The Mystery of Prayer

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The Mystery of Prayer

The Ascension of the Wayfarers and the Prayer of the Gnostics

سِرُّ الصَّلاة

مِعْراجُ السَّالِكينَ وَ صَلاةُ العارِفينَ

By

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini

Introduction and Translation by

Sayyid Amjad H. Shah Naqavi



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To my mother,
who dearly cherished prayer
1950 – 2010



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قال موسى بن جعفر الكاظم عليه السلام
في دعاء المباهلة

...

اللهم صلّ على محمد وعلي
أخيه وصِنوِه أمير المؤمنين وقبلة العارفين

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Foreword

The events of the past few decades and not least the situation in the Middle East since 2003 have brought Shīʿī Islam into focus. However, both the general public and even the scholarly academic communities lack the resources to understand and engage with the intellectual and spiritual traditions of Shīʿī Islam in depth. Put simply, we still do not have to hand sufficient translations of key texts that allow the traditions of Shīʿah Islam to speak directly. In order to rectify that situation—and to move beyond the narrowly political—the Shīʿah Institute is pleased to announce the launch of the Modern Shīʿah Library. The Modern Shīʿah Library will endeavour to present for a scholarly readership some of the key works of the modern Shīʿah traditions in reliable translations with annotations and the relevant contextualisations to facilitate understanding. We believe that scholarly engagement and mutual recognition arise from intense textual reading. The philosophy, legal theory, political theology, hermeneutics, spirituality, and thought of the modern Shīʿah traditions, insofar as they constitute continuities of earlier scholarly traditions and expressions of communities of textual interpretation, as well as the points from which they diverge, demand our attention.

As part of this endeavour, we present in this volume one of the masterpieces of the modern Shīʿah mystical tradition penned by a household name, Ayatollah Khomeini. While most will be familiar with his role in the Iranian Revolution of 1979, few people are aware of his lifelong commitment to the mystical and philosophical traditions of the Shīʿah seminary. *The Mystery of Prayer* was written in his youth and reflects his early and abiding interests in making sense of the reality that we inhabit as a unified locus of manifestation of the divine and how the very essence of ritual practice, exemplified in prayer, is an attempt to link our human experiences to that reality of unity. As such, it represents a work of mystical reflection as well as a major statement of modern Shīʿah political theology. This will be the first of many further volumes that will contribute to a more nuanced and informed understanding of modern Shīʿī Islam.

Sayyid Sajjad H. Rizvi (General Editor, The Modern Shīʿah Library)
Exeter, 24 February 2015

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Preface

The name Khomeini still leads an overwhelmingly political existence in the Western imagination. Tied therein as he inexorably is to the Iranian Revolution, and thus to Iran's relationship with the West since that time, the career and thought of 'the Ayatollah' remain the prerogative primarily of journalism. Meanwhile, what serious studies have been produced in the academy in the past few decades have retained a very similar focus on the political aspects of Khomeini's life and works.

The resultant image of Khomeini is at best incomplete and at worst distorted. The picture of the elderly man in a scholar's turban is (perhaps too) familiar to the English-speaking public, and yet ironically these two most salient features of the caricature signal its omissions. At the time of the revolution in 1979 Khomeini was in his late seventies, and the defining pursuit of his long life had been that of religious learning.

The subject of the work translated here, written when Khomeini was in his thirties, is the learned disciplines which most fascinated him throughout his life, philosophy (*ḥikmah*) and gnosis (*'irfān*). The existential questions addressed therein were matters with which he never stopped engaging, and his meditations thereupon bear witness to his formidable grasp of the copious literature of an intellectual tradition stretching back to classical antiquity. It is his early writings on these subjects that underpin his very world-view, his wrestling and coming to terms with the concept of being (*al-wujūd*) in all its aspects and implications.

This translation is presented with the understanding that one cannot hope to understand the older Khomeini without a grasp of these his deepest intellectual passions which he had been pursuing for decades, and in the knowledge that until now his numerous writings on the subject have received minimal scholarly attention in the West, the only book-length monograph being the very fine study by Christian Bonaud, of which there is currently no English translation. With this in mind the present work is conceived as part of a lengthier project, with further translations currently being undertaken of Khomeini's other gnostic writings.

The text used for this translation, as referred to below, is based on the work published by the Institute for the Compilation and Publication of the Works of Imām Khomeini (*Mu'assasa-i tanẓīm wa nashr-i āthār-i imām khumaynī*) in Tehran (2nd ed., 1372 SH/1993–4). It has been edited anonymously by the institute and bears a forward by 'Abd Allāh Jawādī Āmulī. It is based on a single manuscript of Khomeini's, which is supplied in the facsimile appended to the text.

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The editors of the Persian edition supply regular footnotes suggesting sources for Khomeini's citations. Some of these have been included in translation here, distinguished from the translator's footnotes by an asterisk. The citations supplied in these footnotes are to be referred to the recreation of the bibliography given in the Persian edition at the end of this volume.

Persian prose is not, in general, averse to long sentences, and even in this context Khomeini's writing is inescapably dense, archaising, and opaque, as well as employing a range of deeply technical terminology. The author, moreover, frequently inserts quotations in Arabic from sources that are over a thousand years old. The translation undertakes to represent rather than diffuse these stylistic features, attempting to create a text that is both readable and retains the character of the original.

As a work of gnosis *The Mystery of Prayer* is concerned with intimate experience as much as with philosophy, and this has been kept in mind when translating the author's terminology. Overly mathematical-sounding vocabulary has thus been avoided where possible, and certain terms have been rendered variously as they bode in context. Names have been transliterated according to the original orthography, without any attempt to render pronunciation. The name and title of the author are supplied in our introduction, but elsewhere he is referred to by his surname alone for the sole sake of brevity. While transliterations of technical terms have been inserted in parentheses where necessary, beyond this unsightly square brackets have been avoided; where a word or phrase has been needed to accurately render Khomeini's meaning it has been inserted as part of the prose. Where a particular translation of a term merits explanation, this is supplied as a footnote. Beyond this an introduction is supplied in which is explained the intellectual and historical context of the work, as well as its relation to Khomeini's other writings on the subject. Moreover, extensive explicatory footnotes are supplied throughout. Citations supplied in these footnotes are referenced in the translator's bibliography.

Some 12 years' (somewhat sporadic) work in the making, this translation has, at last, come into being. Such a long wait not withstanding, I am left wishing that circumstance had permitted me more hours to further refine what is here presented. The published translation, as it stands, could not have been accomplished without the inspiration, help, and dedication of many individuals. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and thankfulness to all those who have assisted me in bringing this work to fruition.

I am gratefully indebted to the Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and to the chair of its board of trustees Syeda Khalida Batool Rahman for their support; to the Shīʿah Institute, to its generous benefactors for their financial assistance and to its staff for their support, in par-

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ticular a note of thanks is due to Benjamin and Mohammed for their tireless efforts and expertise; to Dr Maurits H. van den Boogert and his team at Brill, who have published the work into a reality; and to those friends whose help has always been forthcoming but who have requested not to be mentioned in name. Sincere thanks are, of course, also due to Sayyid Hassan Khomeini, the grandson of the author, for his kind words and prayers.

To the following individuals, meanwhile, I offer my heartfelt thanks, both for the indispensable scholarly and academic support which they have provided and for the tenacity and warmth of their friendship. Beyond all debts of assistance I remain honoured to know them and to benefit from their great scholarship and learning: to the late learned and noble Professor I.K.A. Howard for reading the initial drafts of the translation; to Mr Mohammed Reza Jozi for scrutinizing the original Persian text against the English translation; to Dr Isabel Miller for her profound scholarly insights; to Professor Sajjad Rizvi for his continuous guidance, support, and scholarship; to Mr George Warner for his learned input; and to Mr Aun Kazemi for his last-minute help. Needless to say, whatever shortcomings this work may exhibit are entirely my own.

The love, kindness, and support of my parents is beyond what mere thanks can repay; I am forever grateful for the education they availed me, in particular to my late mother who was and is always my foremost paragon of *namāz*. Last but not least, all my humble gratitude is due to my ancestors the *Ahl al-Bayt*, peace be upon them, and to my forebear, Pīr-i Ṭarīqat, Jalāl Ganj, Mīr Surkh, Mīr Buzurg, Sher Shāh, Quṭb al-Aqṭāb, Jalāl Aʿẓam Ḥaydar-i Ṣānī Ḥażrat Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥaydar, Surkh Pōsh, Naqavī al-Bukhārī (595–690 AH/1198–1291), the grand master of the Lofty Ḥusaynī Murtażawī Shāhī order of Bukhara (*silsilah ʿaliyyah ḥusayniyyah murtażawiyyah shāhiyyah bukhāriyyah*) and the founder of the Jalālī order (*silsilah jalāliyyah*), and his descendants, my forefathers, for their continuous unseen guiding hand, their grace, and their *ʿināyat*, without which I fear I would be lost in the valley of bewilderment.

بندہ شیرخدا
Sayyid Amjad H. Shah Naqavi
London, 18 February 2015

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Translator's Introduction

> Said al-Ṣādiq: 'Verily our affair is the truth, and the truth of the truth, and that is the exoteric, and the esoteric of the exoteric, and the esoteric of the esoteric, and that is the mystery, and the mystery of the mystery, and the mystery shrouded in mystery, and the mystery concealed in the mystery.'[1]

Āyatullāh Sayyid Rūḥ Allāh al-Mūsawī al-Khumaynī (hereafter Khomeini)[2] (1902–1989) finished composing 'The Ascension of the Wayfarers and the Prayer of the Gnostics'[3] (*Miʿrāj al-sālikīn wa ṣalāt al-ʿārifīn*),[4] which has subsequently become known and published as *The Mystery of Prayer* (*Sirr al-ṣalāt*), on the twenty-first of Rabīʿ al-Thānī, 1358 AH (June 1939).[5] At this time, Khomeini

1 Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Farrūkh al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt*, ed. Muʾassasah al-Imām al-Mahdī, Qum, n.d., p. 71.

2 The conventional spelling in English has become 'Khomeini', and this will therefore be followed from hereon in. It is worth noting that while the Arabic *al-* is nearly always omitted, Khomeini himself always signed his name with this included as above.

3 Words from the Arabic root *ʿ-r-f* are in this translation rendered as 'gnosis' and its cognates. Such words are often instead translated with cognates of 'mysticism', a frequent objection being that 'Gnostic' refers to a specific intellectual movement in Christianity. However, 'gnosis' is here preferred since the root meaning of the original Greek (γιγνώσκω), 'to know; to recognise' avails by far the closest approximation to the Arabic. The OED, moreover, supplies 'the knowledge of spiritual mysteries' for 'gnosis', which mirrors the meaning of *ʿirfān* as employed by Khomeini and his fellows. For a similar justification of such a usage see Sayyid Hossein Nasr's translation of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā)'s *Kitāb al-mashāʿir* as *Metaphysical Penetrations*, ed. Ibrahim Kalin, Provo, 2014, p. 77.

4 The term *sālik* is translated as 'wayfarer' throughout the text. For a basic definition of the term and its cognates see ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, Cairo, 1413 AH/1992, p. 119.

5 The edition used for this translation is Rūḥ Allāh Mūsawī Khumaynī, *Sirr al-ṣalāt*, 2nd ed., Tehran, 1372 SH/1993. It is published by the Institute for the Compilation and Publication of Imām Khomeini's Works (*Muʾassasa-i tanẓīm wa nashr-i āthār-i imām khumaynī*). The edition has a forward by the prominent seminarian teacher of philosophy and gnosticism Āyatullāh ʿAbd Allāh Jawādī Āmulī and is appended with a facsimile of Khomeini's autographed manuscript of the dedication to his son and a manuscript of the text. The first printing of *Sirr al-ṣalāt* seems to have been in 1361 SH/1982, followed soon after by an Arabic translation by Sayyid Aḥmad Fihrī, Khomeini's representative in Syria and Lebanon, in Beirut in 1986. A second translation in Arabic has been published recently by an anonymous group of scholars (*lajnat al-hudā*) as Khomeini, *Sirr al-ṣalāt*, 4th ed., Beirut, 1431 AH/2010. While both are valuable contributions, both editions are very much interpretations of the text rather than precise translations, and therefore lack some of the subtleties contained in the original.

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was established as a teacher in Qum, and when not instructing students or attending lectures himself spent his days in research and contemplation.[6]

Sirr al-ṣalāt was Khomeini's sixth book.[7] The author's first work, completed in 1347 AH/1928, was *Sharḥ duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, a commentary on the famous dawn supplication of the fifth Shīʿī imām Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Bāqir. His second work seems to have been glosses completed in 1348 AH/1929 on some of the works of the Safavid sage Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī (d. 1107 AH/1696), namely his commentaries on the *ḥadīth* of Imām al-Riḍā's disputation with the exilarch (*raʾs al-jālūt*) entitled *al-Fawāʾid al-raḍawiyyāh*.[8] This was followed by his first independent treatise on the concept of nearmostness[9] and the mediation between the cosmos and God, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, completed in 1349 AH/1931.[10] His fourth work was *Taʿlīqāt ʿalā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa-miṣbāḥ al-uns*. This consisted of marginalia on two of the key school texts of the Ibn al-ʿArabī tradition, the commentary of Dāwūd b.

6 Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent*, New York, 1993, pp. 409–11.

7 On his gnostic works see Jawādī Āmulī's introduction to Khomeini, *Sirr al-ṣalāt*, pp. 20–1; Christian Bonaud, *L'Imam Khomeyni, Un gnostique méconnu du XXe siècle*, Beirut, 1997, pp. 104–48; Alexander Knysh, '"Irfan" Revisited: Khomeini and the Legacy of Islamic Gnostic Philosophy', in *The Middle East Journal*, 46.4 (Autumn 1992), pp. 631–53; Lloyd Ridgeon, 'Hidden Khomeini: gnosticism and poetry', in *A Critical Introduction to Khomeini*, ed. Afshin Adib-Moghadam, Cambridge, 2014, pp. 193–210; Hamid Algar, 'The fusion of the gnostic and the political in the work of Imam Khomeini', <www.al-islam.org> accessed 19th February 2015.

8 The original text is in Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī, *al-Arbaʿīnīyyāt li-kashf anwār al-qudsiyyāt*, ed. Najafqulī Ḥabībī, Tehran, 1381 SH/2003, pp. 67–114. These glosses have only been published as part of Khomeini's collected works in the last decade.

9 The term *walāyah* has been translated as 'nearmostness' contrary to popular translations based on 'sainthood' and 'friendship', and *walī* (plural *awliyāʾ*) is correspondingly rendered 'nearmost one'. The Arabic word *walī* does not capture all of the implications of the word 'friend' as given in the OED. Nor is the word 'saint' entirely appropriate. Derived as it is from the Latin *sanctus*, meaning 'holy' or 'sacred', 'saint' is etymologically much closer to the Arabic root *q-d-s*, and, indeed, the word for 'saint' used by Arab Christians is *qiddīs*. *Walī*, meanwhile, is defined by Ibn Fāris (d. c. 395 AH/1004) as having the primary meaning of *qurb*: 'closeness' or 'nearness'. This is aptly reflected in English by the expression 'nearmost one'. Christian Bonaud opts for a similar translation, rendering *walāyah* as *proche-amité*. For his discussion of the term and Khomeini's usage thereof see Bonaud, *L'Imam Khomeyni*, pp. 268–77. For further discussion of the meaning of the terms *wilāyah* and *walāyah* in the context of notions of closeness and proximity within the Shīʿī gnostical tradition see Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (d. 2005), *Sharḥ-i muqaddimah-i qayṣarī bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, Mashhad, 1385 AH/1966, pp. 494–608.

10 This text, written in Arabic, was first published in Beirut in 1983, but is more famous in the edition and commentary by his student the eminent seminarian philosopher Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (d. 2005) published in Tehran in 1372 SH/1993.

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Muḥammad al-Qayṣarī (d. 751 AH/1350) on the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, and *Miṣbāḥ al-uns* of Ibn Ḥamza al-Fanārī (d. 834 AH/1431), itself a commentary on the *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* of Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 673 AH/1274), which he penned in the years up to 1354/1936.[11] His fifth book, finished earlier in the same year as *Sirr al-ṣalāt*, was *Chihil ḥadīth*, a commentary on forty selected prophetic and imāmic traditions. Though written in Persian, the book is often referred to by the author in this text by its Arabic title, *al-Arba'īn*.[12] These were followed in 1942 by a more accessible work on prayer, *Ādāb al-ṣalāt*.[13]

11 This was first published in 1986 in Tehran. On the *Sharḥ* of Qayṣarī see Āshtiyānī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddimah-i qayṣarī bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*; on the *Miṣbāḥ* see Alan Godlas, 'Mollā Fanārī and the *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*', in *Uluslararası Molla Fenârî Sempozyumu* ('International symposium on Mollā Fanārī'), Bursa, 2010, pp. 31–46; Dāwūd b. Muḥammad al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭla' khuṣūṣ al-kalim fī ma'ānī fuṣūs al-ḥikam*, Bombay, 1300 AH/1882; and Ibn Ḥamza al-Fanārī's *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, with various glosses, ed. Muḥammad Khwājawī, Tehran, 1374 SH/1995.

12 The original Persian text with the alternative title *Arba'īn-i ḥadīth* was first published in Tehran in 1989, an Arabic translation as *al-Arba'ūna ḥadīthan* followed in Beirut in 1991, and an English translation in 2003 by the Institute for the Compilation and Publication of Imām Khomeini's Works in Tehran.

13 The Persian was first published in Tehran in 1980, an Arabic translation *al-Ādāb al-ma'nawīyya li-l-ṣalāt*, again by Sayyid Aḥmad Fihrī, in Damascus in 1984, and an English translation in Tehran in 2002. Significantly, none of these works were published at the time of their composition. Publishing was not so widespread for works composed in the seminary, particularly in a time of political marginalisation of the traditional Shī'ī elites under the modernist programme of the Pahlavis. Many of Khomeini's gnostic writings appeared in the 1980s after he came to power, and whilst it could be argued that this was the result of the state apparatus seeking to establish the all-round credentials of their leader; publication flourished after the Revolution, partly drawing upon the subsidies available for printing books, especially on religious subjects. It is important to remember that Khomeini's credentials as a scholar in the field were already long-established. As early as the 1960s (when Khomeini himself was in exile) manuscripts of these works were being cited. See for example Āshtiyānī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddimah-i qaysarī bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, bibliography, pp. 6, 445–6. Āshtiyānī does not cite Khomeini by name, presumably in fear of repercussions from the regime which had so recently sent him into exile. He simply gives the author of *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah* as *ḥaḍrat ustādh 'allāmah* (the honourable, learned teacher). Khomeini's first work, which was published in 1946, although written in 1944, was the famous political-theological polemic *Kashf al-asrār* in response to reformist and modernist approaches to Shī'ī Islam in the work *Asrār-i hazār-sālah*. Already in this work we can see an explicit link made between the Platonic ideal as gnostic and the legitimacy of governance, albeit maintaining a post-Safavid adherence to monarchy. For discussions see Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran*, London, 2000, pp. 35, 103–12; and Afshin Adib-Moghadam's introduction to *A Critical Introduction to Khomeini*, Cambridge, 2014, pp. 10–5. An English translation of the text is forthcoming with Yale University Press.

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As its title implies, *The Mystery of Prayer* sets out to elucidate the inner meanings of the Islamic ritual of prayer (*ṣalāt*),[14] relating its outward forms and observances to how those forms are unveiled in the inner states of the wayfarer (*sālik*) as he or she comes to terms with the reality of God. Key to this endeavour is a very ancient concept in the Shī'ī tradition, that of the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and the esoteric (*bāṭin*). This is the notion that the word of God, such as the Qur'ān or the Prophetic tradition, contains an inner aspect by which it may be more profoundly understood. This is, of course, of great significance in Qur'ānic hermeneutics,[15] but the concept may also serve to add dimensions of meaning to the realms of ritual and action, such as we see here in Khomeini's work. This understanding of the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and the esoteric (*bāṭin*) can be found as far back as the Qur'ān as well as in the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet and of the Imāms, as may be seen in the following examples:

> He is the first and the last, the outward (*al-ẓāhir*) and the inward (*al-bāṭin*).[16]
> They know an outward (*ẓāhir*) part of the present life...[17]
> And He has lavished on you His blessings, outward (*ẓāhir*) and inward (*bāṭin*).[18]
> Verily the Qur'ān has an exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and an esoteric (*bāṭin*), and its esoteric has seven esoteric levels in turn.[19]
> There is no verse save that there are unto it four meanings: the exoteric (*ẓāhir*), the esoteric (*bāṭin*), the limit (*ḥadd*), and the apex (*maṭla'*). And so the exoteric is recitation, the esoteric is understanding, the scope is the judgements regarding the permitted and the forbidden, and the apex is what God wills from the servant thereof.[20]
> Know that for every exoteric (*ẓāhir*) there is an esoteric (*bāṭin*) according to its like, and so whatsoever is pure of *ẓāhir* is pure of *bāṭin*, and whatsoever is impure of *ẓāhir* is impure of *bāṭin*.[21]

14 As will become apparent, *ṣalāt*, usually translated as 'prayer', is not to be confused with supplication (*du'ā'*), the act of asking with which prayer is usually associated in English. As a discussion of the esoteric aspects of the *ṣalāt*, the text of *Sirr al-ṣalāt* is organised according the succession of the outward forms of prayer.

15 See Majīd Falāḥpūr, *Mabānī uṣūl wa rawish-i tafsīr-i mullā ṣadrā*, Tehran, 1389 SH/2010, pp. 27–80.

16 Q.57:3.

17 Q.30:3.

18 Q.31:20.

19 Quoted from the Prophet in Mullā Muḥammad Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *Tafsīr al-ṣāfī*, Beirut, 1979, vol. I, pp. 31, 59.

20 Quoted from Imām 'Alī in Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *Tafsīr al-ṣāfī*. p. 31.

21 Quoted from Imām 'Alī in al-Sharīf al-Rāḍī, *Nahj al-balāghah wa al-mu'jam al-mufahras*

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> Verily the Qur'ān has an exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and an esoteric (*bāṭin*).[22]
> Verily the Qur'ān possesses an exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and an esoteric (*bāṭin*)...[23]

In the Imāmī Shī'ī tradition an axial characteristic of how this conception of the outward and the inward is understood is the insistence that one cannot exist without the other. This finds succinct expression in the following words of the sixth imām, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq:

> Said Abū 'Abd Allāh: 'O Haytham al-Tamīmī, verily a people trusted in the exoteric whilst denying the esoteric, and thus it availed them nothing, and after them there came a people who trusted in the esoteric whilst denying the exoteric, and thus it availed them nothing. There is no faith in the exoteric save through the esoteric, nor in the esoteric save through the exoteric.'[24]

In its concern with the inner dimensions of worship, *The Mystery of Prayer*, like those works that preceded it, is primarily concerned with the study of philosophy (*ḥikmah*) and gnosticism (*'irfān*), and, indeed, arguably represents Khomeini's most original work on this subject.[25] In introducing the understanding of the esoteric in the Shī'ī gnostic tradition it seems fitting to refer briefly to the work of Henry Corbin (d. 1978) who did more than most to draw attention thereto. For him, the intellectual history of esoteric approaches to religion is an unfolding of the sacred in history, an *hiéro-histoire*, in which the God that is hidden becomes manifest through discovering the inner meaning of scripture. Corbin's conception of spiritual hermeneutics, a *ta'wīl*, decodes the hidden meaning in the revealed books of scripture and of nature so that one can return to the original and essential meaning of the revelation: what is apparent and what is earthly is in this sense a pale imitation (a *ḥikāya* as he puts it) of the true life of the soul and of the prophets and friends of God who reveal the *deus absconditus*.[26] It is the true sense of the revelation, the account of the nature of God rendered through wisdom, for which purpose the mes-

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li-l-alfāẓ, Beirut, 1410 AH/1990, p. 153.

22 Quoted from Imām al-Ṣādiq in Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, ed. 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, Tehran 1363 SH/1984, vol. I, p. 549.

23 Quoted from Imām al-Kāẓim in al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. I, p. 374.

24 Al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣā'ir al-darajāt*, p. 952.

25 Bonaud, *L'Imam Khomeyni*, p. 123.

26 Henry Corbin, *Face de Dieu, face de l'homme*, Paris, 1983, pp. 43–4; Corbin, *Le paradoxe du monothéisme*, Paris, 1981; Corbin, *En Islam iranien I: Le shī'isme duodécimain*, Paris, 1972, pp. 3–51. For an exposition of Khomeini's own understanding of *ta'wīl* see Khomeini, *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, Qum, 1410 AH/1989, p. 50.

