

Let us suppose one of the ascetics and worshippers, and they are people who look comprehensively at the annihilation of the world and its decorations, deceptions and depletions, and the everlastingness of that which is with Allah the Almighty. They have prepared themselves for asceticism *(zuhd)* and worship and have heard the caller for Truth inviting them to escape from the lies of worldly desires and to turn towards worshipping Allah in order to acquire salvation from the pain of punishment and to gain the victory of infinite blessings and a kingdom that can never be spoiled.

The fear of Allah dominates that person's heart and he always thinks of death, and hence the love of this world and the concern for wealth are taken away from his heart and he has no concern other than to be abstemious of this world or to perform good deeds for Allah in desire of seeking His satisfaction.

He disciplines the characteristics of his self, corrects the quality of his actions and abstains with piety from all that he is confronted with and from what amounts to what Allah dislikes. All this is in desire for the everlasting blessings and being cautious of eternal punishment.

If you were to seriously contemplate the state of this person and what he seeks in his esoteric exercises, you would find that he does not want anything other than the desires of his self. He loves his self because of what he heard from the Truth Almighty in that he was created to stay forever and not to be annihilated. He therefore loves his self and what it desires and he abstains from the world for what he sees in it of its termination and vanishing.

If the world was to continue for those who belong to it and its blessings and desires were to be everlasting and all of its discomforts were to be wiped away, the aspirations behind the strivings of this ascetic person would not decrease or change. From here you know that perfection for this person is the desires of the self for the blessings of the material world.

However, he sees this world associated with deficiencies and barriers, so he acquires the desires of its adornments, but without its disturbances, so he views the next world as a realm of the world he lives in and believes that Judgment Day is one of the days of this world.

His self has stayed within this physical realm and has not been elevated to a higher level because of the despair the self has for anything existing above it. The only perfection he wants is physical perfection, for he does not believe in anything existing beyond that.

This is why he is below the level of knowledge of Allah and he has confined himself to the level of action, tumbling about through life with sayings, actions and good behavior. It is as if the curtains of the unseen have been taken away from him and that which is behind the veils has manifested itself for him and everything can be seen, but this is not so.

This person has no hope of being able to witness that which is beyond the veils, but will see it after he dies, for he has only righteous actions and good rewards and he will not be blessed with more than that.

*"Were Allah to expand the provision for his servants, they would surely create havoc on the earth. But He sends down in a [precise] measure whatever He wishes. Indeed He is all-aware, all-seeing about His servants." 42:27*

This is another group and their level of knowledge and action. They share knowledge with the first group, but differ from them in actions.

[Third Group: Those who know and those who yearn]

Now let us suppose one of the yearning lovers who is someone who has been stricken by the thunder of love and enthralled by the attraction of longing to meet Allah the Almighty. His pillars have been torn down, his insides tremble, his heart I confused and its intellect has flown away. He has escaped from the world and its ornaments and he has not confined his interests only to the hereafter and its blessings. The lover has no religion other than the Beloved and he seeks no goal to aspire to other than the ultimate goal who is Allah Almighty. If he has to hear Allah the Almighty say:

*"Let not the life of the world beguile you; nor let the deceiver deceive you." 35:5*

And:

*"The life of the world is just play and diversion."* 47:36

He looks down upon the world and its decorations and he renounces it because Allah the Almighty has done so, and if He praises this world, this person would do so because of His Beloved, but knowing its annihilation and lowliness. If he hears Allah saying:

*"But the abode of the hereafter is indeed Life… " 29:64*

He would praise the hereafter because He the Almighty praises it, and if He was to dispraise it, this person would do so even with its everlastingness and glory.

If he hears Allah says:

*"Is it not sufficient that your Lord is witness to all things." 41:53*

*"He surrounds all things." 41:54*

*"And He is with you wherever you may be." 57:3*

*"He who sustains every soul in spite of what it earns." 13:33*

When hearing these verses, his heart would only become attached to it and his self would rely upon it. This attachment would not be akin to a game he plays, for what would a dismayed lover do with amusements? Rather, this attachment would be because his Lord Almighty oversees all actions. He is near to him, with him, a witness over him and He encompasses him, so he strives towards Him Almighty and seek Him, but by its means and not by himself.