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sengers were sent and unto which the friends of God called.

Khomeini was profoundly interested in these areas of knowledge, having become drawn to them at an early age in the theological seminaries of Qum, despite the fact that they were far from central to the curriculum, and to some extent marginalised in the seminaries at that time, with scholars focusing rather on law and jurisprudence.[27] In fact, one of the central contestations in political theology in the 20th century Shīʿī seminary lay in the area of the permissibility of philosophy and gnosticism as subjects worthy of the jurist-in-training.[28] His first introduction to the subject may thus have been cultivated through private study, and biographers record that as a young seminarian he and a fellow student were together reading through the Qurʾānic exegesis *Tafsīr al-ṣāfī*, written by Mullā Muḥammad Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1091 AH/1680). It has long been emphasised in the gnostic tradition, however, that these sciences are not merely a theory to be consulted in books, but rather an intensely practical and ethical discipline, which must be learned under the tutelage of a master. In order to further these intellectual and spiritual interests, therefore, Khomeini personally sought out masters of philosophy and gnosticism who, in turn, agreed to instruct him.

His first formal teacher to instruct him in subjects related to gnosticism and ethics was Mīrzā Jawād Āqā (d. 1304 SH/1925), referred to in this text as Ḥājj Mīrzā Jawād Tabrīzī.[29] Tabrīzī may well have acted as his spiritual master and linked him into a gnostical apparatus that was associated with Sayyid ʿAlī Shūshtarī (d. 1283 AH/1865) through his teacher Ḥusayn-qulī Hamadānī (d. 1311 AH/1893) and networks in the shrine cities of Iraq, to which a number of other prominent figures of twentieth century philosophy and gnosticism in Iran were connected, including ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1981).[30] Since Hamadānī was also a student of Sabzawārī in philosophy, it demonstrates how the practical side of gnosticism became increasingly intertwined with the teaching of philosophy in the Qajar period to which the Pahlavi period was an inheritor. In the field of philosophy, meanwhile, his first teacher was

27 This may be somewhat illustrated by the fact that classes on gnosis (*ʿirfān*) were always referred to as ethics (*akhlāq*).

28 On the role of gnosticism and the debate on philosophy see Sayyid Sajjad Hayder Rizvi, '"Only the Imam knows best": The Maktab-i tafkīk's attack on the legitimacy of philosophy in Iran', in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 22 (2012), pp. 487–503 and Rizvi, 'The Philosopher-Gnostic and the *Marjaʿīya*: The Case of ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1981) Contesting Authority in the *Ḥawza*', forthcoming.

29 Of course, he pursued courses in jurisprudence with Shaykh ʿAbd al-Karīm Ḥāʾirī until 1937 when the latter died, and whom he had followed to Qum. Ḥāʾirī gave him his license to practice *ijtihād*.

30 Bonaud, *L'Imam Khomeyni*, pp. 88–94.

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Mīrzā ʿAlī Akbar Ḥakīm Yazdī (d. 1305 SH/1926); he may also have taught Khomeini mathematics and astronomy.[31] Khomeini, having only arrived in Qum in 1922 or 1923,[32] was only to avail briefly of either master's teachings, but it seems clear that these two short-lived periods of instruction made a lasting impression. Another important master during these early years was Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Rafiʿī Qazwīnī (d. 1355 AH/1975), a scholar of philosophy and gnosticism, whose classes at the Fayżiyyah Khomeini attended until the former's departure from Qum in 1310 SH/1931.[33] He studied the *Sharḥ-i manẓūmah* of Sabzawārī and the *Asfār* of Mullā Ṣadrā for five years with Qazwīnī. It was probably in this period that Khomeini became acquainted with Neoplatonic texts such as the *Uthūlūjiyā* ('Theology of Aristotle') as well as works of Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī (d. 1107 AH/1696) and Mīr Dāmād (d. 1040 AH/1631).

Khomeini's most significant instructor in gnosticism and spiritual practice in this formative period was Mīrzā Muḥammad ʿAlī Shāhābādī (d. 1328 SH/1950).[34] Shāhābādī, having also studied gnosticism in Tehran, in

31 Rizvi, 'Hikma muta'aliya in Qajar Iran: Locating the Life and Work of Mulla Hadi Sabzawari (d. 1289 AH/1873)', in *Iranian Studies*, 44.4 (July 2011), p. 489. Khomeini's account of his study is provided in a short autobiography published in Sayyid ʿAlī Riḍā Ḥusaynī Yazdī, *Āyīnah-i dānishwarān*, Tehran, 1353 AH/1934, pp. 65–7, reprinted in *Ṣaḥīfah-i nūr* ('Collected works'), Tehran, 1372 SH/1993, vol. 1, pp. 22–4. Bonaud, *L'Imam Khomeyni*, p. 46 says that authors have confused Sabzawārī with his student Ḥusayn Sabzawārī who was one of the key teachers of gnosticism in Tehran along with Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Jilwah (d. 1315 AH/1896) and Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshihī (d. 1306 AH/1889) and they all taught Yazdī. On Yazdī, who taught the intellectual sciences at the Madrasah-i Fayżiyyah after it was refounded in Qum by Ḥāʾirī see Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tārīkh-i ḥukamāʾ wa ʿurafāʾ-i mutaʾakhkhirīn az ṣadr al-mutaʾallihīn*, Tehran, 1980, p. 121. Khomeini resorts to astronomical ideas in his following works, *Sharḥ duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, pp. 31–6 and *Taʿlīqāt ʿalā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 99.

32 Prior to this point, he had since the age of 19 been studying in the town of Arak, where he was a student of ʿAbd al-Karīm Ḥāʾirī (d. 1355 AH/1937). When the latter left Arak for Qum in 1922, Khomeini followed him. See Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, p. 29.

33 On Qazwīnī see Ghulām Ḥusayn Riḍā Nizhād's introduction to Qazwīnī, *Majmūʿa-i rasāʾil u maqālāt-i falsafī*, Tehran, 1367 SH/1989, pp. 87–118. Qazwīnī was also a product of the seminaries of Tehran in gnosticism and a student of Qumshihī and Mīrzā Ḥasan Kirmānshāhī (d. 1336 AH/1918).

34 On Shāhābādī see Bonaud, *L'Imam Khomeyni*, pp. 82–7; Muḥammad ʿAlī Muḥammadī, *Shāhābādī-i buzurg: āsimān-i ʿirfān*, Tehran, 1374 SH/1995; Gulpāyigānī, *Fiṭrat-i ʿishq: ʿārif-i ḥakīm āyatullāh al-ʿuẓmā muḥammad ʿalī shāhābādī*, Tehran, 1386 SH/2007; *Āsimānī: sharḥ-i zindagānī-i ʿārif-i maktūm-i āyatullāh mīrzā muḥammad ʿalī shāhābādī*, Tehran, 1383 SH/2004; ʿAlī Ḥaydar Murtaḍawī, *Faylasūf-i ʿitrat: nigāhī bih aḥwāl u afkār-i ʿārif-i ḥakīm-i āyatullāh mīrzā muḥammad ʿalī shāhābādī*, Tehran, 1386 SH/2007; Nayyarah Dashtbān, *Ārāʾ-i ʿirfānī-i ḥakīm-i āyatullāh muḥammad ʿalī shāhābādī*, Tehran,

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particular with Mīrzā Hāshim Ashkiwarī (d. 1332 AH/1914), arrived in Qum in 1928; he captivated Khomeini's attention with his response to a question posed to him by the latter concerning the nature of revelation (*waḥy*). In *Sirr al-ṣalāt* Khomeini on four occasions refers to him with great reverence, with formulae such as 'our perfect gnostic master' (*shaykh-i 'ārif-i kāmil-i mā*), and following his name with the pious utterance 'may my soul be a ransom for him', a saying reserved for those held in the highest esteem. It was with Shāhābādī that Khomeini, alongside a handful of other students, studied many key texts in the study of *'irfān* such as the *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* of Qayṣarī and *Miṣbāḥ al-uns* of Fanārī.[35] His influence on Khomeini's early gnostic writings is very clear.

While *Sirr al-ṣalāt* is the outcome of Khomeini's personal interest in these subjects, it also stands at the end of a venerable set of religious and scholarly traditions. Of particular importance are the intellectual developments that took place in Iran in the early modern period, when a number of largely separate discursive traditions, theological, gnostic, and philosophical, were brought together at the hands of an array of schools and individuals to form systems of knowledge and metaphysical panoplies of exceptional richness and ambition. The most significant figures of this development for the gnostic tradition were Mullā Muḥammad Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, usually known as Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1045 AH/1635), to whom we shall have cause to return below.[36] In terms of earlier figures it is worth mentioning al-Ghazālī (d. 505 AH/1111) who, particularly in his *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, embarks on a similarly synthetic project, integrating theological and gnostic thought with political and ethical concerns.[37]

1386 SH/2007; *'Ārif-i kāmil: mushtamil bar amūzah-hā-i 'irfānī, nuktah, wa khāṭirah darbārah-i shāhābādī*, Tehran, 1380 SH/2001. The presence of a foundation dedicated to Shāhābādī's life and works, no doubt because of the assumed influence upon Khomeini, means that a number of works have been published on him and most of his works are in print. His three most important works were published in 1981 in Tehran just after the revolution: *Shadharāt al-ma'ārif* on aspects of the method of gnosticism, *Rashaḥāt al-asfār* on the work of Mullā Ṣadrā, and *Rashaḥāt al-biḥār wa-qabasāt al-anwār*, on *ḥadīth*, especially Majlisī's collection *Biḥār al-anwār*. They have recently been reprinted in Qum, often with Persian translations and commentaries.

35 For further details see Hamid Algar, 'A Short Biography', in Abdar Rahman Koya, *Khomeini: Life, Thought and Legacy*, Selangor, 2009, pp. 24–7; Bonaud, *L'Imam Khomeyni*, pp. 38–101; Alexander Knysh, '"Irfan" Revisited: Khomeini and the Legacy of Islamic Mystical Philosophy', pp. 633–6.

36 See Sayyid Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origins to the Present*, New York, 2006, pp. 209–33.

37 Al-Ghazālī, *Inner Dimensions of Islamic Worship*, tr. Muhtar Holland, Leicester, 1983; see Wael Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament*, New

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In the context of Khomeini's own writings, *The Mystery of Prayer* plays a significant role in the formulation of his political theology, that is to say the discourse through which a theological conception of reality underpins individual and public ethics.[38] Khomeini's approach here to the question of prayer and its link to one's journey within reality towards God demonstrates his concern with *askesis* and what Foucault called 'care for the self' and 'technologies of the self' as the ways in which humans mediate experience and make sense of their reality.[39]

It is salutary in this regard to remember that whilst the claims of gnosticism are often to forgo a discursive understanding of reality and to insist upon the ineffable nature of their subject resistant to theologisation, in practice most gnostics, in their attempt to grasp the ineffable and articulate an apophatic understanding of the Real, end up proposing an alternative theological vision.[40] At the heart of Islamic gnosticism is the concept of the perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*), the individual whose mediating status connects and presents the face of God to the cosmos and in return takes up the supplications of the cosmos back to God, akin to the notion of the Platonic philosopher-king, and in this sense a gnostic version of *Platonopolis* can be discerned indirectly in Khomeini's writings.[41] Gnostic discourse is thus most definitely theological and, insofar as it pertains to making sense of a central public and private ritual such as prayer and the individual and

York, 2013, pp. 129–38.

38 The modern field of political theology, at least since the revived interest in the work of Carl Schmitt, engages with the theological foundations of the concept of sovereignty and its connection to legitimacy and power; at its heart, Khomeini's work is concerned with how the sovereignty—as one sense of the term *walāyah* central to Shīī thought—of the human and divine are intertwined through the spiritual journey of the seeker in this life. See Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, tr. G. Schwab, Cambridge, MA, 1985; Paul Kahn, *Political Theology: Four New Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, New York, 2012. The one work that indicates most clearly the link between Khomeini's writings on gnosticism and his political theology is Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*.

39 Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, Amherst, 1988; Foucault, *The Government of the Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France 1982–1983*, New York, 2010. See Edward McGushin, *Foucault's Askesis: An Introduction to the Philosophical Life*, Evanston, IL, 2007.

40 See Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Gnosticism*, Cambridge, 1998.

41 For the perfect man see note below in chapter 1 of author's introduction. Dominic O'Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Oxford, 2003. *'Irfān* as political theology predicated on the privileged status of the gnostic is central to a number of readings of Khomeini such as 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥirz, *Min al-'irfān ilā al-dawla: al-taṣawwuf fī al-fikr al-imām al-khumaynī wa-l-shahīd al-ṣadr*, Beirut, 2011.

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communal aspects of one's relationship to the divine in the journey through this life and beyond, was also for Khomeini deeply ethical.

Concerning the sources for *Sirr al-ṣalāt*, Khomeini sometimes cites directly but often, as is common in the seminary tradition, quotes from works and scholars without reference. Together these sources encompass a wide range of subjects including theology, law, ethics, philosophy, and gnosticism, as well as the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*.

Those sources which he explicitly mentions in the text (occasionally quoting an author without citing a specific work) are *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah*, which is ascribed to Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148 AH/765), *Uṣūl al-kāfī* by Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329 AH/941), *'Ilal al-sharā'i'*, *Majālis* (*Amālī*), *al-Khiṣāl*, *'Uyūn akhbār al-riḍā*, and *al-Tawḥīd* by Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh al-Qummī (also known as al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq) (d. 381 AH/991), al-Sharīf al-Rāḍī's (d. 406 AH/1015) compilation of the *Nahj al-balāghah*, *Manāzil al-sā'irīn* by Khwājah 'Abdullāh Anṣārī (d. 481 AH/1088), Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 587 AH/1191), *Falāḥ al-sā'il* by 'Alī b. Mūsā b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Ṭāwūs (d. 664 AH/1266), Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672 AH/1274), *Asrār al-ṣalāt* by Zayn al-Dīn b. Nūr al-Dīn al-'Āmilī (al-Shahīd al-Thānī) (d. 966 AH/1558), *Wasā'il al-shī'ah* by Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī (d. 1104 AH/1693), his teacher Shāhābādī, and two previous works of his own, *Sharḥ al-arba'īn* and *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah*. His most frequently cited reference is, in fact, the *ḥadīth*. His use of these in the context of his other sources will be discussed further below, but for now it is pertinent to note that his insistence upon their use arguably engages indirectly with some modernist critiques of the reliability of the corpus.[42]

In addition to his cited sources, Khomeini names the following books and scholars as useful further reading on the subjects that *Sirr al-ṣalāt* discusses: 'Alī b. Mūsā b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Ṭāwūs, Bahā' al-Dīn b. Ḥusayn al-Ḥārithī al-Hamadānī al-'Āmilī (d. 1031–2 AH/1622–3), *Kitāb sharḥ al-faqīh* by Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī (d. 1070 AH/1659), Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1111 AH/1699), *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt* by Ḥājj Mullā Muḥammad Mahdī b. Abī Dharr Narāqī (d. 1209 AH/1794), *Mi'rāj al-sa'ādah* by Aḥmad b. Mullā Muḥammad Narāqī (d. 1245 AH/1829), and Ḥājj Mīrzā Jawād Tabrīzī (d. 1343 AH/1924). In directing the reader to these sources he is, of course, also acknowledging his own thorough awareness of them and their importance in what he writes.

Regarding those citations in *Sirr al-ṣalāt* for which Khomeini does not give

42 Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition: Modern Discussions on Sunna in Egypt and Pakistan*, Cambridge, 1996; Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, Oxford, 2009; Ahmad el-Shamsy, 'al-Shāfi'ī's written corpus: a source-critical study', in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 132 (2012), pp. 199–244.

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a reference, these have been identified through the labours of the editors of the Persian edition. These are *ḥadīth* compilations *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, *Maʿānī al-akhbār*, and *Thawāb al-aʿmāl* by al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's (d. 505 AH/1111) *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, a poetic couplet by Bābā Afḍal Kāshānī (d. 610 AH/1213–4), *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah* and *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638 AH/1240), a couplet by the poet Saʿdī (d.690 AH/1291), *Iʿtiqādāt* by Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, a couplet by the poet Ḥāfiẓ (d. 803 AH/1389–90), *Majālis al-muʾminīn* by Qāḍī Nūrullāh Shūshtarī (d. 1019 AH/1611

, *ʿIlm al-yaqīn* by Mullā Muḥammad Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1091 AH/1680), *Asrār al-ʿibādāt wa-ḥaqīqat al-ṣalāt* by Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī (d. 1103 AH/1691),[43] and *Kifāyat al-uṣūl* by Muḥammad Kaẓim Khurāsānī (d. 1329 AH/1911).[44]

Through my own labours I have identified a number of additional sources, including Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī's (d. after 787 AH/1385) *Asrār al-sharīʿah wa aṭwār al-ṭarīqah, Jāmiʿ al-asrār wa manbaʿ al-anwār*, and *Kitāb naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ*, Ibn Ḥamzah al-Fanārī's *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, and Dāwūd b. Muḥammad al-Qayṣarī's *Maṭlaʿ khuṣūṣ al-kalim fī maʿānī fuṣūs al-ḥikam*, as well as works by al-Shahīd al-Thānī and Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī, as discussed below. Moreover, I have provided annotations on key concepts throughout the text alongside more than a hundred suggestions for further reading, including directions to those works of Khomeini's composed prior to *Sirr al-ṣalāt*, including *Chihil ḥadīth, Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah, Sharḥ duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, and *Taʿlīqāt ʿalā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, which serve as important building blocks for the ideas therein. This extensive collection of references has been listed in a translator's bibliography at the end of this volume and can be distinguished in the footnotes by the absence of an asterisk.

Sirr al-ṣalāt thus draws on an expansive variety of sources, its text imbued with over a millennium of gnostic and philosophical tradition. Essential for the understanding of the discussion of spiritual wayfaring which the book undertakes is an apprehension of the central concern of both gnosis and philosophy, which is being (*wujūd*) itself. The gnostic tradition's discussion of being encompasses a prodigious wealth of terminologies to which Khomeini makes constant allusion in his early works. This being the case it is necessary here to supply an outline of these core terms and ideas. The two most common taxonomies employed for the understanding of being categorise it respectively as the threefold system of the degree of the essence (*maqām al-dhāt*), the degree of aloneness (*maqām al-aḥadiyyah*), and the degree of

43 This work is, in fact, a publication of individual chapters taken from Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī's work *Sharḥ tawḥīd al-ṣadūq*, ed. Najafqulī Ḥabībī, Tehran, 1373 SH/1994.

44 For a further discussion of Khomeini's sources see Manuchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tārīkh-i ḥukamāʾ wa ʿurafāʾ-i mutaʾakhkhirīn az ṣadr al-mutaʾallihīn*, Tehran, 1980.

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oneness (*maqām al-wāḥidiyyah*), and as the five divine presences (*al-ḥaḍrāt al-khamsah al-ilāhiyyah*). The first of these two conventions is outlined as follows:[45]

The degree of the divine essence (*dhāt*) has been termed variously the phoenix of the west (*ʿanqā al-maghrib*), the hidden of the hiddenness (*ghayb al-ghuyūb*), the concealed treasure (*al-kanz al-makhfī*), and the reality of realities (*ḥaqīqat al-haqāʾiq*). This degree of the essence (*maqām al-dhāt*) equates to the absolute hiddenness (*al-ghayb al-muṭlaq*), of which no manifestation (*ẓuhūr*), theophany (*tajallī*), or determination (*taʿayyun*) may occur, nor even a hidden theophany (*al-tajallī al-ghaybī*). It is the esoteric (*bāṭin*) of the esoteric (*bāṭin*). It is unconditioned by anything (*lā bi sharṭ shayʾ*).[46]

The degree of the essence is the origin (*aṣl*) of the reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of absolute being (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*) which is devoid even of absolute delimitation. It is more hidden than aloneness (*aḥadiyyah*) and oneness (*wāḥidiyyah*), and indeed constitutes the esoteric of the degree of aloneness and the origin of the theophany of aloneness. It is entirely without condition, the source of the reality of absolute being, and the beginning of the manifestation of unity (*waḥdah*).[47] It is beyond aloneness and oneness and is the unity (*waḥdah*) whence they come, and may also be called the esoteric of the degree of aloneness.

In summary, the degree of essence is not delimited to any absoluteness, delimitation, totality, partiality, generality, or specificity. The defining feature of this degree is the failing of language and the very absence of detailed terminology or taxonomy; it simply cannot be described. It cannot be apprehended through any condition whatsoever.

The degree of aloneness is also known as the degree of the drawing together of the drawing together (*jamʿ al-jamʿ*), the reality of realities (*ḥaqqīqat al-ḥaqāʾiq*), the degree of the thin cloud (*al-martabah al-ʿamāʾiyyah*), the Muḥammadian reality (*al-ḥaqīqah al-muḥammadiyyah*), and the first determination (*al-taʿayyun al-awwal*).

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45 For the sources of the summary below see predominantly ʿAbd al-Riḍā al-Maẓāhirī, *Sharḥ-i taʿlīqah-i āyat allāh al-ʿuẓmā imām khumaynī bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam-i ibn al-ʿarabī*, Tehran, 1387 SH/2008, pp. 39–43; Dāwūd b. Muḥammad al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭlaʿ khuṣūṣ al-kalim fī maʿānī fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, Bombay, 1300 AH/1883, pp. 9–10, 23–4; ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 51, 73. Also see Sayyid Ḥaydar al-Āmulī, *Kitāb naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ*, Tehran, 1975, pp. 445–50.

46 ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī explains *tajallī* as 'what manifests to the heart from the lights of the unseen'. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 173.

47 'Unity' is here given as a translation of *waḥdah*, but it is also elsewhere used in the translation to render *tawḥīd*. The transliteration is always supplied in brackets to avoid any ambiguity.

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In this degree, the essence is apprehended but without reference to attribute (*ṣifah*), name (*ism*), or determination (*taʿayyun*). At this point it is still the reality of being conditioned by nothing (*bi sharṭ lā*), and thus all names, attributes, and determinations are annihilated therein. Differentiation between the names at this degree is impossible.

At this degree the distinctions between dominion (*mulk*) and the spirit (*malakūt*), between the spirit and invincibility (*jabarūt*), and between invincibility and divinity (*lāhūt*) cannot occur.[48] It is pure aloneness and sheer receptivity (*qābiliyyah*), devoid of the apprehension or manifestation of multiplicity (*ẓuhūr al-kathrah*). It is a degree more general than relative knowables (*al-ʿilmī al-nisbī*) and external entities (*al-ʿaynī al-khārijī*), and as such is more general that the point at which relative and existential multiplicity (*maqām inqiṭāʿ al-kathrah al-nisbiyyah wa al-wujūdiyyah*) cease and are annihilated in the aloneness of the essence.

This degree is the point at which God theophanises towards oneness (*wāḥidiyyah*) through His most holy effusion (*al-fayḍ al-aqdas*). As such it is the point where the names, attributes, and permanent archetypes (*al-aʿyān al-thābitah*) are disclosed, and is the first determination to assume the reality of pure being. It is aloneness, apprehended through the condition that there is nothing accompanying it.

The degree of oneness is that of the unity of the names and attributes (*waḥdat al-asmāʾ wa al-ṣifāt*). It is also called the presence of divinity (*ulūhiyyah*) of the realm of meanings (*ʿālam al-maʿānī*), of the degree of drawing together (*maqām al-jamʿ*), of the second determination (*al-taʿayyun al-thānī*) of lordship (*rubūbiyyah*), and of the relative unseen (*al-ghayb al-muḍāf*).

It is in this degree that the permanent archetypes are said to discover knowable existence (*al-wujūd al-ʿilmī*), and relative knowable multiplicity (*al-kathrah al-ʿilmiyyah al-nisbiyyah*), also called relative multiplicity (*al-kathrah al-iʿtibāriyyah*), becomes manifest. The permanent archetypes (*al-aʿyān al-thābitah*) do not, however, re-manifest upon themselves or upon their like. For this reason this degree is also known as the second unseen (*al-ghayb al-thānī*). This is also conceived in terms of the degree of oneness bestowing perfection upon the archetypes, each according to their potential, and for this reason it is also called the degree of lordship.

The distinction between aloneness (*aḥadiyyah*) and oneness (*wāḥidiyyah*) is thus that in the degree of aloneness the permanent archetypes are rendered indistinguishable (*mundakk*) in the essence, whereas in the degree of oneness they attain knowable being (*al-wujūd al-ʿilmī*). In the degree of

48 The word 'spirit' as a translation for the term *malakūt* is employed according to the OED in the sense of that which is incorporeal or immaterial as opposed to body or matter. For further details see footnote 3 to author's prologue below.