When this person hears Allah saying:

*"O you who have faith! Take care of your own souls. He who goes astray cannot hurt you if you are guided." 5:105*

He realizes that his attachment to his self is not the same as his attachment to other things, and it is his guidance to his goal, which is of course knowledge of the self. Allah Almighty has made this lover a wayfarer towards Him, as He said:

*"O Man! Verily you are working toward your Lord a work which you will meet." 83:6*

And he hears Allah saying:

*"And whosoever turns away from the remembrance of the Lord, He will let him into an escalating punishment." 72:17*

And:

*"Whoever turns a blind eye to the remembrance of the All-beneficent, We assign him a devil who remains his companion. Indeed they bar them from the way while they suppose that they are [rightly] guided." 43:36-37*

And:

*"And do not be like those who forget Allah, so He makes them forget their own souls." 59:19*

To forget is to renounce remembrance, and it is defined as the forgetting of one's self and being attached to things, which is a sign of the forgetting of one's Lord.

If he were to abandon His remembrance and be attached to other things, it will lead him to ever-growing torment, and there is no torment with the lovers of Allah other than the veil of separation. A companion would lead him astray from the path. The path therefore becomes his own self and the attachment of the self is the way towards his Lord, because his Lord is with him, oversees him, and encompasses him, so he will therefore detach himself from everything other than his self and he will be attached to his self and purify and discipline it with the best of morals and good deeds. He will guard it from sins and flee from destructive things, as Allah orders and loves. He does not do this because he is greedy for heaven, nor for fear of hellfire, except for the sake of Allah, and does not want gratitude or thankfulness for it.

This is all because, with his attachment to his self, he desires to meet his Lord and he has encircled his self, turning his heart towards it day and night, but he does not consider his self independent and does not claim it has such an ability, far be it from him. His reliance is not on the self, but on Allah.

How can one have true love for two loved things or demand the truth from two true things? The Beloved is loved for itself, and everything else

he loves is only because of that real and true love. This real love is loved for itself and is also loved for others.

You know that the lover does not want anything other than the beloved and he runs away from anything that would hinder him from his beloved. He stays away from anything that would distract him from his beloved. He has no concern other than to be in solitude with his beloved and to get to the latter through all the veils that veil him from it. Every time he dwells on the characteristics of the beloved, his passion increases and the fire of his yearning intensifies. His yearning might be so much that he forgets himself and annihilates his self in the beloved, engaging himself in his Lord alone and nothing else will remain other than the Face of His Lord, the Mighty and Glorious.

This is another group and by the given explanation now you know their level in knowledge and practice.

The real distinction between these three groups, as is now evident, is the difference in their state of perception. They differ in their understanding of the content of a saying as having two or three meanings.

Therefore, this path is not related to the matters of the law rather it is the difference in understanding that separates these levels.

I have heard from some of my teachers who were asked about the path of knowing the self and why it wasn't elaborated by the shariah if it had been the closest path to Allah the Almighty.

Our beloved teacher answered: "And where in the shariah does it not aim towards this purpose and does not explain this path?"

It is here that some of the people of this group mention in their commentaries on some Quranic verses and traditions certain meanings that are very far from normal understanding.

What must be known here is that this path is composed of acting and refraining, which is to refuse anything other than Allah, and to attentively turn towards Him the Almighty, and these two are complementary to each other. It has already been explained that knowledge in Allah is the most evident of self-evident things, and the thing that veils one from Him is not ignorance, but inattentiveness and occupying the self with the vanities of the world and its vileness. So:

*"Allah has not put two hearts within any man." 33:4*

If the heart was to occupy itself with worldly affairs it would certainly start loving it and would make it its greatest concern, and it would therefore occupy the dominion of the heart. Accordingly, the mirror of the heart will not be transparent in order for it to reflect the beauty of the

Truth Almighty and acquire knowledge, for all these affairs are related to the heart.

If you would like to test the truth of what we have mentioned you can consider going to a secluded place where there is nobody and there is no light, sound, furniture or anything else. Then sit down, close your eyes and do not move at all. After you have made sure all your senses are paying attention, start focusing on an image, like imagining the image 'A'. Make sure you pay full attention to it and do not let anything else come into the picture.

You will see at first that a lot of imaginary images will interrupt and crowd your mind. They will be vague and disordered and you will not be able to distinguish many of them from each other, like your thoughts of the day and the night, your intentions and desires. After an hour you might awake and think you are in another place, or with such and such person, or you have done such and such thing. All of this and you were only supposed to imagine the image 'A', and this confusion will continue with you for a while.