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oneness God's theophany is thus to the next world.

In contrast to the degree of essence and the degree of aloneness, this third degree is conditioned being (*wujūd bi sharṭ shay'*) and may therefore be approached from a number of perspectives or conditions. Thus, being at this degree may be apprehended from the perspective of the attribute, of the name, or of the determination.

If, then, the reality of being is apprehended through the condition of the permanence of the knowable forms (*al-ṣuwar al-'ilmiyyah*) therein, it is known as the grade of the name 'the Absolute Esoteric' (*al-bāṭin al-muṭlaq*), 'the First' (*al-awwal*), 'the Ever-Knowing' (*al-'alīm*), and 'the Lord of the Permanent Archetypes' (*rabb al-a'yān*). This is because the degree of knowing is related to the degree of creation, and the manifestation of external things is related to the degree of the unseen.

If the reality of being is apprehended solely through the condition of the universals of all things it is known as the grade of the name 'the Oft-Compassionate' (*al-raḥmān*), 'the Lord of the First Intellect' (*rabb al-'aql al-awwal*). Concerning other names, it is called 'the Tablet of Destiny' (*lawḥ al-qaḍā'*), since within it are contained all realities other than the first intellect. It is called 'the Mother of the Book' (*umm al-kitāb*), since the first intellect is equated with the comprehensive, Qur'ānic book of truth which contains all aspects of the realm of being. It is also termed 'the Lofty Pen' (*al-qalam al-a'lā*), because the first intellect may be conceived as the intermediary between the divine effusion and the realm of being, the medium through which God has inscribed the existential realities of the world.

This grade of being is also given the name 'the Oft-Compassionate' as it is what draws together all that is good, it is the origin of all determinates, and it is hence that the general theophany of God reaches the vertical and lateral levels of the world.

If the reality of being is apprehended through the condition that the universals therein are permanent, distinct particulars (*juz'iyyāt mufaṣṣalah thābitah*), without, however, its being veiled from these universals, then it is the grade of the name 'the Ever-Merciful' (*al-raḥīm*), 'the Lord of the Universal Soul' (*al-nafs al-kullī*), 'the Tablet of Prescription' (*lawḥ al-qadr*), 'the Guarded Tablet' (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*), and 'the Manifest Book' (*al-kitāb al-mubīn*). The term 'the Manifest Book' is used because the intellect is the source of the universal soul, and the universal soul is what contains the intellect and its realities. Similarly, the name 'the Guarded Tablet' refers to the intellect being the source of the perceptions of particular souls.

If the reality of being is apprehended through the condition that the detailed forms are mutable and particular (*juz'iyyah mutaghayyirah*), then it is called the grade of the name 'the Effacing and the Affirming' (*al-māḥī*

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wa al-muthbit), 'the Life-Giving and the Death-Bringing' (*al-muḥyī wa al-mumīt*), and 'the Lord of the Soul Imprinted within the Universal Body' (*al-nafs al-munṭaba'ah fī al-jism al-kullī*), which is also known as 'the Tablet of Effacement and Affirmation' (*lawḥ al-maḥw wa al-ithbāt*).

If the reality of being is apprehended through the condition that it is receptive to the peculiar (*naw'iyyah*), spiritual (*rūḥānī*), and corporeal (*jismānī*) forms, then it is known as the grade of the name 'the Receivant' (*al-qābil*), and 'the Lord of the Universal Prime Matter' (*al-hayūla al-kullī*), called also 'the Inscribed Book' (*al-kitāb al-masṭūr*), and 'the Unfolded Parchment' (*al-raqq al-manshūr*).

If the reality of being is apprehended through the condition that it has the capacity to affect, it is termed the degree of the name 'the Actor' (*al-fā'il*), 'the Author' (*al-mūjid*), 'the Creator' (*al-khāliq*), and 'the Lord of the Universal Nature' (*al-ṭabī'ah al-kulliyyah*).

If the reality of being is apprehended through the condition of the immaterial, spiritual forms (*al-ṣuwwar al-rūḥāniyyah al-mujarradah*), it is called the grade of the name 'the Ever Knowing' (*al-'alīm*), 'the Divider' (*al-mufaṣṣil*), 'the Arranger' (*al-mudabbir*), and 'the Lord of the Rational Souls and Intellects' (*rabb al-'uqūl wa al-nufūs al-nātiqah*).

Concerning this grade and the rational souls and intellects there are a number of concepts for which the terms differ in philosophical and gnostic writings. Thus what the philosophers call the immaterial intellect (*al-'aql al-mujarrad*) is known in gnostic terminology as the spirit (*rūḥ*). The philosophers' first intellect (*al-'aql al-awwal*) is called the holy spirit (*rūḥ al-quds*) by the gnostics. Similarly the immaterial, rational soul (*al-nafs al-mujarradah al-nāṭiqah*) is known as the heart (*qalb*), and the innate animal soul (*al-nafs al-munṭaba'ah al-ḥayawāniyyah*) as simply the soul.

If the reality of being is apprehended through the condition of the sensual (*ḥissī*), unseen (*ghaybī*) forms, it is known as the grade of the name 'the Fashioner' (*muṣawwir*) and 'the Lord of the Realm of Delimited and Non-Delimited Imagination' (*al-khayāl al-muṭlaq al-muqayyad*).

If the reality of being is apprehended through the condition of the sensual, witnessed (*shahādī*) forms, it is called the grade of the name 'the Absolute Manifest' (*al-ẓāhir al-muṭlaq*), 'the Final' (*al-ākhir*), and 'the Lord of the Realm of the Dominion' (*rabb 'ālam al-mulk*).

If all the grades of perception are combined, including not only those listed but all possible grades, then this is termed the grade of the perfect man. This is also called the degree of the thin cloud (*'amā'iyyah*), which is understood as corresponding to the divine grade. The sole, defining difference between the two is that between lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) and bondsmanship (*marbūbiyyah*), and so it is that the perfect man is said to be the vicegerent of

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God (*khalīfat Allāh*).

Regarding the second system, that of 'the five divine presences' (*al-ḥaḍrāt al-ilāhiyyah al-khamsah*), these, briefly, are conceived as follows:

The presence of the absolute unseen (*al-ghayb al-muṭlaq*), also called the mystery of mysteries (*sirr al-asrār*), which is utterly without any theophany or manifestation.

The presence of absolute witnessing (*al-shahādah al-muṭlaqah*), which is understood as the realm of sense-perception (*ḥawāss*) and of witnessing (*mushāhadah*).

The presence of the relative unseen (*al-ghayb al-muḍāf*) that is closer to the absolute unseen, the realm of which is the realm of the spirits of invincibility (*jabarūt*) and of the heavenly (*malakūt*), that is to say the realm of the immaterial souls and intellects.

The presence of the relative unseen (*al-ghayb al-muḍāf*) that is closer to absolute witnessing, the realm of which is that of the ideal (*mithāl*). This latter is also sometimes called the presence of relative witnessing.

The presence that draws together the previous four, whose realm is the realm of man, which encompasses all realms together. This is the realm of the perfect man.

Khomeini himself makes a telling remark concerning these taxonomies of the reality of being in his commentary on al-Qayṣarī's discussion thereof, which deserves quotation in full:

> Concerning al-Qayṣarī's words on the reality of being, let it be known that 'through the condition of nothing', 'through the condition of something', and other such expressions on the subject do not constitute apprehensions of the reality of being, such as is the apparent contention of al-Qayṣarī. Rather expression, apprehension, perception, and such like are but adjuncts (*lawāḥiq*) of quiddities (*māhiyyāt*) and of natures (*ṭabā'i'*), and do not touch on the reality of being. Rather, what is the convention amongst the folk of God is nothing save the result of their witnessings and those theophanies which have occurred within their hearts, in other words these conventions are either the mark of the theophanies of God upon the names, the archetypes, and the beings (*akwān*), or they are His theophanies upon the hearts of the folk of God and the lords of the hearts and their witnessings of Him. It is therefore said that being may theophanise through the hidden theophany of aloneness, wherein are annihilated all names and attributes, and this theophany occurs through the hidden name and the seventy-third letter from the great name, and this is the degree of 'through the condition of nothing' (*maqām bi sharṭ al-lā'iyyah*). In this degree God has a name, though it is concealed in the

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> knowledge of His hiddenness. This theophany is the hidden theophany of aloneness, through the hidden design for the holy effusion; or the essence, insofar as it is concerned, does not theophanise in any mirror, and is not witnessed by any wayfarer from amongst the folk of God, nor by any witness from amongst the lords of the hearts or the nearmost ones. It is unseen, not in the meaning of the hidden of aloneness, rather it possesses neither name nor description, there can be no alluding to it nor may anyone covet it. 'No one can ensnare the *'anqā*.' Or being theophanises through the aloneness of drawing together all the realities of the names and attributes, which is the degree of the greatest name of God, Lord of the Perfect Man. This, the knowable theophany (*al-tajalli al-'ilmī*), occurs by way of the multiplicity of names, which draws together all nominal multiplicities (*al-katharāt al-asmā'iyyah*), and that is the degree of oneness. It is to this that al-Qayṣarī aspires in all that he mentions concerning this degree.[49]

Far from a being mere conduit of tradition, therefore, Khomeini's writings thus constitute a significant engagement with previous scholarship on the subject of gnosis; this is just one example of his contributions to his intellectual tradition. A close study of his earlier works such as would be needed to illustrate this further is beyond the capacity of this introduction, however some aspects of his philosophy such as pertain to *The Mystery of Prayer* will be discussed below. Meanwhile, his contention that all these categories of being can only ever concern a subjective understanding thereof is important to keep in mind.

As a treatise on the inner dimensions of prayer, meanwhile, *The Mystery of Prayer* has a number of direct precedents. Two of these in particular stand out as Khomeini's principal sources: Zayn al-Dīn b. 'Alī al-'Āmilī al-Jubaʿī, known as al-Shahīd al-Thānī ('the second martyr') (d. 911 AH/1506) and Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī.

Al-Shahīd al-Thānī was a scholar of law and jurisprudence whose works are still taught in seminaries today. Originating from the great Shīʿī centre of Jabal 'Āmil, situated in modern-day Lebanon, he studied and taught in Syria, mastering all the schools of Islamic law. He was, moreover, a scholar of gnosticism, one of the relatively few whom Khomeini cites by name in his text,[50] and was the author of a book commonly known as *Asrār al-ṣalāt* ('The mysteries of prayer').[51] Like *Sirr al-ṣalāt*, al-Shahīd al-Thānī's treatise proceeds

49 Khomeini, *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 13–5.

50 See below in part 1, chapter 1.

51 The author himself in fact entitles the book *al-Tanbīhāt al-'aliyyah 'alā waẓā'if al-ṣalāt al-qalbiyyah* ('Lofty remarks regarding the duties of the heartful prayer'). Published in Zayn al-Dīn b. 'Alī al-Jubaʿī al-'Āmilī, *Majmū'at al-rasā'il*, Qum, 1404 AH/1984.

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methodically through the motions of prayer in the manner of a manual of law, supplying esoteric interpretations of every stage. This is clearly governed by the same concerns as Khomeini's book, and these concerns are, moreover, expressed in similar conceptual vocabulary. Khomeini closely echoes al-Shahīd al-Thānī in his description of the subject matter as 'the ascent to the mysteries and the theophanies' (*ma'ārij al-asrār wa al-tajalliyyāt*),[52] and both authors begin their works with a lengthy assertion of the importance of the 'presence of the heart' (*ḥuḍūr al-qalb*) in prayer.[53] Both of these corresponding passages are particularly worthy of discussion as they exemplify a further parallel between the two: that of their sources. As has been observed, Khomeini regularly cites *ḥadīth* texts in his book, and we regularly find the exact same *ḥadīth* cited in *Asrār al-ṣalāt;* the array of traditions cited by al-Shahīd al-Thānī in his passage affirming the need for the presence of the heart are nearly all to be found in *Sirr al-ṣalāt.*[54] Bearing in mind the near-innavigable vastness of Shī'ī *ḥadīth* literature, it is interesting to observe here in Khomeini's work how consistently and tenaciously the gnostic tradition maintains a particular corpus of traditions for its endeavours.

Significant in this light is a text of which both Khomeini and al-Shahīd al-Thānī make prolific use, a treatise ascribed to Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq entitled *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah* ('The lantern of the way and the key of reality'). Whilst the authenticity of this work has been called into question by some over the centuries, in Khomeini's and al-Shahīd al-Thānī's writings it clearly finds an established acceptance, with both scholars often citing the

52 Khomeini, *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 3.

53 The presence of the heart (*ḥuḍūr al-qalb*) is a recurring topic in gnostic writing as a precondition for sincere acts of worship. The great master Sayyid Jalāl al-dīn Ḥusayn Bukhārī Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān Jahāngasht (d. 1308–1384)—not to be confused with his grandfather the founder of the Jalāliyyah order, with whom he shares the same name—discusses presence of the heart under the vernacular *ḥużūr-i dil* and sees it not only as a precondition but as a result of sincere worship. See Amina M. Steinfels, *Knowledge Before Action: Islamic Learning and Sufi Practice in the Life of Sayyid Jalāl al-dīn Bukhārī Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān*, Columbia, SC, 2012, pp. 81–2, 88.

54 See below in part 1, chapter 1 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 5 for 'There is a white spot in the heart of every servant...'; below in introduction, chapter 5 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 6 for 'And so serve your Lord as if you see Him, for even if you do not see Him He sees you'; below in introduction, chapter 1 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 6 for 'Surely, two men of my *ummah*, standing in prayer...'; below in introduction, chapter 5 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 7 for 'Of the prayers there is that which is half accepted...'; below in introduction, chapter 5 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 7 for 'I saw 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn praying...'; below in introduction, chapter 5 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 8 for 'When 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon them both, arose for prayer...'; and below in introduction, chapter 5 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 8 for 'The pure (*al-salīm*) heart is the one that meets his Lord...'

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same passages to illustrate the same discussions.[55]

Of a different kind is Khomeini's relationship to the works of Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī. As we have seen above, one of the former's earliest works was a set of glosses on some of the latter's commentaries. Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī was a scholar and philosopher as well as a physician at the Safavid court. He was a pupil of Mullā Muḥammad Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī and of Mullā Rajab ʿAlī Tabrīzī (d. 1080 AH/1669–70). Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī authored two works on the mysteries of the acts of worship, the first being *Sharḥ tawḥīd al-ṣadūq* ('Commentary on Saduq's "Book of unity"'), several chapters of which discuss the inner meanings and gnostic dimensions of all forms of ritual worship in Islam, including prayer (*ṣalāt*), alms (*zakāt*), fasting (*ṣiyām*), pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), and so on. The second work is *Rūḥ al-ṣalāt* ('The spirit of prayer'), a succinct treatise presenting his erudite understanding of the mysteries and inner realities of prayer. It is the latter work on which we will focus here, exhibiting as it does particularly strong parallels with *Sirr al-Ṣalāt*.[56]

Unlike al-Shahīd al-Thānī, Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī had at his disposal the full metaphysical richness of the latest philosophical discourses of his day, and it is in his application of this to the prayer that striking similarities to Khomeini's treatment of that subject may be found. *Sirr al-ṣalāt* and *Rūḥ al-ṣalāt* are imbued with the very same conceptual vocabulary, the gnostic apparatus of Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī being fully permeated into Khomeini's writing.

An example of this is an idea which lies at the core of both Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī's and Khomeini's expositions of the prayer, that of the 'three unities' (*tawḥīdāt*): the unity of divine actions (*al-afʿāl*), the unity of divine names and attributes (*al-asmāʾ wa al-ṣifāt*), and the unity of the divine essence (*al-dhāt*), these being terms to describe progressive degrees of spiritual ascendancy in the gnostic's apprehension of the divine in prayer.[57] In both authors

55 See for example below in part 1, chapter 3 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 13, below in part 1, chapter 5 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 15, below in part 1, chapter 7 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 17, below in part 2, chapter 4 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 23, below in part 2, chapter 9 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 28, below in part 2, chapter 11 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, p. 29, and below in part 2, chapter 12 and *Asrār al-ṣalāt*, pp. 30, 31. For a list of scholars who have deemed *Miṣbāḥ al-sharīʿah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah* as an authentic work of Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq see introductory note by Sayyid Muḥammad Jaʿfar Bāqirī to *Manāhij anwār al-maʿrifah fī sharḥ miṣbaḥ al-sharīʿah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah* by Mirzā Abū al-Qāsim al-Shīrāzī, 2nd ed. Tehran 1363 SH/1984.

56 It is of interest to note that despite this the editors of the Persian edition do not list *Rūḥ al-ṣalāt* in their list of Khomeini's sources. *Rūḥ al-ṣalat* is the first treatise in *al-Arbaʿīniyyāt li-kashf anwār al-qudsiyyāt*.

57 For a comprehensive elucidation of these concepts see Sayyid Ḥaydar al-Āmulī, *Asrār al-sharīʿah wa aṭwār al-ṭarīqah wa anwār al-ḥaqīqah*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājawī, Tehran, 1982, pp. 70–81; Sayyid Ḥaydar al-Āmulī, *Jāmiʿ al-asrār wa manbaʿ al-anwār*, Tehran,

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these unities are corresponded to the three principal postures of prayer: standing (*qiyām*), bowing (*rukū'*), and prostrating (*sujūd*).[58]

Rūḥ al-ṣalāt's terminological overlap with *Sirr al-ṣalāt* is all the more interesting on account of the fact that, though shorter, the former work is far more systematic, presenting these terminologies in a well-ordered topography of gnostic states and spiritual directives such as Khomeini for the most part only alludes to.

This difference may be seen in the two authors' use of the concept of the 'ladder' (*mirqāt*), in describing the wayfarer's spiritual ascension. While Khomeini only evokes this image in general terms,[59] Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī provides a detailed explanation of every rung, each rung being one of the seven heavens, and also corresponding to one of the seven opening magnifications of God at the beginning of the prayer. The seventh magnification constitutes the *takbīrat al-iḥrām*, the seventh rung and the seventh heaven, which is arrival in the presence of God (*al-wuṣūl ilā Allāh*) and subsistence through the subsistence of God (*al-baqā' bi-baqā' Allāh*).[60]

Another area where Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī goes into more detail than Khomeini is with regard to the doctrine of *wasīlah*. This is the tenet, long-established in Shī'ī Islam,[61] of turning to God through the means (*wasīlah*) of *Ahl al-Bayt*, namely the Prophet, his daughter Fāṭimah, Imām 'Alī, their two sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and the nine imāms of the line of al-Ḥusayn. For both authors, this is intimately tied to the concept of intention (*niyyah*) in prayer, and it is in his chapter on *niyyah*, the concluding chapter of his treatise, that Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī discusses the *wasīlah* of *Ahl al-Bayt* in an elaborate formula of intention, a formula which he ascribes to 'the folk of God (*ahl Allāh*) amongst the Shī'ah'. According to this formula the worshipper turns to God in his noon prayer (*ẓuhr*) through the *wasīlah* of Muḥammad the Envoy of God (*rasūl Allāh*); in the afternoon prayer (*'aṣr*) the *wasīlah* is the Prince of the Believers; Fatima the Radiant is the *wasīlah* for eventide prayer (*maghrib*); in the dusk prayer (*'ishā'*) the *wasīlah* is al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, as well as the nine imāms from the progeny of al-Ḥusayn; and in the morntide prayer (*fajr*) the *wasīlah* is through the *Ḥujjah* of God, the *Qā'im*.[62]

1368 SH/1989, pp. 105–60.

58 See Qummī, *al-Arba'īniyyāt li-kashf anwār al-qudsiyyāt*, pp. 40–3, and below in part 2, chapter 2 on standing, part 2, chapter 9 on bowing, and part 2, chapter 11 on prostration.

59 See below in part 2, chapter 7.

60 See Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī, *al-Arba'īniyyāt li kashf anwār al-qudsiyyāt*, pp. 39–40.

61 It is, in fact, derived from the Qur'ānic injunction 'and seek the means to come to Him' (*wa ibtaghū ilayhi al-wasīlah*), Q.5:35.

62 For a comprehensive exposition of his ideas on this matter see Qummī, *Sharḥ tawḥīd al-*

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Khomeini alludes to the same concept in part 2, chapter 1, but characteristically eschews a proscriptive schema like that of Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī in favour of a more discursive approach:

> The safest and closest way to salvation is that the one who prays, in everything he says and does, surrenders himself to the spirituality of the Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be upon him and upon his descendants, or to the degree of the treasury of nearmostness (*maqām al-walāyah*, i.e., 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib), or the Imām of the Age, peace be upon them, and through their tongue he praises God. Also, as regards deeds, he holds fast to their deeds. He who leads (*imām*) the angels and the divine forces in prayer in turn becomes the follower (*ma'mūm*) of the degree of prophethood (*risālah*) and nearmostness (*walāyah*), and he traverses this spiritual wayfaring and ascends to the divine ascension through the guidance of these aforementioned great ones by sincerely following them and surrendering to them alone, because 'Alī, peace be upon him, is the straight path (*ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*), the prayer of the believers, and the Khiḍr of the path of wayfaring; 'Do not traverse these stages without being led by Khiḍr.'[63]

In his chapter on the mysteries of intention (*niyyah*), meanwhile, Khomeini again alludes to the *wasīlah* of *Ahl al-Bayt*, but with much more subtlety. He describes the purification of the wayfarer's intentions as 'the cleansing of the house of God of idols by means of the hand of *walāyah*'. This is much more than a mere metaphor: rather it refers to an important detail of the actual event of the Ka'ba's cleansing after the conquest of Mecca, whenas the Prophet placed 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib on his shoulders to remove those idols which he himself could not reach.[64]

Khomeini within the same chapter brings forth the quotation, 'by 'Alī prayer is established'. Both authors quote in their respective works the famous saying of 'Ali 'I am the prayer of the believers and their fast'. Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī begins his treatise with this quotation and from there proceeds to present his metaphysical apparatus and insights on the subject. Both authors, it seems, maintain that he is the ontological reality of prayer and prayer personified. However, Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī goes further, presenting a detailed exposition on this matter, under the heading 'Holy Mystery', wherein he illustrates that prayer is nothing but an unveiling and self-disclosure of the

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ṣadūq, ed. Najafqulī Ḥabībī, Tehran, 1373 SH/1994, pp. 597–601.

63 This is from a poem by Ḥāfiẓ. See below in part 2, chapter 1.

64 Muftī Ja'far Husayn, *Sīrat amīr al-mu'minīn*, Lahore, n.d., pp. 263–5.

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different levels of this reality and personification.[65] Thus we see in Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī an example of the kind of elaborately ordered metaphysical interpretation that Khomeini, for whatever reason, elects not to explain in full but rather to employ through allusion in this work. Khomeini briefly revisits the notion of the *wasīlah* of *Ahl al-Bayt* in part 2, chapter 12 of *The Mystery of Prayer*, where he writes:

> Therefore, just as at the beginning of prayer, it was mentioned that the friends and companions of the way of gnosis and true ascension are the Prophet and the infallible pure imāms; it must also be mentioned at the end of the journey that they are the blessed nearmost ones, the means of arrival for the folk of gnosis, and the intermediaries for the revealing of the blessings and theophanies of the presence of lordship, glorified be His majesty. 'If it were not for them, the Oft-Compassionate would not have been worshipped and the Oft-Compassionate would not have been known.' Anyone who knows a little of the reality of nearmostness and prophethood would know what kind of relationship the nearmost ones, peace be upon them, have with creation; we have mentioned this, praise be to God, in our treatise *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah*.

Hence, what is only alluded to in *The Mystery of Prayer* receives his close attention in the five writings that precede it. Indeed, in these previous works are laid the foundations on which the conceptual framework of *The Mystery of Prayer* rests.

The most telling glimpse of just how much profoundly systematic thought is at work just beneath his text's surface comes at the book's close. In the last sentence of part 2, chapter 12, Khomeini writes as follows on the concluding of prayer:

> Then, after that, through the absolute multiplicity of the hidden and witnessed, he turns to finding the ceremonies required while being in the presence and presents a vocalised invocation of peace, and the fourth journey, which is 'from the creation to the creation', is complete.[66]

Though, it is hoped, slightly less cryptic in the context of the chapter, this passage contains an allusion that is the only one of its kind in the entire work; a direct reference to the 'four journeys'. This is the notion, employed by a number

65 See below in part 2, chapter 1 and Qummī, *Rūḥ al-ṣalat* in *al-Arbaʿīniyyāt li kashf anwār al-qudsiyyāt*, pp. 38, 52–3.

66 See below in part 2, chapter 12.

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of scholars, that the gnostic path to God consists of four journeys.[67] Khomeini himself provides a fuller exposition of his understanding of these journeys in *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*:[68]

> In my opinion, the first journey from creation to the delimited real (*al-ḥaqq al-muqayyad*) occurs through the removal of the veils which are the side that borders creation, and through seeing the beauty of the Real through His actual manifestation, which, in reality, is the manifestation of the essence (*al-dhāt*) in the levels of beings (*marātib al-akwān*), and that is the side which borders the Real. In other words, it occurs through the unveiling of the face of the Real before the wayfarer. The final point of this journey is to see all of creation as the manifestation of the Real and His signs (*āyāt*). The first journey thus comes to an end, and the wayfarer begins the second journey. This is from the delimited real (*al-ḥaqq al-muqayyad*) to the absolute real (*al-ḥaqq al-muṭlaq*). The ipseities of being (*al-huwiyyāt al-wujūdiyyah*) fade away nigh the wayfarer, created determinates cease to be (*yastahliku*) entirely before him, he rises to his greater resurrection (*qiyāmatuhu al-kubrā*) through the manifestation of complete unity (*al-waḥdah al-tāmmah*), and the Real theophanises Himself to him through the degree of His ever-oneness (*maqām waḥdāniyyah*), whereupon he sees not things, and becomes oblivious of his own essence, attributes, and actions.
>
> If, in these two journeys, anything remains of egotism, then the wayfarer's devil who dwells between his sides will appear in mastery over him and ecstatic utterances (*shaṭḥ*) will come forth from him.[69] Ecstatic utterances in their entirety are from the failings of the wayfarer and wayfaring and from the remnant of egoity and egotism. Therefore, according to the belief of the folk of wayfaring (*ahl al-sulūk*), it is necessary for the wayfarer to have an instructor (*mu'allim*) who guides him to the path of wayfaring, who knows its conditions, and who does not stray from the way of lawful spiritual exercises. For the paths of esoteric wayfaring (*al-sulūk al-bāṭinī*) are not bound by the number of the breaths of creatures.
>
> Then, if divine providence (*al-'ināyah al-ilāhiyyah*) is bestowed upon him—and divine providence, to wit, is the degree of decreed propensi-

67 See Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'āliya fī al-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, Beirut, 1981, vol. 1, p. 13. See also Rizvi, *Mulla Sadra and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being*, London, 2009, pp. 30, 145.

68 See Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 87–8 and *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 78.

69 For a contrary view on ecstatic utterances (*shaṭḥ*), but in a somewhat different context see Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, *Kitāb naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 203–4.

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ties (*taqdīr al-istiʿdādāt*), just as al-Shaykh al-ʿArabi said: 'The receiver exists not save from His holy effusion'—it will return him to himself and he will begin the third journey. This is from the Real to real creation within the Real, that is to say, from the presence of the encompassing aloneness (*al-aḥadiyyah al-jamʿiyyah*) to the presence of the permanent archetypes (*al-aʿyān al-thābitah*). At this point the realities of things and their perfections, the manner of their progression to the first degree (*al-maqām al-awwal*), and their arrival at their original dwelling (*waṭanuhā al-aṣlī*) are disclosed to him. In this journey he is not a prophet bearing a law for he has not yet returned to creation in the material realm (*al-nashʾah al-ʿayniyyah*).

He then begins wayfaring in the fourth journey, and this is from the creation which is the Real (*al-ḥaqq*), to wit from the presence of the permanent archetypes (*al-aʿyān al-thābitah*), to creation, to wit the external archetypes (*al-aʿyān al-khārijiyyah*), within the Real; to wit with his true being (*bi-wujūdihi al-haqqānī*). As this occurs he witnesses the beauty of the Real in all things, recognises their degrees that they possess in the realm of knowledge, and knows the way of their wayfaring to the presence of the archetypes and what is beyond them and the manner of their arrival to their original dwelling. In this journey he will legislate and give exoteric rulings of form and heartful esoteric rulings, and he will inform and prophesy about God, His attributes, His names, and true gnoses, in accordance with the propensity of those rendered able.

Let it be known that these four journeys are necessary for every prophet sent forth with a law. However, nonetheless, the levels vary and the degrees differ. Some of the prophets (*al-anbiyāʾ*) and ones sent forth with a message (*al-mursalūn*) are, for example, from the manifestations of the name 'the Oft-Compassionate' (*al-raḥmān*). Thus, in the first journey, the prophet witnesses the name 'the Oft-Compassionate' (*al-raḥmān*) manifestly in the world, and his second journey comes to an end with the ceasing of things within the name 'the Oft-Compassionate' (*al-raḥmān*), and the prophet returns to the world with mercy and with oft-compassionate being. The cycle of his prophecy is thus bounded. So it is with manifestations of the other names, in accordance with differences which are from the presence of knowledge. It is thus until the matter concludes at the manifestation of the name *Allāh*. In this case the prophet witnesses at the end of the first journey the Real with all His aspects (*shuʾūn*) manifest, and no aspect diverts him from another aspect. Just so the end of his second journey occurs with the ceasing of all realities in the comprehensive divine name (*al-ism al-jāmiʿ al-ilāhī*), even as he ceases to be in pure aloneness (*al-aḥadiyyah al-maḥḍah*). He returns to

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the creation with a comprehensive divine being, and he possesses eternal everlasting prophecy and esoteric and exoteric vicegerency.

Let it be known that these journeys were also realised by the perfect nearmost ones, including the fourth journey. Such was realised for our master the Prince of the Believers, and his infallible sons, may the blessings of God be upon them, but since the Prophet holds the comprehensive degree there remains no scope for divine legislation (*tashrī'*) after him for anyone in creation. For the Envoy of God possesses this degree in principle, while for his infallible successors it is through following (*mutāba'ah*) and emulation (*tab'īyah*), yet the spirituality of all is one.[70]

This exposition is presented as an elaboration on that of Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshihī (d. 1306/1889). Before explaining his own views, Khomeini first presents a summary of Qumshihī's understanding of the four journeys before proceeding with his own. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī supplies a valuable note on Khomeini's understanding of the four journeys in his writings on al-Qayṣarī. He notes that Khomeini's model is identical to that of Qumshihī, with the significant difference that in his description of the first journey Khomeini replaces the word 'creation' with 'delimited real' as the journey's point of origin.[71]

Regarding the wider intellectual context of Khomeini's views of this concept, it is important to note that his approach differs from that of some other major figures in that he employs the language of the gnostics—the folk of God (*ahl Allāh*)—rather than that of the philosophers.[72] He is distinct in this regard from perhaps the best-known proponent of the idea of the four journeys, Mullā Ṣadrā. While for Mullā Ṣadrā, like Khomeini, the journeys are concerned with spiritual wayfaring towards the divine (*sulūk*), in the former's work there is a greater emphasis on their importance as intellectual journeys,

70 Āshtiyānī provides an elegant summary of Khomeini's view of the four journeys in his introduction to *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*. As he explains it, the first two journeys concern propensity (*isti'dādiyyatān*), whilst the latter two concern perfection (*kamāliyyatān*). Of the former two, the first is vertical and ascending (*ṭūliyyah ṣu'ūdiyyah*), and this is the journey from creation to the Real, not within the Real, and the second is lateral and divine (*'arḍiyyah ilāhiyyah*), and this is from the Real to the Real within the Real. Of the two concerning perfection, the first is vertical and descending (*ṭūliyyah nuzūliyyah*), and this is the journey from the Real to creation within creation, and the final journey is lateral and existential (*'araḍiyyah kawniyyah*), and this is from creation to creation within the Real. See the introduction to Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 166–7.

71 See Āshtiyānī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddimah-i qayṣarī bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 445–6.

72 For a detailed explanation of this distinction see the comments of Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshihī (d. 1306 AH/1889) in Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'āliya fī al-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, Beirut, 1981, vol. I, pp. 13–6.

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the intellectual appearing as the dragoman for the spiritual. According to his conception the four are as follows: the first journey, from creation to the Real (*al-safar min al-khalq ilā al-ḥaqq*), concerns the ontological bases of his philosophical thought. The second journey, within the Real in the Real (*al-safar bi al-ḥaqq fī al-ḥaqq*), corresponds to cosmology. The third journey, from the Real to creation within the Real (*al-safar min al-ḥaqq ilā al-khalq bi al-ḥaqq*), concerns theology, and the fourth journey, within the Real in creation (*al-safar bi al-ḥaqq fī al-khalq*), deals with psychology, soteriology, and eschatology.[73]

Regarding the more gnostic conception of the four journeys which governs Khomeini's understanding of the four journeys, it is best to make recourse to Āshtiyānī, who deals with this matter in great detail in his commentary on the *Muqaddimah fuṣūs al-ḥikam* of al-Qayṣarī.[74] Al-Qayṣarī makes an allusion to the third journey, from God to creation within God. Āshtiyānī in his commentary on this point cites 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 730/1330) and his explanations of the four journeys. According to Kāshānī's thought a journey is the orientation of the heart towards God (*al-ḥaqq*). The first is the journey to God from the stations of the self until arrival at the clear horizon (*al-ufuq al-mubīn*), which he describes as the end of the degree of the heart and the beginning of the theophanies of the divine names. The second journey is the traversing in God to the highest horizon (*al-ufuq al-a'lā*) through markedness by His attributes and realisation through His names. This is the end of the degree of the spirit (*maqām al-rūḥ*) and of the presence of oneness (*al-ḥaḍrah al-wāḥidiyyah*). The third journey is the ascent to the spring of totality (*'ayn al-jam'*) and the presence of oneness, and this is the degree of two bows'-length (*maqām qāba qawsayn*) for as long as duality endures. When duality is removed it becomes the degree of even nearer (*aw adnā*), which is the end of nearmostness (*walāyah*). The fourth journey is the traversing within God from God for the sake of perfection, that is to say the degree of subsistence (*maqām al-baqā'*) after annihilation (*fanā'*), and separation (*farq*) after union (*jam'*).[75] As is plain, this topography of the wayfarer's employs gnostic language which has much in common with the terminology later employed by Khomeini.

Thus, in what almost appears as a concluding flourish, only at the very

73 For a detailed study of this see Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'āliya fī al-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, Beirut, 1981, vol. I, pp. 13–8 and Rizvi, *Mulla Sadra and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being*, pp. 29–33.

74 For Āshtiyānī's complete discussion of the four journeys see Āshtiyānī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddimah-i qayṣarī bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 433, 441–56.

75 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 122–3. Also see Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, *Kitāb naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 267–8.

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close of *The Mystery of Prayer* does Khomeini give an almost playful acknowledging nod to what the attentive reader has known all along; that surrounding, immersing, and infusing his discussion of the ritual of prayer is this fourfold exposition of gnosis, of enlightenment, and of apprehension of the divine, and that ultimately the framework of the prayer has served first and foremost as a vehicle for the elucidation of the four journeys.

The driving existential questions of philosophy and gnosticism held a deep fascination for Khomeini, and he would return to them again and again during the course of his life through a range of mediums. The following, entitled 'The Languid Eye' (*Chashm-i bīmār*), was composed in the spring of 1989, a few months prior to his death:

> Oh friend, by the mark of your lip, enthralled am I,
> In your languid eye, now languorous am I.
> From selfhood freed and drumming 'Real am I',
> A buyer of gallows heights, like Manṣūr am I.[76]
> The grief of the beloved enflames my soul,
> My life consumed, the talk of the town am I.
> The tavern's door we pass through night and day,
> While from madrasah and mosque withdrawn am I.
> And having shed the cloak of pious pretence,
> In tavern-keeper's mantle, wise am I.
> Though preacher's admonitions vex, sustained
> By the vagrant's spirituous breath am I.
> Now I recall the idols' shrine, awakened
> By the tavern idol's touch, am I.[77]

76 The phrase 'Real am I' (*anā al-ḥaqq*) is borrowed from the famous statement of Manṣūr al-Hallāj, the controversial gnostic writer and preacher who was executed for his teachings by the authorities in Baghdad in 309 AH/922 after a lengthy imprisonment, trial, and mutilation. For the most comprehensive study on Manṣūr al-Hallāj see Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, 4 vols., tr. Herbert Mason, Princeton, NJ, 1982.

77 My translation of the *ghazal* here into English iambic pentameter has sought to capture the gist of the Persian original. The poem was initially published by the Iranian daily newspaper *Kayhan* on the 21st of June 1989, a few weeks after the death of Khomeini. Passed to the editors by Khomeini's son Aḥmad, it was published with an accompanying article, stating that the poem was written to mark the birth of Lady Fāṭimah, daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad. Khomeini's collected poems were published posthumously as *Dīwān-i imām* by *Mu'assasah-i tanẓīm wa nashr-i āthār-i imām khumaynī* in 1372 SH/1993. See *Dīwān-i imām*, 4th ed., p. 142. For a somewhat scattered commentary on this poem see 'Abd Allāh Fāṭimī Nīyā, *Farjām-i 'ishq*, Tehran, 1998. For a good study of his poetry and its gnostic themes see Asghar Seyed-Ghorab, 'Khomeini the Poet-Mystic', in *Die Welt*

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Beneath the weight of its cosmic themes, *Sirr al-ṣalāt* retains the aura of an intensely intimate book. It will by now have become apparent that it is not only regarding observances obligatory for every Muslim that Khomeini is content to refer without explanation. *Sirr al-ṣalāt* is, without question, a dense and difficult work, and indeed has been described as Khomeini's most difficult.[78] While far from unsystematic, it brings the reader into conversation with a host of systems, taxonomies, and terminologies while supplying minimal provision for his or her lack of fluency therein. Whilst it may be recalled that the subject matter of *The Mystery of Prayer* was somewhat controversial and marginalised in the seminaries of the time, it may nonetheless be an oversimplification to read the text's opacity as evasiveness.[79] What we see vividly in the dedication with which Khomeini bequeaths the book to his son Aḥmad is *Sirr al-ṣalāt*'s deeply personal, familiar nature as a knowing word to the initiated. In abstaining from a detailed exposition of the conceptual languages which he employs, Khomeini addresses a peer with the full depth of his erudition, forbearing any didactic pause to instead lead his reader to confront the work's subject even as he himself confronts it. As the book shares the author's view of the archetypal pillar of Islam, the prayer which he himself would have practiced more even than the required five times a day, it avails a picture of a man wrestling with the nature of reality and the Real,[80] and how this may be understood through the diverse facets of his religious, spiritual, and intellectual tradition.

بندہ شیرخدا
Sayyid Amjad H. Shah Naqavi
London, 21 February 2015

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des Islams, 51 (2011), pp. 438–58.

78 Bonaud, *L'Imam Khomeyni*, p. 123.

79 It should be noted that the notion of the esoteric as present in Khomeini's writings, insofar as it pertains to that which is not literally apparent and requires elucidation, is not akin to the use of 'esoteric' by philosophers such as Leo Strauss, much debated in the method of reading Islamic philosophical texts. See Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Chicago, 1953. See Oliver Leaman, 'Does the interpretation of Islamic philosophy rest upon a mistake?' in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 12 (1980), pp. 525–38.

80 A feature of Khomeini's Persian, in keeping with the gnostic tradition, is that more often than not he refers to God by the name *al-Ḥaqq*: 'the Truth' or 'the Real'.

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THE MYSTERY OF PRAYER



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Author's Dedication

> In the name of God, the Oft-Compassionate, the Ever-Merciful, praise be to God and may blessings and peace be upon the Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants.

This is a testimony from an elderly father, who has spent his life heedlessly and in ignorance and who is now moving towards the eternal abode with a hand lacking good deeds and with a record darkened by misdeeds, yet with desire for the forgiveness of God and hopeful of His pardon, to my young son, who is perplexed by the difficulties of this day and age and who has the free choice to choose the divine straight path (on which God, through His boundless grace, may guide him) and may God forbid that he choose another path (from which God, through His mercy, may protect him).

My son, this book, which I am bequeathing to you, is a touch of the fragrance of the prayer of the gnostics and the mystical wayfaring of the folk of traversing. Notwithstanding, the pen of one such as myself is incapable of explaining the account of this journey and I confess that what I have written are only words and expressions and until now I have not managed to obtain even a touch of this fragrance myself.

My child, what is within this ascension (*miʿrāj*)[1] is the ultimate goal of the hopes of the folk of gnosis (*maʿrifah*), of which we fall short; 'no one can ensnare the *ʿanqā*.'[2] However, we should not lose hope of receiving the graces

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1 The event of the *miʿrāj* or 'ascension' is one of the most important episodes in the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, a central tenet of Shīʿī doctrine, and a key motif in gnostic literature, which is employed frequently by Khomeini throughout this text. It is narrated that the Prophet was taken up to heaven through the conveyance of a heavenly creature called *Burāq*, where he was shown numerous signs and wonders, such as the *bayt al-maʿmūr*, the celestial temple of the angels situated directly above the Kaʿbah on earth, the tree Ṭūbā, and the remote lote tree (*sidrat al-muntahā*). The climax of this journey was communion with God, wherein the Prophet was instructed on various matters including the ritual of prayer. For accounts of the *miʿrāj* from the Shīʿī tradition see for example Furāt b. Furāt al-Kūfi, *Tafsīr furāt al-kūfī*, ed. Muḥammad al-Kāẓim, Beirut, 1412 AH/1992, vol. II, pp. 370–4; 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-qummī*, ed. Sayyid Tayyib al-Mūsawī al-Jazāʾirī, Najaf, 1387 AH/1967, vol. II, pp. 3–14. See also the account given in Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh, *'Ilal al-sharāʾiʿ*, Najaf, 1385 AH/1966, pp. 312–6, to which Khomeini makes frequent recourse throughout the text. For a recent study on the *miʿrāj* see Ron Buckley, *The Night Journey and Ascension in Islam: The Reception of Religious Narrative in Sunni, Shiʿi and Western Culture*, London, 2012.

2 This is a hemistich from a verse by Ḥāfiẓ. *ʿAnqā* refers to a mythical bird in Persian literature of mystical significance. The term is synonymously used to refer to the *humā* or

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of God the Oft-Compassionate, because He, may He be glorified and exalted, is the helper of the destitute and the poor.

Dear one, the discussion is about the journey from creation (*khalq*) to the Real (*ḥaqq*), from multiplicity to unity (*waḥdah*), from the lowest realms of matter (*nāsūt*) to what is beyond the realm of invincibility (*jabarūt*), to the point of absolute annihilation (*fanā'*), which is realised in the first prostration during prayer, and to the point of annihilation of annihilation, which is achieved after self-effacement (*ṣaḥw*) during the second prostration. This is the complete arc of being (*qaws al-wujūd*)[3] from God to God. In this state there would be neither the one who prostrates nor the one who is prostrated to, nor the one who worships nor the one who is worshipped, 'He is the First and the Last, the Exoteric and the Esoteric'.[4]

My child, the first thing that I bid you is that you do not deny the degrees of the folk of gnosis, for this is a trait of those who are ignorant, and that you avoid the company of those who deny the degrees of the nearmost ones (*awliyā'*),[5] for they are the brigands on the path to God.

My son, shun self-interest and self-conceit, which are the heritage of the devil, who through self-conceit and self-interest opposed the command of God the High by not submitting to His, may He be glorified and exalted, nearmost and chosen one. Know that all forms of the miseries of the children of Adam are due to this heritage of the devil, which is the origin of all discord. Perhaps, regarding some of these stages the noble verse, 'And combat them until there is no discord and religion is only for God',[6] is an allusion to the 'greater spiritual struggle' (*al-jihād al-akbar*) and to combating the root of discord, which is the great devil and his forces, which have deep roots and branches in the inmost depths of the hearts of mankind. Everyone should strive to remove discord from themselves inwardly and outwardly. This is the

sīmurg. The esoteric understanding of the *'anqā* is highly significant in Islamic gnosis. For further illumination see 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, *Laṭā'if al-i'lām fī ishārāt ahl al-ilhām*, Cairo, 1995, vol. II, p. 166.

3 A concept which Khomeini employs in this work is the arc of being (*qaws al-wujūd*), sometimes also conceptualised as the circle of being (*dā'irat al-wujūd*), which consists of two arcs, the arc of descent (*qaws al-nuzūlī*) and the arc of ascent (*qaws al-ṣu'ūdī*). In gnostic writings these two arcs are understood to correspond to the two bows mentioned in the Qur'ānic verse Q.53:9; 'till he was two bows'-length (*qawsayn*) or even nearer, a reference to the Prophet Muḥammad's *mi'rāj*. The arc of descent represents the emanation of multiplicity from the one, and the arc of ascent represents the reversion towards Him. For elucidation of these concepts beyond what is provided by Khomeini below see 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 159.

4 Q.57:3.

5 See translator's introduction for the term 'nearmost ones'.

6 Q.2:193.

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struggle which, if victorious, will lead to happiness and order for everything and everyone.

My child, strive to attain this victorious end, or at least some of it. Endeavour to diminish the desires of the soul, which have no limit or end. Seek help from God Most High, may He be glorified and exalted, because without His assistance no one arrives anywhere. Prayer (*namāz*), which is the ascension of the gnostics and the journey of the passionate lovers, is the way to arrive at this goal. If you, and we, were to succeed in realising one inclining of prayer (*rak'ah*)[7] and to succeed in witnessing the hidden lights and the mysteries indicated within it, even only through the measure of our own strength, we would smell the fragrance of the aim (*maqṣad*) and the one aimed for (*maqṣūd*) by the nearmost ones of God, and we would witness the distant view of the prayer of the master of the prophets and the gnostics, peace and blessings be upon him and upon his descendants, during his heavenly ascension. May God the Bestower bestow this great blessing upon you and us. Indeed, the path is long and very dangerous and requires abundant means and provisions. The provision of the likes of myself is either non-existent or very insignificant, save that the grace of the Beloved, may He be glorified and exalted, were to prevail and help.

Dear one, make use of what remains of your youth because all is lost in old age, including the chance to turn to the hereafter and God the High. One of the greatest deceptions of the devil and the commanding soul (*al-nafs al-ammārah*) is that they promise to youth rectitude and correctness in old age so that youth is spent heedlessly, and they promise longevity to the elderly. With futile promises they hold man back from the remembrance of God and purity until the very last moment when death comes to him. Under these circumstances if, up to this moment, they have not already taken your faith, they will take it. Therefore, because you have greater ability during youth, you should exert yourself and abstain from all friends save God, may He be glorified and exalted, and if you are bound to God you will establish all the more your own attachment to Him. If, God forbid, you have no such attachment, then strive for it and surrender your own strength to His power because no being other than Him, may He be glorified and exalted, is worthy of attachment. If attachment to the nearmost ones of God is not for the sake of being attached to

7 *Rak'ah* (plural *raka'āt*) is commonly translated as a 'unit' of prayer, however here throughout the text the term has been translated as 'inclining', which is closer to the root meanings from which the term is derived, which are given by lexicographers as *raka'a*, *rukū'*, and *rak'*. *Rak'ah* itself is an infinitive noun and denotes the meaning of lowering one's head, bowing, or becoming bent or bowed due to old age. In prayer it denotes the *qiyām*, *rukū'*, and *sajdatān*, which constitute a single *rak'ah*. The term 'inclining' better renders the sense of this etymology.

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Him, then it is a trick of the devil, who in every way obstructs the path to God. Never be pleased with yourself or your actions, which is as the pure nearmost ones are, for they see themselves as nothing. Sometimes they even consider their good deeds to be misdeeds. My child, as the degree of gnosis increases, so the sentiment of there being nothing other than Him, may He be glorified and exalted, deepens.