If you were to continue staying in such seclusion and freeing your thoughts for a few days, you will see after a while that the interferences and preoccupations of the mind will become less and less, and thoughts and imaginations will become illuminated until it is as if you could see the thought that strikes your heart with the sense sight. They will become even less day by day until for certain there will only be the image of 'A' and no other form will be there with it.

From this example you can know the validity of what we have said, I that occupying yourself with worldly affairs will by necessity make you forget yourself and become inattentive to that which awaits us in next life.

The only way one can devote his self to an esoteric life is to abandon the exoteric life and turn towards that which is beyond it [the metaphysical]. So, as an example, if you wanted to see your self by the method just mentioned, you would see much more of what we said in thoughts and obstacles, and they are the forms of the desires of the self and worldly inclinations.

Therefore, the only path to inner-knowledge is to purify your heart from the world and everything else that veils your sight from Allah, may His name be exalted.

All of the different methods that were mentioned, like self-observation, seclusion etc., are for the purpose of acquiring this state of the heart

and then to orient the heart towards the Truth Almighty and to be blessed under His sovereignty.

This is remembrance itself and nearness to the Truth Almighty, and it is the last of the keys [levels], and Allah is the Guide.

Know that remembrance in this meaning has been mentioned many times in the Quran and in the traditions, like:

*"And do not obey him whose heart We have made oblivious Our remembrance." 18:28*

*"Then remember Allah as you would remember your fathers, or with a more ardent remembrance." 2:200*

And it is certainly known that verbal remembrance cannot be described as ardent *(shiddat)*.

*"Yet no one takes admonition except him who returns penitently [to Allah]." 40:13*

*"But none takes admonition except those who possess intellect." 2:269*

In Dua of Kumail, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (a.s.) says:

"I ask you (O Allah) by your Truth, Sanctity and the Greatest of Attributes and Names to make my times in night and day full of Your remembrance, and continuous in Your service, and make my day deeds accepted by You; so that all my actions and deeds be one united deed, and my state of servitude be eternal."

Chapter 5

## What will you achieve through perfection.

This chapter is an additional explanation of Chapter Two.

**We say:** You now know that the perfection of the human being is in his or her annihilation *(fanaa)* and is of three kinds, reaching to the levels of Tawhid in Action, Attribute and Essence *(tawhid fili/ismi/zaati).* You also know that the nearness of any existent to the Truth Almighty is in accord with the extent of the limits of its essence and non-existences. Therefore, the medium that exists between the physical human realm and the Truth Almighty originate according to the limits of its essence.

Hence, in his path towards the Truth Almighty a person must pass through all of the levels of Action, Attributes, and Essences in order to obtain the three forms of monotheism.

It is not possible for him to achieve any of the levels of perfection without him gaining annihilation in that level and for that level of perfection to become subsistent *(baqa)*. He will then oversee all the kinds of emanations *(faiz)* that manifest on the level he is in and all that is below it, and through this he will constantly strive until he acquires the station of Tawhid of the Essence and nothing will be left of him, either in name or description.

*"On that day all sovereignty will belong to Allah." 22:56.*

This argument, as short as it might be, includes all the stations of the vicegerents *(maqamat al-awliya)*. It explains their levels and states. And is more than enough for those who comprehend and understand.

As for the particulars of their station, no one can know and apprehend them other than their Lord, may His Name be blessed.

## Conclusion

The spiritual stations of the vicegerents and especially their secrets are all with Allah Almighty, as the guardianship of their affairs is with Him. Their names and descriptions have been annihilated into Him the Almighty, and it is therefore not possible to comprehend their stations.

He, the Almighty has said:

*"But they cannot comprehend Him in their knowledge." 20:110.*

It suffices them to have the honor that the guardianship of their affairs is with Allah the Almighty and He is their Teacher and Instructor.

He, the Exalted said:

*"Be it known, verily, the friends of Allah, no fear shall be on them nor do they grieve." 11:62.*

And He described them as follows:

*"Those who believe and were pious." 41:18.*

He described them as having characteristic of belief after they had the characteristic of piety, and it is known that piety *(taqwa)*, which is to be cautious of what displeases Allah, can only be established after one believes in Allah and His Messenger (s.a.w.s.).