During prayer, which is the ladder to arrival at God, after every instance of praise and glorification there follows a magnification offered up to God (*takbīr*), just as at the start of prayer there is a magnification, which alludes to the fact that He is far beyond praise and glorification, and far beyond even the greatest praise, which is prayer itself. There are magnifications offered up to God after prayer, which assert that He is far greater than the description of His essence, attributes, and actions. What am I saying? How can He be described? What is being described? How is He described? With what words and with what explanation can He be described? For the entire universe, from the highest levels of being to the lowest of the low, is nothing, and whatever is is Him, and what can that which is nothing say about the absolute being? If it were not for the command and permission of God the High, may He be glorified and exalted, perhaps none of the nearmost ones would have spoken about Him. At the same time, whatever is is a word from Him and no other, and no one can be uninvolved in the invoking of Him because everything that is invoked is His invocation, 'Thy Lord has decreed you shall not worship any save Him';[8] 'Thee only we worship and to Thee alone we pray for succour',[9] which is perhaps an address from God to all beings. 'Nothing is that does not proclaim His praise, but you do not understand their extolling.'[10] This is also according to the language of multiplicity, unless He is the praise, the praise-giver, and the one who is praised, 'Verily, your Lord prays...',[11] 'God is the light of the heavens and the earth'.[12]

My child, we are incapable of being thankful to Him and His unlimited favours, so what is there that is better than not neglecting to serve His servants? For serving them is to serve God because they are all from Him. At no time or in no place should you deem yourself in the service of God's creation, for they in truth are doing us a favour because they are the means of serving Him, may He be glorified and exalted. In serving them do not seek to gain fame and affection, because this itself is a trick of the devil, who submerges us in his own desire. Regarding serving the servants of God, choose

8 Q.17:23.

9 Q.1:5.

10 Q.17:44.

11 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, Tehran, 1363 SH/1984, vol. 1, p. 443.

12 Q.24:35.

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for them whatever is most availing for them and not what is more availing for yourself and your friends, because this is the sign of veracity in His holy court, may He be glorified and exalted.

My dear child, God is present and the universe is His presence and the page of our souls is the record of our actions. Endeavour to choose every occupation and action that brings you closer to Him, because that pleases Him, may He be glorified and exalted. Do not doubt me in your heart by saying, 'If you are truthful, why are you not as such?' For I myself know that I am not endowed with any of the qualities of the folk of the heart. I fear that I have broken my pen in pointless labour and for the harmful self, and that tomorrow I shall be held accountable for it. However, the original purpose is God, even though the pen of one such as myself is not without error. In my final breaths, I seek refuge in God the High and hope for help and intercession from His nearmost ones, may He be glorified and exalted.

O Lord, assist this feeble old man and young Aḥmad. Seal our outcome with goodness. Through Thy all-encompassing mercy guide us to the court of Thy awe-inspiring majesty and beauty.

Peace be upon him who follows guidance.
Rūḥ Allāh al-Mūsawī al-Khumaynī
15 Rabīʿ al-Mawlūd 1407 AH/1986[13]

13 The author is referring to the month of Rabīʿ al-Awwal; he has called it by the name al-Mawlūd in reference to the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad.

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Prologue

> In the name of God, the Oft-Compassionate, the Ever-Merciful, praise is for God, the Lord of all Realms; and may blessings be upon Muḥammad and his pure descendants; and may God's condemnation be upon all their foes until the day of reckoning.

O God, guide us on the straight path of humanity and free us from the ignorance of self-complacency and the error of self-conceit. Afford us entry to the intimate gathering of the lords of spiritual ascension and the sanctified rank of the possessors of discerning hearts, and cast from the sight of our inner eye the dark veils of egotism (*anāniyyah*) and the glittering veils of egoity (*inniyyah*)[1] so that we may attain the true ascension of the prayer (*namāz*) of the folk of spiritual poverty (*niyāz*) and four times magnify God (*takbīr*) in the four directions[2] of the realm of matter (*mulk*) and the realm of the spirit (*malakūt*).[3] Grant us the opening of the door of the hidden mysteries (*al-asrār al-ghaybiyyah*) and lift the veiling of aloneness (*aḥadiyyah*) from our souls, so that we may incline towards the whispered prayers of the folk of nearmostness (*ahl*

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1 *Anāniyyah* and *inniyyah* are translated throughout the text as 'egotism' and 'egoity' respectively. However, this being a text of gnosis, and the author being well-versed in the terminology thereof, it should be borne in mind that both of these words hold further meanings within the conventions of gnosis. Firstly, the word *inniyyah* is a homograph for *unniyyah*, the Arabicisation of the Greek ειναι ('to be'), which refers in gnosis to the realisation of existence as permanent. Thus the author is potentially evoking both meanings whenever he uses the term. Thus he employs both of these terms simultaneously in the meanings given to them. *Anāniyyah*, meanwhile, refers to the reality to which everything else is added. Thus it is that this pair of terms can render two very different dimensions of meaning at any given point. Whilst the more literal meaning is retained in the English, this should not be forgotten. See 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 57–8.

2 The four directions (*al-jihāt al-arba'ah*) refer to the four compass points of North, South, East, and West. Six directions (*al-jihāt al-sittah*) are also sometimes mentioned and this includes the vertical and horizontal scale of the realm of matter.

3 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī explains *mulk* as the realm of witnessing (*'ālam al-shahādah*) and *malakūt* as the realm of the unseen (*'ālam al-ghayb*). See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 108. In the present translation *malakūt* is rendered intermittently as 'spirit', 'angelic', or 'heavenly' and their derivatives, depending on context, rather than 'unseen'. The word 'spirit' is employed according to the OED in the sense of that which is incorporeal or immaterial as opposed to body or matter. Amongst other considerations, this is to avoid confusion with the term *ghayb*, which Khomeini frequently uses and which is here rendered as 'unseen'. *Mulk*, meanwhile, is translated as 'the realm of matter' or 'the realm of dominion' depending on the context.

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al-walāyah) and attain the sweetness of the invocation (*dhikr*)[4] of the lords of guidance.

Turn the attachment of our hearts away from occupation with other things to occupation with you, and cover our eyes from the others, who are the demons on the path of wayfaring, and by your ever-beautiful beauty (*jamāl al-jamīl*) grant them light. Truly, you are the bestower of guidance and success.

And now, this wanderer in the valley of perplexity and unknowingness, tied to the attachments of egoity and egotism, absorbed in the heady wine of himself and self-worship, unaware of the degrees of immateriality and the material dominion of being, sincerely intends to draw out in writing some of the spiritual degrees of the great ones nearmost to God (*al-awliyā' al-'iẓām*) in this spiritual wayfaring and ascension of faith and gnosis. I myself am content with putting into words and arrangements all the various degrees and ascensions, although I have not acquired the adornment of any of the moral and spiritual degrees of the folk of the heart. However, in accordance with the saying, 'I love the virtuous although I am not from amongst them', I will adorn these pages with the remembrance of the beloved. Perhaps this remembrance without thought and this form without meaning, coupled with the displaying of weakness and spiritual poverty, will cause the lords of insight and the immaculate ones nearmost to God (*al-awliyā' al-kumal*), peace be upon them, to glance upon this captive of hopes and desires and set aright the lack in the remaining days of his life. Upon God is reliance.[5]

I have arranged these pages as an introduction, two parts, and an epilogue.

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4 Invocation (*dhikr*), often translated as 'remembrance', is a central concept in Islamic thought and especially in gnosis. 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī supplies a ninefold classification of the concept see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 277–8.

5 When Khomeini alludes to the great ones nearmost to God and the immaculate ones nearmost to God, he is referring to the infallible ones, which are the Prophet Muḥammad, his daughter, and the twelve imāms.

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INTRODUCTION



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CHAPTER 1

The Degrees and Progressions of Man and the Degrees and Levels of Prayer

Let it be known that, in so far as man has degrees (*maqāmāt*) and progressions (*madārij*),[1] we should consider him as having two degrees: one degree is that of the world (*dunyā*) and witnessing (*shahādah*), the other is that of the hereafter (*ākhirah*) and the unseen (*ghayb*). One is the shadow of the Oft-Compassionate (*ẓill al-raḥmān*) and the other is the shadow of the Ever-Merciful (*ẓill al-raḥīm*).[2] In accordance with this consideration, regarding the shadow and the bondsman, all the names of the possessor of the shadow and of the Lord occur in the encompassment of the two names: the Oft-Compassionate and the Ever-Merciful, as He has been pleased to say in conjunction with the noble verse, 'In the name of *Allāh*, the Oft-Compassionate, the Ever-Merciful'.[3] The gnostics[4] have said: 'Being manifests in[5] the name of *Allāh*, the Oft-Compas-

1 On degrees and stations (*manāzil*) see 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 107–8.

2 The concept of the shadow (*ẓill*), here evoked in a Qur'ānic citation and extensively employed by Khomeini in his previous writings, is a far-reaching one, casting resonances as far back as Plato's parable of the cave. 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī gives a threefold classification of *ẓill* which is pertinent to what follows of Khomeini's usage of the concept. 'The shadow' is relative being, manifest through the determinates of the possible archetypes. 'The first shadow' is the first intellect and 'the shadow of God' is the perfect man realised in the presence of oneness. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 184.

3 Q.1.1.

4 See Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah*, Beirut, n.d, vol. I, p. 102. Also see Khomeini's commentary on this quote in *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 100–1.

5 The preposition 'in' here translates the preposition in the Arabic *bi*. Another possible reading would be 'by, by means of, or through'. If this latter reading is adopted then it would mean that being manifests through the name of God and the meaning of the phrase as a whole changes. For Khomeini's understanding of being (*wujūd*) see *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 19–21, 71–3; his *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 13–5; *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-walāyah*, pp. 26–7, 48, 51, 57–8, 60, 68, 72, 76, 78–9. See also Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, *Hastī az naẓar-i falsafah wa 'irfān*, Tehran., n.d., pp. 6–15; Āshtiyānī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddimah-i qayṣarī bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 84–107; Sayyid Ḥaydar al-Āmulī's *Kitāb naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 445–50. Khomeini explains this notion of 'being' manifesting in the name of *Allāh* in his first work *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar* in two instances. In the first instance it is with reference to a tradition on the authority of *Ahl al-Bayt*, 'Through the *ba* being manifests and by the *nuqṭah* the worshipper (*al-'ābid*) is distinguished from the one worshipped (*al-ma'būd*)'. In the second instance he quotes

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sionate, the Ever-Merciful'. In the perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*),[6] these two degrees consist of the manifestation of the absolute divine volition (*mashī'ah*) from the hidden places of the unseen aloneness (*al-ghayb al-aḥadī*) to the grip of matter, or the grip of the seventh earth—which is the veiling of humanity in accordance with the methodology of the eminent gnostics—and this is one

the famous statement of 'Alī, 'Verily all that which is in the Qur'ān is in the *al-fātiḥah* and all that is in the *al-fātiḥah* is in *bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm* and all that is therein is in the *bā* and all that is in the *bā* is in the *nuqṭah* ('dot') and I am the *nuqṭah* under the *bā*.' See *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 23, 52, 88. These instances are referenced by the Persian editors to the work *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fī asrār amīr al-mu'minīn* by al-Ḥāfiẓ Rajab al-Bursī. (Beirut, 1427 AH/2006, pp. 31, 35, 41, 56). Though al-Bursī has a chapter on this matter and elaborates in detail the concept of the *nuqṭah* in his work, it may be useful to refer also to the work of Dāwūd b. Muḥammad al-Qayṣarī (*Maṭla' khuṣūṣ al-kalim fī ma'ānī fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 32–3) where he quotes an oration of Ali, in which he states 'I am the *nuqṭah* of the *bā* of *bismillāh*', and Sayyid Ḥaydar al-Āmulī, who explains the manifestation of being in the following manner, 'In sum, the mysteries [of *al-basmalah*] are not receptive to writing and composition; of this degree it is said, "Being manifests in the *bā* of *bismillah al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*", and it is said, "In the *bā* being manifests and by the *nuqṭah* the worshipper (*al-'ābid*) is distinguished from the one worshipped (*al-ma'būd*)." The Prince of the Believers said: "By God! If I had willed I could burden seventy camels with [the commentary of] the *ba* of *bismillah al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*." He also said: "I am the *nuqṭah* under the *bā*." This is because he is as the *nuqṭah* is in relation to the first determination (*al-ta'ayyun al-awwal*), which is the light of the Muḥammadian reality, due to his [the Prophet's] saying, "The first that God created was my light, called the Ever-Merciful (*al-raḥīm*)", and due to his saying, "'Alī and I are from one light." For the prophet is like the *bā* and Ali is like the *nuqṭah* beneath it. For the *bā* cannot be determined save by the *nuqṭah*; just as the Prophet does not achieve perfection save through [the degree of] nearmostness (*walāyah*) even though the nearmost one (*walī*) is lesser in rank than the Prophet. It is to this that the Prince of the Believers alluded to when he said "Knowledge is a *nuqṭah* of which the ignorant made much (*kaththarahā*)." He means that real knowledge is a *nuqṭah*; to wit the attainment of real knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ḥaqīqī*) depends upon the knowledge (*al-iṭṭilā'*) of this *nuqṭah* and the manner of its manifestation (*ẓuhūr*) and its manifestations (*maẓāhir*) and their levels (*marātib*). However, the ignorant made much of it [along with] the denial of its occupant (*ṣāḥibuhā*). And to whomsoever God assigns no light, no light has he (Q.24:40). That is the bounty of God; He gives it to whom He will, and God is of bounty abounding (Q.62:04).' See al-Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār wa manba' al-anwār*, pp. 564–5.

6 The perfect man is another long-standing concept in gnostic discourse which Khomeini employs in this work. In the Shī'ī usage it is a particular way of conceptualising the infallible Prophet and imāms. See Khomeini, *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 68 and 138; Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣila bayn al-taṣawwuf wa al-tashayyu'*, 3rd ed., Beirut, 1982, vol. I, p. 484; Ḥasan Zādah Āmulī, *al-Insān al-kāmil fī nahj al-balāghah*, tr. (from the Persian) 'Abd al-Riḍā Iftikhārī, Qum, 1416 AH/1995; Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *Kalimāt maknūnah min 'ulūm ahl al-ḥikma wa al-ma'rifah*, ed. 'Azīz Allāh al-'Aṭṭārdī al-Qūchānī, Tehran, 1342 SH/1383, pp. 116–93.

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of the two arcs of being,[7] and from the grip of the inundation of the divine effusion (*fayḍ*) to the utmost limit of the unseen volition and the absoluteness of being, which is the second arc.[8] Thus, the perfect man, in accordance with these two degrees, to wit the degree of witnessing and manifestation according to the oft-compassionateness (*raḥmāniyyah*), and the degree of the unseen and manifestation according to the ever-mercifulness (*raḥīmiyyah*), is the complete circle of being.[9] 'Then he drew nigh and came down, till he was two bows'-length or even nearer.'[10] One of these two is the reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of the night of measure (*laylat al-qadr*)[11] and is the mystery thereof, for it is the

7 Khomeini here is alluding to the degree of the alone (*aḥad*) when he says 'unseen aloneness' (*al-ghayb al-aḥadī*). He explains in *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar* (p.23) that it is through absolute divine volition (*mashī'ah*) that the manifestation of being occurs. This he supports by the tradition of al-Ṣādiq that God created volition by itself (*bi-nafsihā*) and then He created things through volition (*Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 78, 98–101, 104, 106–7). Also see al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 8, note 51 and al-Ṣadūq, *al-Tawhid*, p. 339. For the divine will (*al-irādah*) understood as the divine act and volition (*al-mashī'ah*) as a creation through which things are created see al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 109–10. Also see his note in *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 61, 65–6. These subtleties should be borne in mind in order to follow Khomeini's thought; see *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 19, 45–7, 49, 61–2, 65, 79. Furthermore, he states that the divine act is His volition (*Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 100, 106–7) and he also notes that absolute divine volition is described as the holy effusion (*al-fayḍ al-muaqaddas*), the broad mercy (*al-raḥmah al-wāsi'ah*), the greatest name (*al-ism al-a'ẓam*), the absolute Muḥammadian nearmostness (*al-walāyah al-muṭlaqah al-muḥammadiyyah*), and the degree of 'Alī (*al-maqām al-'alawiyyah*). See Khomeini, *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 17–8. See also Āshtiyānī's introduction to Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 17–8. The arc of being alluded to here is the descending arc of being (*al-qaws al-nuzūlī*).

8 This is the ascending arc of being (*al-qaws al-ṣu'ūdī*). Divine effusion (*al-fayḍ al-ilāhī*) is divided into two. One is the most holy effusion (*al-fayḍ al-aqdas*) and the other is holy effusion (*al-fayḍ al-muqaddas*). It is through the former that the permanent archetypes are realised within the divine knowledge and through the latter they are realised in the external world. See al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭla' khuṣūṣ al-kalim fi ma'ānī fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 15–9. Also see al-Bursī on the discussion of the reality of the *nuqṭah* which he calls the first effusion in *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fi asrār amīr al-mu'minīn*, pp. 41, 43–4. When Khomeini uses the term 'absoluteness of being' here he is referring to the level of the divine essence.

9 Khomeini's remark on al-Qayṣarī's writings on the reality of being discussed above in the translator's introduction should be borne in mind here.

10 Q.53:8. Khomeini here is alluding to the degrees of even nearer (*aw andā*), suspended-hung (*al-tadallā*), and two bows'-length (*qāba qawsayn*). He returns to the discussion of these degress in part 2, chapter 9. For his explanation of the degree of even nearer see *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, p. 15, and for the degree of suspended-hung see *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, p. 17.

11 This is a reference to what is alluded to in *sūrat* al-Qadr, Q.98:1–5. The night of measure

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sun of reality within the veiling of determinates (*ta'ayyunāt*). The other is the reality of the day of resurrection, for it is the coming forth and dawning thereof from its veiling, and these are the entire day of divinity.

And from the consideration of man having three degrees: firstly, there is the degree of material dominion (*mulk*) and the world (*dunyā*); secondly, the degree of the isthmus (*barzakh*);[12] and thirdly, the degree of the intellect (*'aql*)[13] and the hereafter (*ākhirah*). In the perfect man these three degrees are: a degree of the determinates of manifestation (*ta'ayyunāt al-maẓāhir*); a degree which is the degree of the absolute divine volition (*al-mashī'ah al-muṭlaqah*), which is the isthmus of isthmuses (*barzakh al-barāzīkh*)[14] and, according to one consideration, the degree of the thin cloud (*'amā'*);[15] and a degree which is the degree of the aloneness of the assemblage of the names (*maqām aḥadiyyah jam' al-asmā'*).[16] These three degrees are alluded to in the noble verse, 'In the name of *Allāh*', where '*Allāh*' alludes to the degree of

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is identified with the person of Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet. As noted in the introduction, it is through the means of Fāṭimah that the eventide prayer is performed. Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī in his *Sharḥ tawḥīd al-ṣadūq* explains that the reason why Fāṭimah is linked to this time is that she is the divine night and the night of measure (*laylat al-qadr*). He cites a tradition from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, as recorded by the early exegete Furāt b. Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī, that he said: 'The night is Fāṭimah the radiant, and the measure is God the exalted. Thus she is the night of God (*laylat Allāh*). See Qummī, *Sharḥ tawḥīd al-ṣadūq*, p. 600. Also see Khomeini, *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 61.

12 The isthmus is the locus whence comes forth the sides of oneness (*al-waḥdah*) and multiplicity (*al-kathrah*), and it is the reality of man (*al-ḥaqīqah al-insāniyyah*). A comprehensive discussion of this may be found in al-Fanārī, on whom Khomeini writes a commentary and who must be considered an important source. See al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, with various glosses, ed. Muḥammad Khwājawī, Tehran, 1374 SH/1995, pp. 205, 232. For the concept of the reality of man see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 149.

13 See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 149; al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 191–99; Khomeini, *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, p. 80.

14 Al-Fanārī describes the perfect man as the beloved of God (*maḥbūb al-ḥaqq*) and the isthmus of isthmuses (*barzakh al-barāzīkh*). See al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 270.

15 The degree of the thin cloud is derived from the Prophet's answer to the question of where God was prior to creating, 'He was in a thin cloud' (*kāna fī 'amā'*). Khomeini notes the difference of opinion regarding this matter, pointing out that some have seen this as alluding to the presence of aloneness (*al-ḥaḍrah al-aḥadiyyah*), whilst for others it concerns the presence of oneness (*al-ḥaḍrah al-wāḥidiyyah*). Khomeini himself, however, maintains that the term alludes to the presence of the most holy effusion (*ḥaḍrah al-fayḍ al-aqdas*). See Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 29–30; *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, pp. 72–3. See also al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 200–8; al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭla' khuṣūṣ al-kalim fī ma'ānī fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 32–3; Āshtiyānī, *Sharḥ-i muqaddimah-i qayṣarī bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, p. 432; Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt-i ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 148–9.

16 See al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 562.

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the aloneness of assemblage (*maqām aḥadiyyah al-jamʿ*),[17] 'the name' (*ism*) alludes to the degree of the greater isthmus (*al-barzakhiyyah al-kubrā*),[18] and the determinates of 'oft-compassionateness' and 'ever-mercifulness' allude to the divine volition.

And from the consideration of man having four degrees: these are the realm of dominion (*mulk*), the realm of the spirit (*malakūt*), the realm of invincibility (*jabarūt*), and the realm of divinity (*lāhūt*).[19]

And from the consideration of man having five degrees: these are absolute witnessing (*al-shahādah al-muṭlaqah*), the absolute unseen (*al-ghayb al-muṭlaq*), relative witnessing (*al-shahādah al-muḍāfah*), the relative unseen (*al-ghayb al-muḍāf*), and the degree of comprehensive being (*al-kawn al-jāmiʿ*). These correspond to the five presences (*al-haḍarāt al-khamsah*) employed in the language of the gnostics.[20]

And from the consideration of man having seven degrees: they are known in the language of the gnostics as the seven citadels of love (*shahr-i ʿishq*)[21] or the seven climes of being (*aqālīm al-wujūd*).[22]

And from a detailed consideration, man has a hundred or a thousand stations (*manzil*); the detailing thereof would be beyond the capacity of this brief treatise.[23]

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17 See Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, p. 51; al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 526.

18 See al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 506; Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 20, 45, 67, 75.

19 ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī explains *mulk* as the realm of witnessing (*ʿālam al-shahādah*) and *malakūt* as the realm of the unseen (*ʿālam al-ghayb*). See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 108.

20 For both the fourfold and fivefold classifications see al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭlaʿ khuṣūṣ al-kalim fī maʿānī fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 23–4; al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 203, 231, 262–3, 287, 349–51, 373, 539, 593, 708; Āshtiyānī, *Sharḥ muqaddimah-i qayṣarī bar fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 268–95; Khomeini, *Sharḥ duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, p. 120; *Taʿlīqāt ʿalā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 32–3. See also William Chittick, 'The Five Divine Presences: From al-Qunawi to al-Qaysari', in *Muslim World* 72 (1982), pp. 107–28.

21 This seems to be an allusion to a line from Rūmī wherein he laments, '*Haft shahr-i ʿishq rā ʿAṭṭār gasht | mā hanūz andar-i kham-i yek kūcheʾīm*' ('Aṭṭār wandered the seven citadels of love | In a single winding alley yet we remain). This, in turn, evokes the seven valleys through which the wayfaring birds progressed towards their goal in 'Aṭṭār's most celebrated work, *Manṭiq al-ṭayr* ('The speech of the birds').

22 The division of the world into seven geographical regions is a common motif in Islamic literature and elsewhere, as is that of seven earths corresponding to the seven heavens.

23 See for example Khwājah 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī, *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn*, Beirut, 1408 AH/1988, wherein al-Anṣārī gives one hundred such stations. Khomeini begins with man and the degrees of man because, discussing as he is the prayer of man, this work concerns primarily the arc of ascent, the upward progression of the prayer of the servant towards

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As far as prayer (*namāz*) is concerned, which has a universal and predominant[24] position amidst all acts of worship (*'ibādāt*) and divine rituals (*al-manāsik al-ilāhiyyah*), it concurs step by step with these degrees, for all the spiritual degrees of man are in accordance with his mystical journey, from the point of descent into the realm of material dominion, which is the dark abode of the soul (*nafs*), to the furthest limit of true spiritual ascent, which is the arrival (*wuṣūl*) at annihilation in God.[25]

Prayer is the heavenly steed (*burāq*) of wayfaring (*sayr*) and the fluttering wings (*rafraf*) of ascension for the folk of gnosis and the lords of the heart. Each one of the folk of the wayfaring (*sayr wa sulūk*) unto God has their own specific prayers, and each one has a lot and share thereof according to their own degree. In the same way, all other rituals such as the fast (*ṣawm*) and the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) are also like this, although they do not possess the universality of prayer; 'The ways to God are as many as the breaths (*anfās*) of the creatures.'[26] For those who have not reached this degree, for them is no lot from their prayer; but rather the individual of any realm or degree (*nash'ah wa maqām*), if he does not abandon the mount of prejudice and egotism, denies the existence of the other levels (*marātib*). Furthermore, he who is convinced of this considers the other degrees (*maqāmāt*) to be useless and pointless. In the same way, the one who has not arrived at these levels (*marātib*) and degrees (*maqāmāt*) of man (*insāniyyah*) and who has

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his Lord, through the three unities as discussed in the introduction. The prayer of the Lord commences with the oneness of essence and closes with the oneness of actions. In the servant's prayer the opposite is the case, rather it commences with the oneness of actions and progresses through the oneness of names to end with the oneness of essence. Otherwise conceived it may be said that the servant's prayer rises towards the Lord above, whilst the Lord's prayer descends towards His servant. This rising and ascending is also referred to as the arcs of ascent and descent, as discussed earlier. See Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī, *Rūḥ al-ṣalāt*, in *al-Arba'īnīyyāt li-kashf anwār al-qudsīyyāt*, pp. 49–50. Khomeini will return to this matter in depth in part 1, chapter 6 and in part 2, chapter 6.

24 The word *'amūdiyyat* has been translated here as 'predominant'; the author here is basing his understanding upon the well-known tradition *'al-ṣalāt 'amūd al-dīn'* ('Prayer is the pillar of religion'), taking the term *'amūd* and using it adjectivally.

25 Khomeini throughout this work refers to the concept of arrival (*wuṣūl*). For a full appreciation of this notion recourse should be made to 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, who quotes the following tradition from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, 'Whosoever knows parting from arrival, motion from stillness, he has reached firmness in unity (*tawḥīd*).' See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 76–7. Annihilation (*fanā'*) and its opposite, subsistence (*baqā'*), are concepts which the author employs throughout the text in various contexts. For an explanation of the two concepts and their relationship see the detailed note by 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 367.

26 * See Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *'Ilm al-yaqīn*, Qum, 1400 AH/1980, vol. I, pp. 14, 32.

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not extracted himself from the veiling of egotism will make denial and will think nothing of the ascensions and ways (*ma'ārij wa madārij*) of the folk of divine knowledge and the ones nearmost to God. This very thing is one of the greatest impediments in the wayfaring to God and one of the foremost obstacles to the spiritual risings and spiritual degrees, which keep the commanding soul (*al-nafs al-'ammārah*),[27] on account of its love for itself and the vanities of this world, in the veiling of darkness. Furthermore, such an individual is aided by devilish whispered temptations causing him to cling to the earth, so much so that sometimes he begins to reckon that the prayer and fasting of the immaculate ones nearmost to God is like his own prayer.[28] Or, if he upholds any distinction, he confines it to the exoteric disciplines of their prayer such as Qur'ānic recitation (*qirā'ah*), lengthy bowing (*rukū'*), prostration (*sujūd*), and other such acts which are the outer form of prayer. Again, if he progresses a little further from this point, he deems the ultimate distinction to be the attention of the heart at the time of prayer and the meditation on its customary meanings and concepts, without having himself any awareness of the presence (*ḥuḍūr*) of the heart, the levels, and the mysteries thereof, or the means of realising it. Moreover, he is not even concerned, at the least, to realise the presence of heart according to the measure that he has carved out for himself, nor to remove the impediments to it, nor to realise its requisites.

Furthermore, the prayer of the nearmost to God, peace be upon them, cannot be understood by our erroneous impressions. The first level of their worship, which is the general and normal degree, is the worship of the free. Moreover, for them there are other degrees (*maqāmāt*) and ways (*madārij*) amidst this wayfaring to God, some of which we will point out in the following pages.

In sum, just as for prayer there are degrees and levels, so at every level the prayer of the one who is praying will be much different to that at other levels. Similarly, his degree will be much different to other degrees. So, as long as man is in the form of man and is in formal terms a man, then equally his prayer is a form and is in formal terms a prayer. The benefit of this prayer is only that it is correct and that it fulfils formal Islamic law in the form that attends to all its parts and conditions correctly; however, this is neither acceptable at the threshold of the court nor approved by the soul (*pasand-i khāṭir*). Yet, if he takes steps from the exoteric level to the esoteric and from form to meaning, then his prayer would also find reality in every degree that

27 Q.12:53. For *al-nafs*, *al-nafs al-'ammārah*, *al-nafs al-lawwāmah*, and *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah* see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 114–6.

28 Here Khomeini alludes to the fourteen immaculate ones, i.e., the Prophet, his daughter Fāṭimah, and the twelve imāms.

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he verifies. Therefore what has been alluded to before, that the prayer is the mount of traversing and the heavenly steed of wayfaring to God, would reflect this subject. Thus, as long as the prayer of man is in the form of prayer and man has not verified the level of the esoteric (*bāṭin*) and its mystery, then man is also in the form of man and has not verified the reality of this. So, the scale for the perfection of humanity and its reality is its ascension through true ascent and its rising up to the summit of perfection and arrival at the portal of God by means of the ladder of prayer. Therefore, for the one who believes in the Truth (*ḥaqq*) and the reality (*ḥaqīqah*) and for the one who traverses unto God on the steps of gnosis, it is necessary that he prepare himself for this spiritual journey and this faithly ascension, and he should take with him whatever equipment and provision, daily fare, and aid are necessary for the way, and that he remove from himself all those things that hinder and obstruct the wayfaring, and traverse this path with the divine legions and the companion who is in agreement as to this path, in order that he may remain safe and secure from the devil and his troops, who are the brigands on the path of the way to the arrival (*wuṣūl*). After this, we will expound on companionship and the companion, and expound on the divine legions in the mysteries of the call to prayer (*adhān*) and the second call to prayer announcing the commencement of prayer (*iqāmah*).

Our main purpose in this chapter is to point out that for prayer, or rather all acts of worship (*'ibādāt*), apart from this form, shell, and metaphor, there are other aspects such as the esoteric, the kernel, and a reality. This is known by way of the intellect (*'aql*) and there are numerous examples of evidence for it by way of transmission (*naql*). The mention of all of that is beyond the capacity of these pages and we will grace these pages only with the mention of some of them.

From them comes the well-known tradition which says, 'Prayer is the ascension of the believer'.[29] Contemplation and reflection upon this well-known tradition opens doors for those initiated folk who contemplate it, most of which we are veiled and excluded from. All the previous explanations can be drawn from this noble tradition.

And from them comes the following noble tradition from *al-Kāfī* with a chain of transmission to Abū 'Abd Allāh, peace be upon him.[30] He said:

> Verily service (*'ibādah*) is threefold: there are people who serve God, may He be honoured and glorified, in fear and so that is the service of the vassal; and people who serve God, may He be blessed and exalted, seeking

29 * Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, *I'tiqādāt*, 1321 SH/1942, p. 29.

30 The *kunyah* here refers to Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (not Abū 'Abd Allāh Imām al-Ḥusayn), as is usual in *ḥadīth* literature.

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> reward and so that is the service of hirelings; and people who serve God, may He be honoured and glorified, loving Him and so that is the service of the free, and that is the most excellent service.[31]

It has been reported in *Waṣā'il al-shī'ah* from the sources *'Ilal, Majālis,* and *Khiṣāl* by al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq,[32] through the chain of transmission, from the object of resort[33] (*ḥaḍrat*), Imām al-Ṣādiq, may the blessings of God be with him, that he said:

> Verily, the people who serve God, may He be glorified and exalted, are of three kinds: and so a group serves Him desirous of his reward and so this is the service of the covetous and this is greed. Others serve Him fearful of the fire and so this is the service of the vassals and this is fear. However, I serve Him loving Him, may He be glorified and exalted, and so this is the service of the generous. And this is the security in accordance with what God, may He be glorified and exalted, has said: 'And they are secure from the fear of that day.'[34] And God, may He be glorified and exalted, has said: 'Say: "If you love God, follow me; God shall love you and He shall forgive your sins."'[35] 'Whoever loves God, may He be glorified and exalted, God the High will love him, and whoever God loves will be saved.'[36]

Similarly, a report containing similar content has been recorded in the *Nahj al-balāghah*.[37] And of that is the word of the Noble Envoy, 'Serve God as if you see Him, for though you do not see Him, He sees you.'[38] This alludes to two degrees (*maqām*) of the presence of the heart regarding the one who is served

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31 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 84.

32 Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh al-Qummī, also known as al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381 AH/991).

33 The words *ḥaḍrat* and *janāb* are honourific epithets with which Khomeini precedes the names of the infallible imāms or those to whom he accords the greatest respect, as is the norm in the Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Turkish literary traditions. They have here both been translated as 'the object of resort', as noted by E. W. Lane in his *Arabic-English Lexicon.*

34 Q.27:89.

35 Q.3:31.

36 Ibn Bābawayh, *'Ilal al-sharā'i'*, p. 12; the last sentence of this extract is a tradition attributed to the Prophet. * Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, ed. 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, Qum, 1342 SH/1963, p. 188 and al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'ah*, vol. I, p. 45.

37 * Al-Rāḍī, *Nahj al-balāghah, ḥikmah* 229.

38 * Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, Beirut, 1403 AH/1983, vol. LXXIV, p. 74; Raḍī al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Faḍl Ṭabarsī, *Makārim al-akhlāq*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn al-A'lamī, Beirut, 1392 SH/1972, p. 459.

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(*ma'būd*), and this is as follows: in addition, it has been reported of the Prophet that he said: 'Surely, two men of my *ummah*, standing in prayer, their bowing and prostrations are one, whilst the difference between their praying is as the difference between the earth and the heavens.'[39]

It is reported of the object of resort, the Prince of the Believers, peace be upon him, that he said:

> Ṭūbā[40] is for whomsoever is sincere in their service and supplication to God, who does not occupy his heart with whatever his eyes see, who does not forget the invocation of God with what his ears hear, and whose heart is not aggrieved by what is given to another.[41]

Later we shall mention sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*).

Thus, through meditating upon these noble traditions and through contemplating the state of the imāms of guidance, God's peace be upon them, some of whom, during the time of the fulfilling of the divine trust, went pale and would begin to tremble, and some of whom went beyond the self and became completely unaware of anything other than God until they forgot the material domain of the body and the material realm of their own being, it is understood that the reality of these acts of divine service and comprehensive example, which released these holy winged beings (*al-ṭā'ir al-qudsī*) from the constraints of the cage of nature and arranged them according to the perfect Muḥammadian unveiling, may the blessings of God be with him and his descendants, which was revealed to his holy heart,[42] are not the same as worldly form and exoteric material appearance. For any knowledgeable scholar or layman who can read the alphabet is able, given the correct conditions and the perfect formal terms, to establish this form and to come out well from the obligation without the need for the changing of colour to such an extent, the trembling of the nerves, and fear and dread of failings and shortcomings.

And with this we will end the chapter by mentioning a tradition and that should suffice for anyone who 'has a heart or listens and is a witness'.[43]

The striving wayfarer, the gnostic, Sayyid b. Ṭāwūs,[44] may God be pleased

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39 * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXI, p. 249.

40 Ṭūbā is the name of a heavenly tree.

41 * Al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'ah*, vol. I, p. 43.

42 The possessive pronoun here refers to the Prophet.

43 Q.50:37.

44 His full name is 'Alī b. Mūsā b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Ṭāwūs (d. 664 AH/1266); he is sometimes referred to as Raḍī al-Dīn, and also in short as Ibn Ṭāwūs, as he is referred to by the author and the Persian editors of this text.

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with him, reports in his book, *Falāḥ al-sā'il*, that it is reported in the tradition that Rizām the client of Khālid b. 'Abd Allāh,[45] who was from amongst the wretched, questioned Imām Ja'far b. Muḥammad, peace be upon them, in the presence of Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr,[46] regarding prayer and its ordinances (*ḥudūd*).

And so he, peace be upon him, said: 'For prayer there are four thousand ordinances; you have not fulfilled any one of them.'

He said: 'Tell me what it is not permitted to abandon of it and save by which prayer is not complete?'

And so he, peace be upon him, said:

> Prayer is not complete save for the master of full cleanliness, who has attained fullness,[47] not a slanderer and deviator, he knows and so is humble and steadfast, and he stands still between renunciation and covetousness, fortitude, and anguish, as though the promise has been wrought forth for him and the threat has befallen him; he has given away his goods, typified his aim, spent his heart's blood in God, turned the way towards Him, not distracted by distractions, and cut off the clinging of concerns from anything other than the One to Whom he betakes himself, and towards Whom he comes and from Whom he seeks help. And so when he comes forth with this, then this is the prayer that prohibits him from foulness and abomination.[48]

The explanation of this noble tradition in accordance with the way of the folk of gnosis and its application to the principles and degrees of prayer would be lengthy. In respect of some of these degrees, we may allude to them through some of its phrasing. If these four thousand ordinances, which the object of resort, Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, spoke of, were according to the exoteric ordinances and the disciplines of formal terms he would not have said: 'you have not fulfilled any one of them', because it is known that anyone can establish the disciplines of the formal terms of prayer. Truly, the cutting of ties from anything other than God (*ḥaqq*), the arrival in His presence, the spending of the heart's blood in His way, and the abandoning of other and otherness instantaneously, is a matter which is not accessible to anyone save the folk of the divine gnoses (*ma'ārif*), the immaculate ones nearmost to God, the lovers

45 Rizām's full name was Rizām b. Muslim. He is said to have been saved from the cruelty of his master by Imām al-Ṣādiq. See Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsi, *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl al-ma'rūf bi rijāl al-kashshī*, Tehran, 1382 SH/2003, p. 407.

46 This is a reference to Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (d. 158 AH/775), the second 'Abbāsid caliph.

47 From the apparent meaning it could be argued that he is alluding to the coming of age.

48 * 'Alī b. Mūsā b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Ṭāwūs, *Falāḥ al-sā'il*, Tehran, 1382 AH/1962, p. 23.

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(*muḥibbūn*), and ones drawn to the divine grace (*majdhūbūn*).[49]

Ṭūbā for them, again Ṭūbā for them,
Their graces pleasant for the lords of grace.

49 For further details on being drawn to the divine grace see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 65.

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CHAPTER 2

On the Prayer of the Wayfarer and the Perfect Nearmost One

It is clear and manifest to the lords of the divine gnoses that the prayer and other rituals of the man traversing and wayfaring unto God are much different from those of the immaculate one nearmost to God, who has reached the end of the traversing and who has attained the furthest limit of the perfect ascension and spiritual and immaterial ascent, and has stepped into the intimate gathering, suspended at two bows'-length, for the prayer of the wayfarer, whilst he is wayfaring and traversing unto God, is his heavenly steed of ascension and the fluttering wings of arrival. And after this arrival, his prayer is the chart of theophanies and the face of witnessings of the beauty of the Beloved without exerting his deliberation in its constitution; rather it is the diffusion of the ruling (*ḥukm*) of the unseen through the witnessing and the manifestation of the marks of the esoteric on the exoteric. As the authorities from amongst the philosophers have said concerning the particularity of the ordering (*tadbīr*) of the intellectual realm (*al-ʿālam al-ʿaqlī*) in relation to the material realm, given the fact that the superior does not turn towards the inferior, it is subordinate and appointed. Or rather, according to the lords of the heart and the lords of gnosis, these arrangements of divine rites are the consequence of the theophanies of the divine names, attributes, and essence. In sum, those drowned (*mustaghriq*) in the witnessing of the ever-beautiful beauty (*jamāl al-jamīl*) realise the unseen theophanies, which are achieved through the movements of yearning in the secret of the heart and those mysterious quickenings of the heart produce marks in their material dominion. These marks are in accordance with the manner of the theophanies, which concur with any one of the rituals and acts of worship and, despite this, they give no independent attention to the manner of any one of them and they do not change any part or condition in terms of the formal discipline, making them neither greater nor lesser, nor contrary to the assigned legalities. Just so, the Seal of the Envoys, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, in his prayer during his heavenly ascension, as a result of seeing the sublime lights and the unseen essential theophany, fell into prostration and lost consciousness. We shall allude to this later.

An example of this spiritual attraction (*al-jadhbah al-rūḥiyyah*) and total annihilation (*al-fanāʾ al-kullī*) is the state of the amorous one drawn to divine grace and his amorous movings or the complete enmity of the foe and his hateful movings, for neither the movings and nor the proceedings of either

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one are based on deliberation and rational premises. In the art of amorous discourse the amorous one must not arrange rational premises, but rather the reality of love itself is a fire which arises forth from the heart of the amorous one, and the torch of that fire enflames his esoteric and exoteric state both mysteriously and overtly. Thus, the theophanies of love in the mystery of the heart appear in the form of amorous discourse in the exoteric state; 'flows forth from the pitcher that which is within it'.[1] In the same way, for the one drawn to the degree of oneness and amorous for the beauty of the eternal, the esoterical theophanies of the beloved and the loving theophanies of the lover, which manifest by coming forth in his exoterial material dominion and which take a form in the realm of his witnessing, also shapes the chart of prayer. If anything other than these wroughtings and states, which assisted the resort of refuge, the true one drawn to divine grace and the one of actual arrival, the final majestic envoy, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, in this spiritual unveiling and amorous befriending, brings about another state for anyone or achieves another wroughting, then it is surely the sign of the devil's doing. This means that the wayfarer in his wayfaring still has vestiges of egotism, selfishness, and self-conceitedness, and he must remedy himself and emancipate himself from the path of error. Thus the prayer that is attributed to some of the gnostics, the prayer which they say in silence, in which, according to a special arrangement, they utter the *a* of *Allāh* first, then the *la*, then the *ha* and after that the whole name is pronounced in a special sequence corresponding to the five presences, on the supposition of the correctness of the attribution, derives from the ignorance of whomsoever has made up this meaningless concoction.

In sum, there is no unveiling more perfect than the unveiling of the Seal of the Prophets, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, and no spiritual wayfaring truer or more correct than his. So, it is necessary to let go of other meaningless constructs, which come from the minds of those who possess no intelligence yet claim guidance and gnosis.

The perfect gnostic, our master, the excellent Shāhābādī,[2] may my soul be a ransom for him, said:

> The aim of all acts of worship is to spread the praise of God, august is His majesty, as far as the realm of material dominion of the human body. Just as for the intellect there is a portion of knowledge and praise of the degree of lordship, for the heart there is a portion, for the chest there is a portion, and also for the material dominion of the human body there is a

1 This is the second half of a distich from a poem by Bābā Afḍal al-Dīn Kashānī, the eminent Persian philosopher and poet.

2 This is a reference to Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī Shāhābādī. See translator's introduction.

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> portion, which are these rituals. And so, fasting is the praise of God for His transcendent majesty (*ṣamadiyyah*) and the manifestation of His praise for His holiness (*quddūsiyyah*) and gloriousness (*subbūḥiyyah*). Similarly prayer, which holds the degree of the totality of aloneness (*al-aḥadiyyah al-jamʿiyyah*) and the aloneness of totality (*al-jamʿiyyah al-aḥadiyyah*), is the praise of the holy essence by all His names and attributes.

That is the end of what he said, may his shadow endure.

Thus, from the explanations above, it is understood that the notion that is upheld by some of the Ṣūfīs[3]—that prayer is a means of ascension and arrival for the wayfarer and that after arrival the wayfarer becomes needless of the rituals—is an absurd matter without foundation and is crude imagination without reason and is contrary to the way of the folk of God and the lords of the heart and it comes from ignorance of the degrees of the folk of gnosis and the perfections of the ones nearmost to God. We seek refuge in God from that.

3 This is the first of four instances where Khomeini mentions Ṣūfīs and Ṣūfism, and in all these instances it is clear that he is distancing the matters upon which he expounds in his writings from the label of Ṣūfism, and also from the beliefs and practices which are commonly associated with that label in his religious and intellectual milieu. The tendency within Shīʿī thought to distance the gnostic tradition from *ṭarīqah* Ṣūfism and to delegitemise the latter dates at least from the Safavid period. See for example Ṣadrā, *Kasr aṣnām al-jāhiliyyah fī dhamm al-mutaṣawwifīn*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, Tehran, 1340 SH/1961.

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CHAPTER 3

On the Mystery of the Prayer of the Folk of Gnosis

It is clear that prayer is composed, in accordance with the form of its material dominion, of postures (*awḍāʿ*), positions (*hayʾāt*), invocations (*adhkār*), Qurʾānic recitation (*qirāʾah*), and supplications (*adʿiyyah*), although in terms of its reality and heavenly (*malakūtiyyah*) form it has unity (*waḥdah*) and simplicity, and the closer it becomes to the horizon of perfection, the more perfect its uniqueness becomes until it ends in the ultimate perfection, and that is the realisation of the greater resurrection (*al-qiyāmah al-kubrā*) thereof. Later on we will allude to this matter, God willing. The unity (*waḥdah*) of the forms of the material dominion is subject to the unity of the unseen heavenly (*malakūtiyyah*) forms, which are fixed in their own place. The realisation of the total oneness (*al-waḥdah al-tāmmah*) of the forms of the material dominion comes through their annihilation in the esoteric of the heavenly realm (*bāṭin al-malakūt*), which is described as the lesser resurrection (*al-qiyāmah al-ṣughrā*).[1]

For each one of the postures and invocations are detailed mysteries, some of which, God willing, after this, as far as is possible and as is required, we shall explain; at this point, we shall content ourselves with mentioning the general mystery of the prayer of the folk of gnosis and the folk of God. This is the realisation of true ascension, immaterial (*maʿnawī*) proximity, and the arrival at the degree of essential annihilation, which is realised in the posture of the second prostration (*sajdah*), which is the annihilation of annihilation, and in the invocation 'Thee only we worship',[2] which addresses His presence. Similarly, the raising of the head from the last prostration until the invocation of peace (*salām*), which is a sign of encountering His presence and returning from the journey, is a return to multiplicity while being secure from the veilings of multiplicity and subsisting with the Real (*ḥaqq*). In the invocation 'Keep us steadfast on the straight path'[3] is a returning to oneself and a realisation of awareness after self-effacement (*al-ṣaḥw baʿd al-maḥw*),[4] and with the

1 See al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭlaʿ khuṣūṣ al-kalim fī maʿānī fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, p. 35; Khomeini, *Sharḥ duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, p. 137; *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, pp. 82–3. For a detailed illumination of the concepts of the lesser resurrection, the meridian resurrection, and the greater resurrection, according to the *sharīʿah*, *ṭarīqah*, and *ḥaqīqah*, see al-Āmulī, *Asrār al-sharīʿah wa aṭwār al-ṭarīqah wa anwār al-ḥaqīqah*, pp. 113–36. For a succinct understanding of these concepts see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 163.

2 Q.1:5.

3 Q.1:6.

4 See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 98–100 (*maḥw*), 357–8 (*ṣaḥw*). Al-Kāshānī makes distinction between various types of self-effacement.

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completion of the sacred inclinings, which is the reality of prayer, the journey comes to an end.

Let it be known that the original prayer consisted of one sacred inclining of prayer only, and the remaining acts from the necessary and recommended prayers are for the sake of the completion of that one sacred inclining, just as it is reported in the noble tradition. Al-Shaykh al-ʿĀmilī[5] reports in *al-Waṣāʾil* from the works *ʿUyūn al-Akhbār* and *ʿIlal*, with his chain of transmission from al-Riḍā, peace be upon him, that he said:

> Verily, the origin of prayer was ordained as two sacred inclinings; in some another sacred inclining was added, in others two were added, and in some none were added, for the origin of prayer was only one sacred inclining because the origin of numbering is one,[6] and when it is wanting of one then it is not prayer. And so God, may He be glorified and exalted, knew that the servants would not fulfil that one sacred inclining, less than which there is no prayer, with perfection, completeness, and devotion. And so, he added to it another sacred inclining, so that whatever was lacking in the first could be brought to completion through the second. Therefore, God, may He be glorified and exalted, ordained that the origin of prayer be composed of two sacred inclinings. Then the Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be with him and his descendants, knew that the servants would not fulfil these two sacred inclinings completely and perfectly as they had been commanded to do. And so, He added to the two sacred inclinings of the *Ẓuhr*, *ʿAṣr*, and *ʿIshāʾ* two more so that the first two sacred inclinings would be brought to completion through them.[7]

5 Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1104 AH/1693).

6 Because when one instance of something comes into existence, the nature of that thing is realised.

7 * Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil al-shīʿah*, vol. III, p. 38; Ibn Bābawayh, *ʿUyūn akhbār al-riḍā*, ed. Sayyid Mahdī Ḥusaynī Lājūrdī, Qum, 1363 SH/1984, vol. II, p. 107.

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CHAPTER 4

On the Presence of the Heart and its Levels

Although it might be appropriate at this point to give a commentary on the universal conventions of the heart (*qalb*) according to the physicians, philosophers, gnostics, folk of the law, and the language of the Qur'ān, because it will make the discussion lengthy and because no benefit will result from it, I have turned my pen away from it and thought it more appropriate to occupy myself with the discussion of the presence of the heart and its levels.[1]

It is clear for the lords of insight and gnosis, who are aware of the mysteries of the traditions of the infallible household of the Prophet, peace be upon them, that the spirit of worship (*'ibādah*) and its completion and perfection depends on the presence of the heart and its receptivity. Without this no act of worship is acceptable in the court of aloneness, neither is it worthy of being looked upon with grace and mercy and is dropped from the level of consideration. After this, in the following chapter, I will mention to whatever extent necessary the reports and traditions that put forward this claim.