Therefore, the belief mentioned in the verse is different to the belief that comes prior to piety, and this is only to emphasize that belief should not be absent or fall behind the other form.

The basis of belief, which is to be submissive in general, can be commonly associated wit polytheism and other sins.

He, the Almighty said;

*"And most of them do not believe in Allah without ascribing partners to Him." 12:106.*

However, complete perfection of belief in Allah necessitates the adherence to what the fundamentals and branches of religion demand, which means to refer back to the concept of submissiveness to whatever the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) brought with him, as Allah the Almighty said:

*"But no, by your Lord! They will not believe until they make you a judge in their disputes, then do not find within their hearts any dissent to your verdict and submit in full submission." 4:65.*

Submitting yourself to someone is to subordinate your will to their will; in that you do not want anything other than what they want and do not request anything other than what they request, and this is complete subordination.

As He, the Almighty said:

*"Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins." 3:31.*

And:

*"O you who have faith! Be ware of Allah and have faith in His Apostle. He will grant you a double share of His mercy." 57:28.*

Allah Almighty confined the second belief *(iman)* to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), and this belief is absolute certainty *(yakin)* in Allah the Almighty, His Names and Attributes, along with certainty in the truth of what His Prophet (s.a.w.s.) brought and to completely follow and submit to him (s.a.w.s.). Their actions are according to his actions and their goals are his goals. He (s.a.w.s.) is their Leader *(imam)* and he does not have any goal other than gaining the satisfaction of Allah and completely renouncing the world.

He, the Almighty said:

*"Content yourself with the company of those who supplicate their Lord morning and evening, desiring His face, and do not lose sight of them, desiring the glitter of the life of this world. And do not obey him whose heart We have made oblivious to Our remembrance, and who follows his own desire, and whose conduct is [mere] profligacy." 18:28.*

He, the Almighty then promised them, saying:

*"And give good news to the faithful that they are in good standing with their Lord." 10:2.*

The expression having a good standing or on a true footing is a metaphor for a fixed and true place, which is the level that Allah considers them to be in.

He, the Almighty has said:

*"That which is with you will be spent but what is with Allah shall last." 16:96.*

He said whatever is with Him will permanently stay and will not perish or ruin.

He also said:

*"Everything is to perish except His Face." 28:88.*

He has informed of the perishing of everything other than His Face.

It becomes clear that what He, the Almighty has is His Face, and the face of something cannot be detached from it, because it is the thing that is in front and what one faces you with. These kinds of believers are conversant with their firm footing in the Glory of His Face, consumed in the Lights of Divinity and are outside the vicinity of performers who do not belong to any particular place.

*"Whichever way you turn, there is the Face of Allah." 2:115.*

He, the Almighty has also said:

*"Everyone is ephemeral; yet lasting is the Face of your Lord, Majestic and Munificent." 55:26, 27.*

The reciters of Quran have all agreed that the word (?? ) should be read as nominative *(raf')* and it is not a divided adjective, meaning that it is connected to the Face as an adjective, as these two verses demonstrate:

*"Blessed is the Name of your Lord." 55:78.*

*"Celebrate the Name of your Lord." 87:1.*

The Majestic *(jalal)* and the Minificient *(ikram)* encompass all the attributes of Beauty and Majesty, and none of His Elevated Attributes and Beautiful Names are excluded from these two.

These saints of Allah are annihilated into Him and turn to manifest between these Names, there is no name or attributes left in them other than His Attributes and Names, Glory be to Him. Their veil has been lifted and nothing has remained within them other than His Face, the Majestic Munificent. Try to understand this point.

From this we can understand the meaning of the tradition of the Angels bringing an inscription from Allah to his vicegerents in Heaven, and in this inscription it is written:

"From the Living and Ever-lasting King to the living and ever-lasting king."

Allah the Almighty has promised them to bring them near to Him, and He has called them the ones brought near *(al-muqarribin),* introducing them as the foremost ones. He said:

*"And the Foremost Ones are the foremost ones; they are the ones brought near [to Allah]."*

He has defined the foremost ones as those who have restricted themselves in only doing good deeds, He the Almighty said:

*"Then we made the inheritors of the Book (Quran) those whom we chose from among Our servants; and of them is he who causes himself to suffer a loss, and of them is he who follows the middle course, and of them is he who is the foremost in goodness… "*

And:

*"And Verily they who are thrilled for fear of their Lord, and those who believe in the signs of their Lord, and those who associate not (anything) with their Lord."*

He negated from them any kind of polytheism, in knowledge or in action, until He said:

*"It is they who are zealous in [performing] good works, and take the lead in them."*

They are the real believers, who have complete knowledge in Allah and do everything for Him; they are the foremost, the ones brought near and they have certainty.

Allah has promised that He will uncover the veil from their hearts; He said:

*"No indeed! The record of the pious is indeed in 'Illiyun. And what will show you what is 'Illiyun? It is a written record, witnessed by those brought near [to Allah]."*

'Illiyun is the celestial heavenly world. He, the Almighty said:

*"Thus did we show Ibrahim the dominion of the heavens and the earth, that he might be of those who possess certitude."*

This ultimate goal is the same as that also mentioned in another verse:

*"Thus we established Joseph in the land and that We might teach him the interpretation of dreams."*

And,

*"And that God may know those who have sincerely believed, and that He may take witness from among you."*

But this goal is not similar to that of this verse:

*"So that mankind may not have any argument against Allah, after the [sending of the] apostles."*

The verse establishes that Allah, the Almighty will show His worshippers who have certitude the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Moreover, He, the Almighty also further explains this in His saying:

*"All His command, when He will something, is to say to it 'Be' and it is. So immaculate is He in whose hand is the dominion of all things and to whom you shall be brought."*

The Dominion is the realm of command *(alam al-amr)*, which is the celestial heavenly world. As the tradition says:

"If the devils did not hover around the hearts of the children of Adam, they would see the dominion of the heavens and earth."

Another proof that Allah will give the witnessing of the heavens and earth as a gift to those who have attained certitude is Allah's saying:

*"Were you to know with certain knowledge, you would surely see hell. Again, you will surely see it with the eye of certainty."*

And:

*"No indeed! Rather their hearts have been sullied by what they have been earning."*

Allah, the Almighty also points to such an implication in that committing sins removes the precept of certainty, as He says:

*"They impugned them –though they were convinced in their hearts."*

And:

*:Have you seen him who has taken his desires to be his god and whom Allah has led astray knowingly, and set a seal upon his hearing and his heart, and drawn a blind on his sight?"*

In conclusion, it is important that good deeds be accompanied with certainty so that it results in an outcome which is fruitful. He said:

*"To Him ascend the good word, and He elevates righteous conduct."*

Returning to our discussion, Allah has promised these vicegerents that He will change their lives, that is, their existence. He said:

*"Is he who was lifeless, then We gave him life and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people, like one who dwells in a manifold darkness which he cannot leave?"*

He says that they have a light and walk with it among people, living with them, and living is with the body and the senses. So, they have an illuminated life, and divine senses and bodies.

He, the Almighty said:

*"Thus have we revealed to you the spirit of Ourdispensation. You did not know what the Book is, nor what is faith; but We made it a light that we may guide by its means whomever We wish of our servants."*

He Almighty explains that this light is an intellectual spirit, so it is more important that it be within the Realm of Command, as He says:

*"[For] such, He has written faith into their hearts and strengthened them with a spirit from Him." 58:22*

He then informed them that He, the Glorified, will guide them to His Light, and He is the Light over all lights, and by Him all the heavens and earth are illuminated. He said:

*"Allah is the Light of the heavens and earth." 24:35*

Then He gave the example of this light in which He illuminates the heaven and earth, saying:

*"The parable of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp –the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star –lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, whose oil almost lights up, though fire should not touch it. Light upon Light. Allah guides to His Light whomsoever He wishes." 24:35*

His Light has two veils of light in which by them the heavens and earth are illuminated. One of them is the niche, which is the less illuminative and a lamp gives light to it, and the latter is, in turn, illuminated by the glass.

So, the lamp oversees with the light of the glass and the niche, and the glass oversees with the light of the niche, and it is the niche that lights up and gives light to others.