Just as the perfection, imperfection, illumination, and cloudiness of every being is according to its specific form and its final perfection, so the scales of perfection, imperfection, goodness, and wretchedness of man are based on the perfection and imperfection of his rational soul, and that is a divine *pneuma* (*nafkhah*) and an immaterial spirit which belongs to the realm of the divine command. Similarly, regarding all acts of worship (*'ibādāt*), and specifically prayer, which is one of the holy configurations, which has been brought forth and purified by the hands of awe-inspiring majesty (*jalāl*) and beauty (*jamāl*), their perfection and imperfection, their light and darkness are bound to the unseen spirit and the divine *pneuma*, which appears through man's rational soul.

The greater the perfection of the level of devotion (*ikhlāṣ*) and the presence of the heart, which are the two firm pillars of any act of worship, accordingly, the more immaculate the pneumatic spirit (*al-rūḥ al-manfūkh*) in it will be, the greater the perfection of its blessedness will be, and the more illuminated and the more complete its unseen heavenly form will be. The perfection of the acts of the ones nearmost to God, peace be upon them, was due to their esoteric aspect, whereas the exterior aspect of their deeds was not of such importance. For example, the revelation of the noble verses

1 On the development of Khomeini's ideas on this subject see his extensive commentary on *al-ḥadīth al-sābiʿ wa al-ʿishrūn* in Khomeini, *Chihil ḥadīth*, Tehran, 1368 SH/1989, pp. 357–77.

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of the blessed *sūrat* al-Dahr, which praise Imām ʿAlī and the immaculate folk of his house, peace be upon them, was not due merely to their altruism and the giving of several loaves of bread, but rather it was due to the esoteric aspects and luminous nature of their actions, just as is alluded to in the noble verse which says, 'Verily, we feed you for the sake of God; we do not want any recompense or thanks.'[2] As the holy Prophet said of the battle of Khandaq:[3] 'Rather, one blow of ʿAlī's sword is more excellent than the worship of all men and jinn',[4] not because of the worldly form of the action, which were anyone else to have struck the blow would still have been excellent, even though considering its context in terms of the confrontation between the unbelievers and Islam the execution of this action was very important, for otherwise the army of Islam would have been dispersed, however, the outstanding excellence and the perfection of the act of the object of resort is due to the true purity and presence of his heart regarding the execution of this divine task. Due to this it is well-known that when wrath overcame the object of resort as a result of the audacity of a particular accursed individual he held himself back from slaying him so that the action would not contain any taint of egoity or any element of human heroism. Furthermore, the wrath of this nearmost one to God was absolutely the wrath of God, but again he purified his action from taint through attention to multiplicity while at the same time being annihilated in God and so the act occurred at the hand of the Real (*ḥaqq*). Such an action cannot be weighed according to any measure and it cannot be compared with anything. God willing, we will explain this subject in the chapter regarding the concept of intention (*niyyah*).

Now, we shall occupy the pen with an explanation of the levels of the presence of the heart. As for this, there are many levels and degrees and in a general way we will give an example of all its levels.

Let it be known that acts of worship (*ʿibādāt*) are an absolute praise of the holy degree of lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) according to its levels, all of which refers to the praise of the essence (*dhāt*), or praise of the names and attributes, or praise of theophanies in terms of transcendence, sanctification, and praiseworthiness. No act of worship, with respect to its mystery and reality, is devoid of a level of praise of the one who is worshipped (*maʿbūd*).

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2 Q.76:9.

3 The Battle of Khandaq ('the trench') took place in the fifth year of the *hijrah*. For further details see Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-nabawiyyah*, Beirut, 1975, vol. III, pp. 127–40; Abū Bakr ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, Beirut, 1390 AH/1970, vol. V, pp. 367- 372; Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa al-mulūk*, Leiden, 1879–1881, vol. III, pp. 1463–85.

4 Or the inhabitants of two worlds, i.e., the world of witnessing and the world of the unseen. * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. XXXIX, p. 2.

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Therefore, the foremost level of the presence of the heart in acts of worship is the general presence of the heart in acts of worship, which is possible for everyone. This is such that man understands through his own heart that acts of worship are praise of the one who is being worshipped, and from the beginning to the end of the act of worship he makes the heart, in a general manner, attentive and present to the understanding that it is occupied with the praise of the One who is worshipped. Although he himself may not know what praise he is giving, or for what or with what he is praising the holy essence, or whether the act of worship is praise of the essence or the names, or other than that, or sanctifying or praising. An example of this is a poet who has composed a eulogy for someone and explains to a child that this eulogy is in praise of a certain person but the child is not able to understand how and by what he has praised that person. He only knows generally that the poem is in praise of someone but knows nothing of the details. In the same way, the children of the nursery of the Muḥammadian gnoses, peace be upon him and his descendants, sing before the holy throne the praises that have been revealed to the noble heart of the Prophet through the complete and perfect unveiling that was unveiled to him through revelation and the effusion of the presence of God, glorified be His awe-inspiring majesty, even if they do not know what praises they are uttering or with or for what they are singing praises. However, the foremost level of their acts of worship is that during the acts of worship their hearts be aware that they are praising God according to the praise that God, may He be exalted, has prescribed for Himself and the elite have cooled their tongues with this. Giving praise according to the language of the nearmost is better because it is devoid of the impurities of falsehood and hypocrisy, since during the acts of worship and specifically during prayer, praise is composed of invocations, which no one can fulfil apart from the most perfect nearmost ones to God and the pure chosen ones, for example the Qur'ānic verse, 'I have turned my face towards Him who brought forth the heavens and the earth';[5] and the Qur'ānic verses, 'Praise belongs to God'[6] and 'Thee only we worship';[7] during the postures, such as the raising of the hand during the magnifications offered up to God (*takbīrāt*), the prostration, *et cetera*. An explanation of each one of these will follow, God willing. This is not feasible for everyone. There are many examples of this in the noble supplications, which have been issued from the holy threshold of the immaculate imāms, peace be upon them, and the invoking of these supplications is not possible for everyone, such as some of

5 Q.6:79.
6 Q.1:2.
7 Q.1:5.

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the phrases of the noble supplication of Kumayl.[8] Regarding these cases, our perfect master, Shāhābādī, may my soul be a ransom for him, has stated, 'It is better that the supplicant in these degrees recites the supplication according to the intention of the original author, peace be upon them.'

In short, regarding the invocations, the Qur'ānic recitations, and the acts of prayer, it is better for the likes of us that the intention in giving praise be according to the language of the original author, which is according to the way of God, the Glorious, the High, and according to the way of the Seal of the Prophets, may the blessings of God be with him and his descendants, because our inner selves have not been purified and our attachments to other than God have not been severed. God willing, we shall discuss this in part in the chapter about Qur'ānic recitation during prayer.

The second level of the presence of the heart is presence of the heart in detail during the act of worship. This is such that the heart of the worshipper is present during the entire act of worship and knows by what he qualifies God and how he privately converses with Him. For this there are many different levels and degrees according to the differing degrees of the hearts and the different degrees of gnosis of the worshippers.

Let it be known that encompassing in a detailed manner the mysteries of the acts of worship and the nature of praise in each of them is not possible for everyone but only for the perfect chosen ones, either through divine revelation or His gracious effusion. Now we shall explain in a general way all the levels of this:

Now there is one group that does not know prayer and other acts of worship except through the form, shell, and outward material appearance, but they are familiar with the customary concepts of the invocations, supplications, and Qur'ānic recitations, and the presence of their hearts is limited to those at the time of invocation (*dhikr*) or, during Qur'ānic recitation, they make present those concepts in their hearts and their heart is present to the Real through intimate communion (*munājāt*).

It is important for this group that they should not confine the realities only to those customary meanings that they have understood, and they should not assume that acts of worship have no reality other than this form, for this belief, apart from the fact that it opposes reason and tradition, is very harmful for man and causes him to halt and be content and holds him back from the way of knowledge and action. One of the greatest works of the devil is that he occupies and delights man with whatever is immediately before him and he makes him look unfavourably upon other truths, gnosis, and

8 Kumayl b. Ziyād al-Nakha'ī was a close follower of the first two imāms, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī. 'The supplication of Kumayl' is a well-known supplication which was instructed to him by the first imām.

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divine sciences, and from that he obtains strange results.

And there is another group that perceives the realities of the acts of worship, invocations, and Qur'ānic recitations by means of reason and reflection. For instance, by means of rational demonstration they know how all praise returns to God. They know the reality of the straight path (*al-sirāṭ al-mustaqīm*) and the reality of the meaning of *sūrat* al-Tawḥīd, which are the principles of gnosis, by means of reason and reflection. And for this group, the presence of their hearts during the act of worship means that they are aware during the invocation (*dhikr*),[9] in a detailed manner in their hearts, of these realities and praises, and they understand what they are saying and in what manner they are praising God.

And there is another group who have perceived the realities through contemplation and reason and have inscribed them on the tablet of the heart with the pen of reason, and so they have become aware of these realities and have arrived at faith because the level of heartful faith is very different from rational perception. There are many issues that man can perceive through reason and for which he can also establish demonstrative proof, but he does not arrive at the level of heartful faith and its perfection, which is the state of reposedness (*iṭmi'nān*), and his heart does not concur with his reason. An example of this is that we are all certain that the dead possess no movement and that no harm can come to us from them. If all the dead of the world were gathered together they could not cause us the least amount of harm. Bearing this example in mind, since the certainty of reason in this matter is not inscribed on the tablet of the heart and because the heart does not concur with reason in this matter, in the realm (of existence) delusion governs and overwhelms the intellect and causes fear of the dead, especially on dark nights and in lonely places. Furthermore, although reason says that the darkness of the night and loneliness have no impact on the matter and that the dead cannot cause any harm, such a person has abandoned the rule of reason and taken the path of delusion. However, if he were to be with the dead for a time and if he were to spend a whole night in fearful places, on this point the heart would gradually arrive at the rule of reason, the heart would concur with reason, bit by bit he would attain repose, his heart would not tremble at any aspect of this, and gradually he would become fearless. In the same way, the condition for all religious truths and sure demonstrable propositions is that the level of rational perception is different from the level of faith and repose. So long as the one seeking God and searching out the realities does not arrive at this level with the aid of the disciplines of knowledge and its application and his own complete piety of action and of heart, he will

9 For invocation and its ten instances see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 277–8.

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not be a lord of the heart. He will not attain the first level of the heart, which is one of the divine graces, and he will not wear the garment of faith, but rather, in accordance with the requirement of the noble traditions 'Prayer is the ascension of the believer'[10] and 'Prayer is the sacrifice of every devotee',[11] it is possible to say that, for the man who has not reached the level of faith and devotion, prayer is not an ascension or means of closeness to God and he has not embarked on the wayfaring to God and still resides in the house of the self (*nafs*).

And there is yet another group who, having arrived at the realities of the level of the heart, have reached the degree of perfect repose and have arrived at the level of insight (*kashf*)[12] and of witnessing through spiritual striving and discipline (*mujāhadāt wa riyāḍāt*), and have understood the realities according to the witnessing of the presence and the presence of the essence (*'ayni*) with the eye of the angelic realm and divine insight (*baīrah*). The detailing of the levels of these wayfarers is beyond the scope of these pages. As regards this group of folk of witnessing and insight, the presence of their hearts in the act of worship is in accordance with the consideration that they witness through observation all the realities, which are the unveiled forms of that act of worship, and the mysteries, of which the postures and statements are the manifestation. During the opening magnifications offered up to God (*takbīrāt*), seven veils are removed and burnt, and in the last magnification offered up to God the splendours of awe-inspiring majesty (*jalāl*) and beauty (*jamāl*) are unveiled to them according to the suitability of their hearts, and they enter the site of praise-giving by seeking refuge from the devil, who is the brigand on the path, and through the splendour of the all-encompassing name, *Allāh*. God willing, the explanation of this will be given later.

The wayfarer who has arrived at this degree will arrive at another degree of the presence of the heart, namely the presence of the heart regarding the one who is worshipped. As far as this is concerned there are also many levels, which, generally speaking and in a complete manner, lead to three degrees.

One presence of the heart concerns the actual splendour of the one who is worshipped. The explanation of this is that man, through contemplation and demonstrative reason, attains knowledge, which extends from the furthest limit of the abstract intellectual realities to the furthest descent of the reality

10 * Majlisī, *I'tiqādāt*, p. 29.

11 Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, ed. Sayyid Ḥasan al-Mūsawī al-Khurasān, Tehran, 1390 AH/1970, vol. I, p. 136. * Ibn Bābawayh, *'Uyūn akhbār al-riḍā*, vol. II, p. 7.

12 *Kashf*, here translated variously as 'insight' and 'unveiling' depending on context, exists amongst a number of similar concepts such as *waḥy* ('revelation') and *ilhām* ('inspiration'). For a detailed discussion of these terms and how they are differentiated see al-Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār wa manba' al-anwār*, pp. 453–72.

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of being, which are the determinates of extended being (*ta'ayyunāt al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*),[13] which is the illuminated effusion and the actual theophany of God. This actual theophany is the degree of actual knowledge of God, which is the presence itself in the presence of lordship. According to the doctrine of the great philosophers, and the great illuminist philosopher of mighty rank Shaykh Ṭūsī,[14] may his secret be sanctified, they and he have understood that this actual theophany is God's detailed knowledge of beings.[15] Even though delimiting the detailed knowledge of God is, at this point, contrary to what has been established, yet the original point, which is that God has actual detailed knowledge of beings, which is expressed through the most holy effusion, is correct and in agreement with both demonstration (*burhān*) and beholding (*i'yān*).

If anyone were to find such knowledge through demonstration, he would attain the first level of the presence of the heart regarding the one who is worshipped. The explanation of this is that at all times and specifically at the time of the act of worship, which is the site of the event (*mawqi'*) of the presence, one should be aware that the universe is the place of the presence (*maḥḍar*) of lordship and that all beings sanctify the presence, itself in the place of the presence, and that all movement, ceasings, acts of worship, acts of obedience, acts of disobedience, and acts of transgression take place in God's holy presence. Anyone who has reached this true belief would, by his very nature, be completely prevented from opposing God, according to the demands of the divine nature, out of reverence for the place of presence and the safeguarding of the presence, because veneration of the place of presence and respect for the presence comes from divine nature, which is man's innate nature. This is especially the case when the place of presence is the place of the presence of the perfect, the mighty, the beautiful, the generous Bestower of Bounty, because everyone's reverence is absolutely established in the book of nature, which is the most eloquent of the divine books. If we do not safeguard the presence with the knowledge of this truth, due to the limitation of

13 Extended being refers to the divine ipseity that permeates all beings, sometimes also called the breath of the Oft-Compassionate (*al-nafas al-raḥmānī*), which refers to substance (*jawhar*). See al-Qayṣarī, *Maṭla' khuṣūṣ al-kalim fī ma'ānī fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 9, 20. Khomeini, commenting on al-Qayṣarī's discussion of the above, states that substance is extended being and the manifestation of omnipotence (*al-ẓuhūr al-qayyūmī*) from the divine presence, in the shadow of the most holy effusion of aloneness, or the greatest name from the aspect of the hiddenness of aloneness. Accidents (*a'rāḍ*), meanwhile, are the determinates of the effusion of omnipotence (*al-fayḍ al-qayyūmī*) from the intellect unto prime matter (*al-hayūlī*) in the shadow of the determinates of the names in the presence of oneness. See Khomeini, *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 28.

14 This is a reference to Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672 AH/1274).

15 * Jamāl al-Din al-Ḥillī, *Kashf al-murād fī sharḥ tajrīd al-i'tiqād*, Qum, n.d., p. 220.

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perception and reason, there would be no arrival at the degree of faith and heart, just as has been previously pointed out. In fact, man's innate nature and natural disposition is in conformity with nature itself.

In sum, the foremost level of the presence of the heart regarding the one who is worshipped is this, that through demonstrable knowledge one knows that the universe is the place of the presence of lordship and one knows that one's act of worship, one's own being, and all of one's interior and exterior movements are the very presence and place of presence of God. Certainly, the praise-giving of such a person, who knows that both his own being and his own praise are in the presence (*maḥḍar*) of God, is different from those who are veiled from this reality.

The second level of the presence of the heart, regarding the actual theophany (*al-tajallī al-fi'lī*), is the level of faith and repose, which is attained through remembrance of the Beloved secretly and openly, and through intimate communion with the holy essence and through being in solitude with Him (*khalwah*).[16] In this fashion, the act of worship becomes more illuminated, and a mystery from the mysteries of the act of worship is unveiled in the heart of the worshipper. After spiritual exercises and endeavours, constant invoking, love for the presence of God, solitude, humility, and utter devotion, the wayfarer reaches, from the level of repose and gnosis (*iṭmi'nān wa 'irfān*), the level of witnessing and beholding (*shuhūd wa i'yān*), and through an actual theophany suited to his heart, God enacts a theophany in the mystery of his heart. Then the heart attains delight in the presence of God and at the same time attains love for God and pleasure in the grace (*fayḍ*) of His presence makes him unaware of the act of worship. Then he becomes veiled from himself and the act of worship, passes away from the world, and becomes occupied with the actual theophany (*al-tajallī al-fi'lī*). This state, which attains the limit of investiture (*tamkīn*) and passes beyond colouring (*talwīn*),[17] gradually brings about the dawning of the theophanies of the divine names in the heart of the wayfarer, which is another level of

16 *Khalwah* may refer to the ancient gnostic practice of seeking holy seclusion to converse intimately with God, but it may also refer to the conversation itself. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 180.

17 For colouring (*talwīn*) see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 173–4. Commenting on al-Qayṣarī's discussion of Ibn al-'Arabī's assertion that the degree of colouring is greater than the degree of investiture, Khomeini states that what Ibn al-'Arabī means by colouring is the colouring which the wayfarer attains after returning to his own kingdom and his subsistence after annihilation. At this degree there is a colouring unlike the colourings prior to arrival and after it. This colouring, being the highest level of colouring, is also the highest level of investiture (*Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 96.). Furthermore for investiture see Khomeini, *Sharḥ du'ā' al-saḥar*, p. 103, and for both investiture and colouring see Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, p. 80.

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the presence of the heart regarding the one who is worshipped, namely the degree of the theophanies of the names. This degree accompanies the degrees in the previous levels, which have been mentioned in detail. There are many other levels, which man is incapable of comprehending in full or even in part. An example of this is that, since man is the mirror of the all-encompassing name and the servant (*marbūb*) of the greatest name, he is able to gather together all the theophanies of the names, collectively and individually. Accordingly, when perceived individually, all one thousand names are like a thousand theophanies in his heart. Collectively, each one of the names is coupled with another name, or two names, or three names, up to the last names. In the same way, the perceived levels of the combinations of names occur within these one thousand names, in every combination of which a theophany is possible. Also the heart of man, which is receptive to these theophanies, is itself the place of manifestation of all the names and is the place of manifestation of a thousand names in totality; but from the consideration of the state of manifestation of each name, collectively and individually, and regarding the uniting of the levels in the very manner that has been mentioned, the theophanies vary. It is necessary to state that this number is beyond comprehension. 'If you were to count the blessings of God you would never number them.'[18] The *ḥadīth* that has been reported from the object of resort, the Prince of the Believers, says, 'The Most Noble Envoy, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, at the time of his death made me to know a thousand doors of knowledge, from each of which a thousand doors opened.'[19] Perhaps this is an allusion to the opening of individual theophanies.

After the theophanies of the names, the pattern of the theophany of the essence, which is the last level of the presence of the heart regarding the one who is worshipped, is realised. There are also levels in this, and because we are veiled from most of the levels of the presence of the heart it is sufficient to mention this perspective in a general manner. It is better to stop at the initial levels of the presence of the heart, and through mentioning of these perhaps the desired result will be obtained.

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18 Q.16:18; Q.14:34.

19 * Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, vol. II, p. 642; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. XXII, p. 463.

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CHAPTER 5

On the Means of Realising the Presence of the Heart

After the degrees of the presence of the heart have been understood, it is better and more important for man to seek to remedy the soul (*nafs*) and, were he to fall short of all these levels, at least aspire to realise some of the levels, for without this his acts of worship would fall below consideration in the holy court and be unacceptable.

Let it be known that the source of the presence of the heart in any act of the acts, and the reason for and cause of the receptivity of the soul to it, is this, that the heart encounters that act with sublimity and considers that act important. What has been said is clear, and we shall clarify this matter further with the following example: If a sultan were to receive you with great ceremony in his own intimate gathering or formal assembly, pay you special attention, and bestow his benevolence upon you before those gathered, since this situation is important to your heart and because the heart regards this to be important and of great magnitude, your heart would immediately be present in that court and you would record with perfect delight and joy all the details of the assembly, the address, movings, and pausings of the sultan, and your heart would be present throughout your entire time in the court and would not be inattentive even for a second. In contrast to this, if someone who does not hold a situation of importance, and who considers his heart to be insignificant, were to address you, you would not find your heart present during conversation and you would take no notice of what he does and says. From this it is clear what the cause is for the lack of the presence of the heart during acts of worship and the heart's inattention. If we were to give the same importance to our intimate communion with God the High, the Bestower of Blessings, as to conversing with a feeble, ordinary creature, we would not be careless, neglectful, or forgetful. It is entirely clear that this simplistic attitude and negligence arises from weakness of faith in God the High, the Prophet, and the traditions of the folk of the house of infallibility, and this negligence arises from a simplistic attitude to the court of lordship and the holy rank of God. The Bestower of Blessings has invited us to intimate communion and His own presence through the language of the prophets and nearmost ones, through the holy Qur'ān itself, and He has opened before us the doors of discourse and intimate communion with Him, and yet despite this honour we do not adhere to the courtesies due to His

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presence even as much as to a conversation with a weak and feeble human. In fact, each time we enter into prayer, which is the door to all the doors of the presence of lordship and the presence of His court, it is as though we are setting aside time for, and becoming occupied with, various thoughts and devilish ideas, and it is as if prayer is the key to the store, or the abacus for calculation, or the pages of a book. One should not consider this to be anything but weakness in faith and certainty (*yaqīn*).[1] If a man knows the consequences and shortcomings of this simplistic attitude and understands the heart, then, of course, he will seek to reform and remedy himself.

If man does not regard something to be of importance or of great magnitude, gradually he will reach the point where he neglects it. The abandonment of religious acts causes man to forsake religion. We have explained the details of this matter in our commentary on *al-Arbaʿīn*.[2] Were a man to understand the importance of the acts of worship and the divine rituals according to the heart, then, of course, he would turn away from such negligence and such a simplistic attitude and would be dragged out of his heavy slumber.

O dear one, give a little thought to your own situation, respond to the tradition of the folk of the house of infallibility, peace be upon them, gather your strength, and through contemplation and meditation with all your being understand that these rituals, particularly prayer, and more specifically the obligatory acts of worship (*farāʾiḍ*), are the source of happiness, the life of the hereafter, the well-spring of perfections, and the capital of the life of that realm.

According to many traditions in various works, according to the example of demonstrated proof (*burhān*), and according to the witnessing of the lords of insight (*kashf*) and beholding (*iʿyān*), for each one of the accepted acts of worship there is a radiant unseen form corresponding to the apparent form, and also an image in the angelic realm pertaining to the hereafter, which accompanies man through all the unseen realms and helps him in every hardship. Indeed, the reality of physical paradise is the unseen, angelic form of actions. The issue of actions assuming a form is a matter which should be considered from a point of clarity; reason, and revelation (*ʿaql wa naql*) agree with each other on this. These unseen forms are dependent on the heart's awareness and its receptivity. Acts of worship which are not carried out with

1 Certainty (*yaqīn*) is an axial concept in Islamic thought, employed across the various disciplines of gnosis, philosophy, and so on, and also frequently occurring in the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*. For a thorough exposition of *yaqīn* and its various divisions see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 274–5.

2 This is a work by the author. It is a collection of forty traditions with the author's commentary on them. See Khomeini, *Chihil ḥadīth* and translator's introduction above.

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attentiveness or receptivity of the heart fall below consideration and are not accepted in the court of God.