It might be that the light of the earth  is from the niche, and above it is the glass, and maybe the light of the heavens is from the glass, as He the Almighty has said:

*"He directs the command from the heaven to the earth." 32:5*

In this verse there is no mention of anything above and beyond the heavens or the earth, or any explanation of the lamp mentioned in the verse, other than what is understood from His saying:

*"Lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof almost glows forth (of itself), and (even) though fire touch it not." 24:35*

He, the Almighty then mentioned the examples of the niche He gave, explaining it more:

*"(That lamp is lit) in houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and His name be mentioned therein, therein declare glory unto Him in the mornings and the evenings. Men whom neither merchandize nor any sale diverts them from the remembrance of Allah, and they are constancy in prayer and paying the poor rate." 24:36-37*

He describes them as those who do not forget the remembrance and good deeds. They are not veiled from His remembrance, and do not pay attention to anything else other than Him the Almighty. They are devoted to Him, and we have already stated some of the characteristics of the sincere in the last chapter when the verses about them were mentioned.

He, the Almighty said:

*"Hallowed is Allah far above from what they ascribe unto Him. But not so are the sincere chosen servants." 37:15-16*

*"So it was, that We might turn away from him all evil and indecency. He was indeed one of our dedicated servants."*

*"By your might, I will surely pervert them, except Your exclusive servants among them."*

*"So they will indeed be arraigned before Him – all except Allah's exclusive servants."*

*"And you shall be recompensed not but what you were doing, Save the servants of Allah, the sincere."*

He, the Almighty explains that He is exalted from any praise other than their praise. He will dissuade them from all evil and corruption, and satanic insinuations will strike all except for them. The frightening horror of Judgment Day, like the thunder strike, the dreadful scream, the gathering of everyone, the giving of the book of deeds, the judgment and the weighing, will not apply to those sincere ones. They are excluded

from all these levels, and the reward they receive is not for the actions they have done, because they did not have actions.

This is a friction of the Gifts of Allah the Almighty regarding His Vicegerents.

It can be understood from all that was explained that the endowed Gifts of Allah are their rights because of their annihilation in their actions, characteristics, and essences.

The first thing that is annihilated is their actions, and the least of that, as mentioned by some scholars are six things: death, life, sickness, health, poverty and wealth.

They witness these six things from the Truth Almighty, like when one sees a movement but doesn't see the mover, but he knows there is a mover. Allah Almighty takes the position of their actions, so their actions become His actions, as the traditions in al-Kafi and al-Tawhid refer, narrating from Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) regarding His saying:

*"So when they roused Our wrath, We took vengeance on them." 43:55*

"Verily Allah Almighty does not anger or regret the way we do, however He created vicegerents for Himself, and they regret and accept, and they are created and have a Lord. He Almighty has made their acceptance His acceptance and their anger His anger."

This is because He has made them callers unto Him and the guides towards Him, and hence they became so. Of course, these features are not attributed to Allah the same way as they are attributed to His creation, but this meaning is what He Himself has stated.

Allah Almighty has also said:

"Whosoever insults one of my vicegerents has challenged Me to a combat, and has called Me to it."

He also said:

*"Whoever obeys the Apostle certainly obeys Allah." 4:80*

And:

*"Indeed those who swear allegiance to you, swear allegiance only to Allah." 48:10*

These meanings all go back to the explanation we have already given, and similar to this is contentment, anger, and other attributes of Allah the Almighty that are similar to it.

The meaning for the word 'similar' in the words of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) is meant to show the numerous verses and traditions that have spoken of this matter, again like:

*"And you did not throw when you threw, rather it was Allah who threw." 8:17*

And:

*"Nor does he speak out of his own desire: it is just a revelation that is revealed to him." 53:3-4*

The pronoun in the second verse ['it'/? ?] relates to speaking *(nutq)*.

And:

*"You have no hand in the matter." 3:128*

Our Beloved Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.s.) has also said:

"Fatima (s.a.) is a part of me! Whoever hurts her has hurt me, and whoever hurts me has hurt Allah."

Furthermore, the tradition narrated by al-Daylami will be mentioned soon, by the will of Allah.

Then, Allah will annihilate the actions and characteristics of the vicegerents, and the principle actions, that can be deduced from the traditions of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) are five: life, knowledge, power, hearing and listening. Allah Almighty has substituted and taken the place of these vicegerents in these five actions.

It is narrated in al-Kafi, narrating a tradition from Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) who had said:

"Verily Allah, may He be Glorified, said: "There is no servant of my servants who can come near to Me by something more loved by Me than what I have made obligatory on them. And, surely, a servant will come close to Me with supererogatory prayers until I love him, and if I love him I will become his hearing that he hears with, his sight that he sees with, his tongues that he speaks with, his hand that he strikes with. If he was to supplicate to Me I will answer him and if he were to ask Me I would give him."

This popular tradition is narrated in both the Sunni and Shia schools and the Blessed Book of Allah gives evidence to this meaning when He says:

*"Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins." 3:31*

And:

*"O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah and believe in His apostle. He will grant you a double share of His mercy and give you a light to walk by, and forgive you." 57:28*

In applying these two verses together, both ordering the following of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and belief in Him, which are one thing, we can conclude that Allah's love of His servants is mercy over mercy, and it bequeaths to such a person a Light he walks with among the people, living and socializing with them. This person used to live and socialize with his

physical self and its parts, like hearing , seeing, touching and tasting, but then it changed into a Light from his Lord.

This Light is a living soul through which human beings are revived, as was already mentioned in the verse:

*"Is he who was lifeless, then We gave him life and provided him a light by which he walks among the people… " 6:122*

The outer context of 'We made for him' till the end of the verse is an explanation for the raising and giving of life.

It is stated in *Ithbat al-Wasiyah* by al-Masudi, narrating from the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (a.s.) who had said in a sermon:

"Glory be to You, which eye has the ability to witness the Radiance of your Light, and elevate to the gleaming Light of Your Power? Which perception can perceive anything below that, other than the eyes whose veils You have uncovered and ripped away the blinding veils? You dispersed their spirits to the sides of the wings of the Spirits, and they called for You between your Pillars. They entered between the Lights of Your Radiance, and oversaw from the level of the soil to the level of Your Grandeur. The People of the Kingdom *(malakut)* called them 'Visitors' *(zawwar)*, and the People of the All-Powerful *(jabarut)* named them the 'Builders'.

The tradition of Hisham, which refers to the same thing, has already been mentioned in Chapter Three.

This meaning is very commonly elaborated and mentioned in the supplications. In Imam Ali's (a.s.) intimate supplication in Shabaan, he says:

"O Allah, and inspire unto me the enthrallment of remembering You in Your remembrance, and make my vitality towards the Spirit of Your Names and Place of Sanctity"… "O Allah grant me total dedication towards You, and illuminate the eyes of our hearts by brightening its sight in seeing You, so the eyes of the hearts will tear pass through the veils of light, and will reach the core of Greatness, and our souls will become attached to the Glory of Your Sanctity."

This intimate discourse (munajat) of Shabaan holds the introduction and preliminary steps to wayfaring and witnessing.

It is narrated in Ibn Fahd's 'Uddah a-Dai' that Wahab ibn Munabbih said:

"A part of what Allah revealed to Prophet David (a.s.) was: "O David My remembrance is for those who remember, Me heaven is for those who obey, My love is for those who yearn, and I Myself am only for the Lovers."

After the annihilation of characteristics and actions, their essence is annihilated, and their names and descriptions vanish. The Truth Almighty will take their place. It is stated at the end of *'Risalah al-Tawhid'* that this station is so exalted that it is beyond words and terms or for a sign to touch it. It is being called a station *(maqam)* is a figure of speech. It is this that Allah gave to His Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), and the Pure Progeny (a.s.) that followed after Him.

**I say:** Now He the Almighty has made the vicegerents of their nation succeed them (a.s.), as abundant traditions prove that Allah Almighty joins them (a.s.) with their followers in the levels of the Hereafter. In the following tradition of al-Daylami, it says:

"They will transfer from the abode of annihilation to the abode of subsistence, and the abode of satan to the abode of the Compassionate."

From this it can be understood that the stations and miracles that Allah Almighty has promised creation in the Hereafter are given with blessedness to the saints in this world, and in it they are connected to their Imam (a.s.).

This station as you now know is more glorified than a station itself, and it has been expressed as such by the Imams (a.s.) in traditions that are extensive and abundant in regards to the negation of Attributes. Therefore, this station of the vicegerents of our nation is subjoined by the inheritance of the stations of the Imams (a.s.). Understand this point.

Moreover, one of the Divine Gifts that these vicegerents are endowed with is their traversing the intermediate realms between them and their Lord, and this point has already been explained.

It is stated in Bihar al-Anwar, narrating from al-Irshad by al-Daylami, and two chains of narrations have been mentioned for this tradition, part of which is in what follows:

"Allah Almighty said: "O Ahmad, do you know what kind of life is most pleasant and what life subsists more?"

He said: "O Allah, no."

Allah said: "For the pleasant life, it is that such a person does not break away from My remembrance, does not forget My blessings, does not neglect My rights, and night and day is after acquiring of My satisfaction.

As for the subsisting life, it is for them to work on their selves so that they no longer have any concern about the world and it becomes belittled in their eyes. The Hereafter becomes greater for them, and they prefer My desire over their desire. They seek My satisfaction, and amplify My blessings. They mention what I have done to them, and they

confess to Me day and night whenever they commit bad deed or a sin. They purify their hearts from whatever I dislike. They hate the Satan and his temptations, and they do not allow him to overcome their hearts. If they do so I will grant their hearts love so that I make their hearts for Me, and their leisure, concern, work, conversation will all be from the blessings I bestow unto them with those who are of the people of My creation who love Me. I will open the eyes of their hearts and ears, so that they will hear with their hearts, and see with their hearts My Glory and Magnitude. I will narrow the world for them, and make them hate the delights which are in it. I will warn them of the world and what is in it, the same way a shepherd warns his sheep of the pastures that are dangerous. If they become such, they would flee from the people, and they would transfer from the abode of subsistence to the abode of remaining, and from the abode of the satan to the abode of the Compassionate.

O Ahmad I will adorn them with awe and greatness, and this is the pleasant life, and the life of subsistence. This is the station of contentment.

So, whoever does according to My Pleasure I will grant them three features: I will make them know gratitude that will not be mixed with ignorance, remembrance that will not be mixed with forgetfulness, and a love of Me that will not be preferred by the love of any creation.

If he loves Me I will love him, and will open the eye of his heart onto My glory, and will not hide from him the elite of My creation. I will converse with them in the dark of the night and the light of the day so that he will sever his conversation with creation and gatherings with them, and I will make him hear My speech and the sound of My Angels.

I will make him know the secrets I have hidden from My creation. I will dress him with a dress of shyness so that all creation will be shy in front of him. He will walk on the earth, all forgiven, and I will make his heart aware and shrewd, and will not hide from him anything from heaven and hell.

I will make him know what people will go through in the horror of Judgment Day, and how I judge the poor and the rich, the knowledgeable and the ignorant. I will make him sleep in his grave and bring down Munkar and Nakir to ask him, and he will not see the distress of death, the darkness of the grave and burial, and the dismay of Judgment Day.

I will elect for him a scale, and open his Book of Deeds and put it in his right hand. He will read it, and I will not put between Me and him an explainer. These are the features of the Lovers.

O Ahmad, make your concern one concern, and make your tongue one tongue, and make your body alive, and do not ever be inattentive, for whoever is inattentive in remembering Me, I do not worry in which valley they perish."

In Bihar al-Anwar again, narrating from al-Kafi, al-Ma'ani, and al-Rawandi' Nawadir in different chains of narrators from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) and Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.), narrating from the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and what is mentioned here is the same as that stated in al-Kafi –where he said:

"The Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.s.) met with Haritha ibn Malik al-Numani al-Ansari and said to him: "How are you O Haritha ibn Malik al-Numani?"

Haritha said: "O Messenger of Allah, I'm a true believer."

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said to him: "For everything there is a reality, so what is the reality of what you said?"

He said: "O Messenger of Allah, I have turned away from the world. I have stayed up late at nights [in worship]. I have made thirsty my days [in fasting]. Now, I see the Throne of My Lord, and He has brought forward Judgment Day. It is like as if I see the people of heaven visiting each other in heaven, and I hear the howling of the people of hell in hellfire."

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said: "A servant whom Allah has lightened [his heart] with insight *(basirah)* and steadfastness."

If you were to contemplate properly on the verses and traditions that we have transcribed here, and that which we have not mentioned is far more than the brevity of what we have, and if you were to ponder over the remarks and phrases, you would see in the traits of the awliya' such mysteries that it will be impossible for any kind of expression to express.

Allah is the guide and the Helper. We now come to the end. Praise be to Allah for us being able to finish, and praise and peace be to our Master Muhammad and His Pure Progeny. Wassalam.

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Ignorance is a choice

*"Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer,*

*let him claim it wherever he finds it"*

*Imam Ali (as)*