At this point, one or two verses and a few traditions will be sufficient for the man who is aware and awake. The Most High says, 'So woe upon those that pray and are heedless of their prayers',[3] and 'Prosperous are the believers, who in their prayers are humble'.[4] The one who is not humble during his prayer is not from the folk of faith and prosperity. For the folk of contemplation and meditation these two verses are sufficient. Woe upon the state of the one about whom God the High has said: 'Woe be upon him.' It is known that something that the Absolutely Magnificent One states with such import and great magnitude will be followed by dread, severity, and wrath.

From the Prophet, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, it is reported that he said: 'Worship God as if you see Him for, even if you do not see Him, He sees you.'[5] This noble *ḥadīth* points to two levels of perfection of the presence of the heart. One is awareness of the heart during the theophany of the essence or the names, the other is the awareness of the heart during the actual theophany (*al-tajallī al-fi'lī*) and according to one of these levels the worshipper sees himself present in the presence of lordship. Of course, in this way the manner of presence and the manners of conversing with His Majesty the Lord naturally find their proper place.

From the Prophet, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, it is reported that he said:

> Of the prayers there is that which is half accepted, or a third, or a quarter, or a fifth ... or a tenth thereof. Surely from prayer there is that which is wrapped up, just as the worn garment is wrapped up, and it is struck upon the face of its owner. There is no prayer for you except the one towards which you turn with your heart.[6]

Other traditions have been reported with similar meanings.

It is reported from the object of resort, al-Baqīr, peace be upon him, that the Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, said:

> When the faithful servant stands in prayer God the High looks upon him (or he said that God the High turns towards him) until he finishes and mercy covers his head all the way from heaven and the angels surround

3 Q.107:4–5.

4 Q.23:1–2.

5 * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXI, p. 260.

6 * Ibid.

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> him all the way from heaven. God the High appoints an angel to stand above his head and say: 'O Worshipper, if only you knew who is looking at you and with whom you are conversing privately, you would not turn towards anyone else and you would never abandon this place.'[7]

This noble *ḥadīth* suffices the folk of gnosis. God knows what beneficence and illumination there is when He turns His attention to the servant, which cannot be comprehended by man's intellectual faculties and cannot be grasped by anyone's heart.

It is reported from the object of resort, the Prince of the Believers, peace be upon him:

> Ṭūbā is for him who is sincere in worship and supplication to God, and who does not occupy his heart with whatever his eyes see, and who does not forget the invocation of God as a result of what he hears, and whose heart is not aggrieved by what is given to another.[8]

It is reported from the object of resort, al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, regarding the commentary on the noble verse, 'Save for him who comes to God with a pure heart (*bi qalb salīm*)'[9] that he said: 'The pure (*salīm*) heart is the one that meets his Lord and in it there is none other than Him.' He said: 'Every heart within which there is doubt (*shakk*) and polytheism (*shirk*) is rejected. Certainly, they desired asceticism (*zuhd*) in the world so that their hearts would be unoccupied for the hereafter.'[10]

The object of resort, al-Bāqir, peace be upon him, said: 'When 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon them, arose for prayer his colour would change and when he prostrated he would not raise his head until he was perspiring',[11] and he said: 'When he would stand in prayer he was like the trunk of a tree nothing of which would move save for that which the wind would move.'[12]

It is reported of Abū Ḥamzah al-Thumālī[13] that he said:

> I saw 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn praying; his cloak dropped from his shoulders but

7 * Ṭāwūs, *Falāḥ al-sā'il*, p. 160.

8 * Al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'ah*, vol. I, p. 43.

9 Q.26:89.

10 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 16. *Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXVII, p. 239.

11 * Al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'ah*, vol. IV, p. 685.

12 * Ibid.

13 Abū Ḥamzah Thābit b. Dīnār al-Thumālī (d. 150 AH/767) was a follower of the imāms 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-'Ābidīn, Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir, and Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq.

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> he did not adjust it until he had finished his prayer. Then I questioned him about that. He replied: 'Woe upon you! Are you aware in whose presence was I? Verily the prayer is not accepted from the servant save the one that is performed with attentiveness.' I said: 'May I be a ransom for you! We are ruined!' He replied: 'Certainly not, God the High completes that prayer through the recommended prayers (*nāfilah*).'[14]

The traditions along these lines are more than can be outlined in these pages and more than can be undertaken in explanation of their mysteries. We will finish this chapter by mentioning one point which is worth knowing, and that is that one of the important benefits of the acts of worship, upon which reason and revelation agree and which should be considered as one of the mysteries of the acts of worship, is that an effect results in the heart from each act of worship, which has been extensively and comprehensively described in the traditions as the 'pure point' (*al-nuktah al-bayḍā'*). Let it be known that there is a connection and a natural relationship between the exoteric and the esoteric, and the secret and the apparent aspects of man, the effects, actions, and movements of each one of which greatly penetrate, and have a strange effect on, every other one. Notwithstanding the fact that this matter can be substantiated, conscience (*wijdān*) and beholding are also witnesses to this. In the same way, bodily states of well-being and illness, the accidental constitution and interior and exterior bodily states, have an effect on the soul (*rūḥ*) and the esoteric. In contrast to this, spiritual and natural dispositions and psychological characteristics have an effect naturally, without deliberation, on movement, stillness, and bodily actions. From this there results for each one of the good or evil actions an effect on the soul, which either turns its attention to the world and its glamour, becomes veiled from God and reality, and fares along the way of the animals and devils, or pays attention to the hereafter whereby the heart is made godly, the splendours of awe-inspiring majesty and beauty are unveiled upon it, and it joins the spiritual company and those who have been brought close to God.

These acts of worship and divine rituals, notwithstanding the fact that they have their own splendid unseen angelic forms that form the physical paradise (*behesht-i jismānī*), also attain in the spirit (*rūḥ*) states and characteristics which are the initiation of the middle paradise (*behesht-i mutawassiṭ*) and the paradises of the names (*al-jannāt al-asmā'iyyah*).[15] This is one of the mysteries of the repetition of the invocations and deeds, because the tongue that repeats the divine invocation gradually opens the tongue of the heart, which

14 * Ḥājj Mīrzā Ḥusayn Nūrī Ṭabarsī, *Mustadrak al-wasā'il*, Tehran, 1383 AH/1963, ch. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 29.

15 For further divisions of paradises see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 67–8.

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then also starts to perform invocation, just as through the invocation of the heart the tongue also starts to perform invocation. This benefit cannot be achieved through acts of worship and this result cannot be obtained unless the heart is present at the time of the acts of worship, supplication, and invocation, and when the heart is neglectful and forgetful good actions have no effect on the spirit. From this point of view, we can see that despite performing acts of worship for fifty years or more it may have no effect on our hearts at all, but rather our base characteristics may be increased every day. Prayer, which is a prevention of indecency and dishonour (*faḥshā' wa munkar*)[16] and which is the ascension of the believer and the means of being brought close for the one who is mindful of God, has not caused us to arrive anywhere and from that we have not attained this degree of clarity.

The perfect gnostic, Shaykh Shāhābādī, may my soul be a ransom for him, said:

> At the time of invocation a man should be like someone who teaches a child to say a word and instructs him so that he is able to say it, and in the same way a man should instruct the heart in the art of invocation. As long as a man is engaged in verbal invocation and occupied in instructing the heart, the exoteric aids the esoteric and this causes the tongue of the childlike heart to open, and the exoteric will be helped by the esoteric, just as it is in the instruction of the child. As long as the man teaches the child the art of speech he will be helping him, until such time as the child can perform the act of speech. The man then becomes happy, which removes his previous weariness. So, initially, the child is helped by the teacher and in the end through him the teacher is helped. In this manner, if the man perseveres for a while in prayer, invocations, and supplications, then, of course, the soul will become accustomed to this and the acts of worship will also become second nature, which in the court of the heart would not be dependent on any deliberation, but rather would be second nature to him.

16 This phrase is drawn from the Qur'ānic verse Q.29:45, 'Verily prayer forbids indecency and dishonour'.

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CHAPTER 6

On Matters which Aid in Realising the Presence of the Heart

There are a number of the above on the subject of prayer, some of which we shall mention later in the appropriate place. Now, we shall talk in a detailed way about a treatment applicable to all acts of worship. This is that man should cut himself off from all internal and external preoccupations, the most important of which are the preoccupations of the heart. The main reason for, or definition of, the preoccupations of the heart is love of the world and concern for it. If man's concern is to obtain the world and if what is most important to him is attainment of its glamour, then, of course, the heart will naturally be turned towards that and be occupied with worldly preoccupations, and if it turns away from one of the affairs of the world, it will occupy itself with something else.

The heart is like a bird, which is forever flying from one branch of a tree to another. As long as the love of the tree of worldly desires grows in the heart, the bird of the heart will be attached to its branches. If this tree is cut down by spiritual exercises and endeavours, or by the contemplation of its results and deficiencies, or by meditation on Qur'ānic verses, the traditions, and the states of the nearmost to God, then the heart becomes tranquil and peaceful and it is possible that the heart will prosper through the inner perfection of the mind, which, in short, is the attainment of presence of the heart with all its degrees. Otherwise, in so far as he is successful in cutting down the tree, he will be successful in the result.

If a person were to give a little consideration to the outcome of the affairs of the folk and lovers of the world, the iniquities that have come to light, and the disgraceful things that can be recalled, which have darkened and disgraced the pages of history, it would be realised that all this is due to love of status and wealth and, in short, that it is due to love of the world. If a person were to contemplate the traditions which have been reported from the folk of the house of infallibility and purity on the subject of the reproach of loving the world and the iniquities that arise in religion and the world, he would acknowledge that, no matter what the price, no matter what the pressure may be, and through whatever spiritual exercises are possible and can be performed, it is necessary to endeavour to cut these iniquities out of the page of the heart and remove this darkness and impurity from its arena. This is possible, to an extent, by taking certain steps and by the exertion of effort. Although absolute abandonment cannot be achieved by anyone through

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their own ability, it is very possible to prune back the tree of love of the world and cut off its branches and leaves. In fact, it can even be said that this is easy. Of course, if man's greatest concern is not the world and if the heart does not turn immediately towards the glamour of the world, it is possible that he will keep separate his own situation and the contemplations of the heart, and also, sometimes, he will make the heart pure for the acts of worship. Perhaps, if he seeks and for a while attends to the heart and encourages himself, he will obtain good results and, little by little, he will accomplish the severing of the root of iniquity.

Let it be known that the world, which has been reproached in the words of the nearmost ones to God, is attachment, love, and regard for the world, for otherwise the origin of the material world (*mulk*) and the place of witnessing (*mashhad al-shahādah*), which is the witnessing of the ever-beautiful beauty of God; the cradle for the education of the nearmost ones, gnostics, and scholars of God; the abode of perfection for the holy human souls; and the field of cultivation for the hereafter, is the dearest place of witnessing and halting-place as far as the nearmost and the folk of gnosis are concerned. How often it is that a person does not have a share of the external world and becomes, by virtue of love and the attachment of his heart to it, one of the folk of the world and forgetful of God and the hereafter. On the other hand, there are those who possess both kingdom and dominion, status and property, like Solomon, the son of David, peace be upon them, who were not of the folk of the world, but were men with a divine nature. It is clear regarding the matter of their turning towards the world and acquisition thereof that it did not interfere with their orientation towards God. For, how often it is that those who are interested in gaining the world are left empty-handed thereby through its iniquity and wretchedness. Those who were without attachment to the possession of kingdom and pomp demonstrated the uniting of the world and the hereafter. The noble *ḥadīth* alludes to this, for example the statement of Imām al-Sajjād, peace be upon him, 'The world is two worlds, the world of attainment of good and the world of damnation.'[1] Sometimes the world itself has been eloquently accused, in terms of attachment to it, because attachment is only for the sake of being attached to the world. Mentioning the traditions that are connected to this chapter, bringing them together and explaining them rationally is beyond the duty of this treatise.

In sum, that which is a thorn on the way of arrival at perfection—and the devil is a brigand on the way to the degree of proximity and arrival who causes man to turn away from God, deprives him of the delight of intimate

1 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, pp. 316–7.

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communion with Him, and darkens and distracts the heart—is love for the world, which the noble traditions have described as 'the source of all erring' and 'the gathering place of every sin'. The traditions regarding this matter and their implications are more than that which can be drawn out in this treatise.

So, at the time of acts of worship man must let go of the preoccupations and thoughts of the heart. He should devote a special time to the act of worship during which he is less preoccupied and during which the heart is in greater repose and peace. This is one of the mysteries of the time of prayer that, God willing, will be mentioned in the appropriate place.

After the preoccupations of the heart have lessened, one must also as much as possible let go of external preoccupations during prayer. Most of the manners of the Islamic code of conduct are perhaps for this purpose. For example, it is recommended to attend to the call of nature if required beforehand and during prayer to hold back sleep and not to look around; look at the design of a ring, the Qur'ān, or a book; listen to external noise or one's inner thoughts; play with the hands or beard; crack the fingers; or other such odious behaviour. For example, these many recommended forms of behaviour are for the sake of safeguarding the presence of the Creator, may His majesty be glorified. The blessed Shaykh al-Shahīd al-Thānī,[2] may God sanctify his soul, says in his book *Asrār al-Ṣalāt*:

> The remedy for the weak individual, who is easily distracted when his eye sees something or his ear hears something, is that he shuts his eyes or he prays in a dark dwelling place, or that he does not put anything before him which may catch the attention of his eyes during prayer, or he should stand close to a wall that has no view. He should be wary of praying in public places, in places which have engravings, or on beautifully adorned rugs. For this reason, the folk of divine adoration worshipped in dark, narrow dwelling places, which were just broad enough to allow a man to pray in, so that they could be completely focused.[3]

This is the end of his address, may God increase his rank. Of course, he said that it is better to pray in a dark dwelling place for those prayers which are other than the daily obligatory prayers, which are highly recommended to be performed in a congregation (*jamā'ah*) of Muslims. Indeed, if man rises to the duties and mysteries of the congregation, he is in defiance of the will of the devil in any act of worship that he performs. The spiritual and mystical benefits of the gathering of the believers and their collective hearts, in which the

2 See translator's introduction.

3 * Zayn al-Dīn b. Nūr al-Dīn al-'Āmilī (al-Shahīd al-Thānī), *al-Tanbīhāt al-'illiyyah 'alā waẓā'if al-ṣalāt al-qalbiyyah*, in *Majmū'ah al-ifādāt-i shahīd-i thānī*, 1313 AH/1895, p. 110.

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unseen hand of God is present, appear in the smallest of actions. Furthermore, it is also noticeable that there is public and collective benefit in this. In fact, it is better for the folk of intimate communion and the lords of the heart to pray in a congregation that entrusts the preservation of the number of inclinings of prayer to others, and so immediately the heart is focused on God and His intimate communion. Indeed, it is better, aside from the obligatory prayers, to be in a secluded place where the preoccupations of the self are diminished.

Let it be known that the hearts vary greatly and each person's situation at any moment varies greatly. So, it is necessary for man to take care of his own heart as a doctor his patient and like one who is devoted to a friend. He should carefully consider that if solitude is suitable to his condition, then he should perform the act of worship in solitude; however, if his preoccupations increase while in solitude, then he should worship in public. All praise is to God and He is the First and the Last.

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PART 1

On the Preludes to Prayer



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CHAPTER 1

On the Mystery of Purity

Just as has been previously pointed out, namely that there are levels to prayer according to the levels and degrees of those who pray and are wayfaring unto God, so according to this let it be known that there are conditions, manners, preludes, and matters connected to prayer. At this point, we shall give an example in a general manner, clarified through comparison with other conditions, which shall require no repetition.

So, according to the lords of gnosis (*asḥāb al-maʿrifah*), purity is the outward form of prayer and the form of prayer is the outward form of purity, and it is the image of purity by means of pure water, which is the mystery of life, and it is the image of purity by means of earth, which is the furthest point of the theophanies.

And the purity of the folk of faith (*ahl al-īmān*) is the exoteric purification of the impurity of sins and freedom from desire and anger.

And the purity of the folk of the esoteric (*ahl al-bātin*) is the cleansing of spiritual impurities and the purification of the dirt of blameworthy traits.

And the purity of the companions of truth (*asḥāb al-ḥaqīqah*) is the cleansing of thoughts and devilish whisperings and the purification of vain, impure thoughts and misguided, misleading views.

And the purity of the lords of the heart (*arbāb al-qulūb*) is the cleansing of colouring (*talwīnāt*) and turnings and the purification of the veiling by the traditional sciences and conventions.

And the purity of the companions of mystery (*asḥāb al-sirr*) is the cleansing of the veiling of witnessing.

And the purity of the companions of love and those drawn to divine grace (*aṣḥāb al-maḥabbah wa al-majdhūbūn*) is the cleansing of turning towards any other or otherness, and purification of the veils of nature.

And the purity of the companions of nearmostness (*aṣḥāb al-walāyah*) is the purification of seeing degrees and levels, and the cleansing of intentions and endings all the way to the furthest degree of nearmostness. The purity of these folk is the cleansing of the determinates (*taʿayyunāt*) of the theophanies of the names and attributes.

And the purity of the lords of awareness after self-effacement and investiture (*arbāb al-ṣaḥw baʿd al-maḥw wa al-tamkīn*) is the cleansing of colouring (*talwīn*) after subsistence and the purification of the overwhelming nature of successive theophanies, which is the degree of seeing the state of the manifestation of the aloneness of drawing together.

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All these levels of purity, up to the last level of purification regarding the perfect ones nearmost to God, are beyond doubt, and in the same way their appearance is unsullied by all externally apparent impurities, and their senses are pure from being applied to that which there is no need of, and their limbs are free from doing anything that is contrary to the pleasure of God. He, may He be exalted, said: 'Verily, God wants to keep the dirt away from you, O folk of the house, and purify you completely.'[1]

Let it be known that for every single prayer its purity has a specific requirement regarding those wayfaring to God, without which it is not possible to arrive at that prayer. As it says in the noble verse, 'It shall not be touched save by those who are cleansed.'[2] Its exoteric form cannot be touched except by the folk of exoteric purity, its esoteric form cannot be touched except by the folk of esoteric purity, and its mystery cannot be touched except by the folk of secret purity. No one can reach the prayer of the folk of the esoteric save those who have washed and cleansed their own hands and face at the fountain of the life of the heart, and with the excess of that have anointed their heads and feet, from the foremost point of perception to the utmost point of the instrument of movement, and who instantly purify themselves and are ready to visit their Friend. God willing, after this, in a general way, we shall explain the prayer of the nearmost to God and the folk of gnosis.

Now we shall direct the pen towards a point that is particularly important to know, and that is that God, the Blessed and the Exalted, has not disregarded exoteric purity or cleanliness of the shell, or purity of the clothes and body, which is associated with the ways of the folk of the world and the exoteric, and He has established cleanliness as a part of faith. He has not disregarded outward manners concerning social obligations and interactions, nor concerning the outward comportment of the body, which is man's outer shell and which does not have any relevance to the reality of the state of man, nor has He disregarded outward manners concerning the covering of the body, which do not bear any relation to the state of man, such as clothing, housing, water, and such things. He has established the purity of each one of these, or He has made it a condition for the realisation or for the perfection of prayer. It is not possible for Him to say that one can be neglectful of purification of the heart and cleansing of the esoteric and cleansing of its spiritual impurities, the iniquity of which has no bearing on the impurities of the form and which is the cause of eternal ruin, darkness, anguish, and perpetual dispersion, and it is not possible for Him to have said that one may be neglectful of the purity of the garment of devotion, which is the best covering, staining

1 Q.33:33.

2 Q.56:79.

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it with the dirt of transgressing the divinely imposed ordinances, nor has He said that one should be neglectful of the purification of the intellect of the dirt of corrupt views and destructive beliefs.

Indeed, through referring to the divine book and the reports and traditions of the prophets and the nearmost ones, peace be upon them, it is known that the purification of the heart has been given more importance than external purification. For all these external acts and deeds are a prerequisite for the purification of the heart. Therefore, the purification of the heart precedes its perfection.

It is reported from Abū 'Abd Allāh, peace be upon him, regarding the Qur'ānic verse, 'Save for the one who comes to God with a pure (*salīm*) heart',[3] that he said: '*Al-salīm* is the heart of one who encounters his Lord whilst there is none other than Him therein.' He also said: 'Every heart within which there is doubt or polytheism is rejected. The meaning of being free (*zuhd*) of the world is that the hearts are empty for the hereafter.'[4]

It is reported of Abū Ja'far, peace be upon him, that he said:

> There is a white spot in the heart of every servant; if he commits a sin a black spot appears within that spot; if he repents the black spot disappears. If he persists in sinning that blackness increases until it covers the whiteness and when the whiteness has been covered, then the one with such a heart can never return to goodness. That is the word of God, may He be glorified and exalted, 'No indeed; but that they were earning has rusted upon their hearts.'[5]

Al-Shaykh al-Shahīd al-Thānī, may his mystery be sanctified, said: 'It has been reported in the tradition that God will not look at your forms but He will look at your hearts.'[6]

In short, the purification of the heart from spiritual impurities and immorality is an important matter. Man must rise to this with whatsoever means, whatsoever spiritual exercises and strivings there may be, and purify himself from baseness. If he stands in the court of lordship without this spiritual purity he will only turn towards the form and the outer shell of prayer and its fatigue and weariness. God the High has said: 'Verily, God accepts from the devoted.'[7] Devotion (*taqwā*) is an absolute condition for the acceptance of

3 Q.26:89.

4 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 16. * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXVII, p. 239.

5 Q.83:14; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 273.

6 Al-'Āmilī, *al-Tanbīhāt al-'illiyyah 'alā waẓā'if al-ṣalāt al-qalbiyyah*, p. 110. * See Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXVII, p. 248; Ṭabarsī, *Makārim al-akhlāq*, p. 480.

7 Q.5:27.

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prayer. Esoteric devotion, which is purification of blameworthy traits, such as arrogance, jealousy, heedlessness, and indolence, is the condition for acceptance, according to the view of the folk of gnosis, and it is the condition for the soundness of prayer according to the view of the folk of the esoteric and, in the same way, this is in accordance with the levels of devotion until the last stage.

There is an important matter that must be pointed out and which the brethren of believers, especially the scholars, may God increase their number, must bear in mind, and that is that if they hear or see an address by one of the scholars of the sciences of the soul or the folk of gnosis to which their ears are not attuned or which is based upon a convention that they do not understand they should not consider it corrupt and invalid without any Islamic legal proof, and they should not insult and belittle those folk. Also, they should not imagine that anyone who carries a name from the levels of the soul, the degrees of the nearmost ones and the gnostics, the theophanies of God, passionate love, and affection, which are current in the conventions of the folk of gnosis, is a Ṣūfī or a spreader of the claims of Ṣūfism, or one who puts things forward by himself. Equally, they should not imagine that he does not have any rational or revealed proof. I swear in the name of the Beloved that these words of theirs are a commentary on the explanations of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*.

Contemplate the noble tradition, which has been reported from the object of resort, al-Sādiq, regarding the pure heart (*al-qalb al-salīm*). See, can it be applied to anything other than essential annihilation, abandonment of the self, self-interest, egoity, and egotism, as expressed by the folk of gnosis? Have you contemplated and meditated on the contents of *Munājāt Sha'bāniyyah*, which is reported from the object of resort, the Prince of the Believers and his infallible sons, may the peace of God be upon them, and which you have recited repeatedly? The utmost degree of the hopes of the gnostics and the furthest limit of the aspirations of the wayfarers is captured in the following noble sentence from that noble supplication:

> My Lord! Grant me total devotion to You and enlighten the eyes of our hearts through the illumination of beholding You, till the eyes of the heart pierce the veilings of light and reach the source of majesty and our souls become attached to the glory of Your holiness.[8]

What is intended by this attachment to the 'glory of holiness'? Is there any

8 * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. XCI, p. 97; Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid wa silāḥ al-muta'abbid*, n.p., n.d., p. 374.

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other truth to 'losing consciousness' in the expression of the nearmost ones than 'and You looked at him and he lost consciousness due to Your awe-inspiring splendour (*fa ṣaq'iqa li-jalālika*)'?[9] Is what is intended by the theophanies in the great, sublime supplication of *Samāt* other than the theophanies and visions as expressed by the nearmost ones? Have you heard any gnostic speak words superior to the following noble *ḥadīth*, which has been reported in the authentic Shī'ī and Sunnī sources, which is considered to be a *mutawātir ḥadīth*:[10]

> A servant from amongst My servants comes not close to Me through what I have ordained upon him. Verily, he comes close to Me through performing supererogatory acts of worship (*nāfilah*) until I love him, and when I love him I am his hearkening through which he hearkens, his sight by which he beholds, his tongue by which he speaks, and his hand by which he grasps. If he calls unto Me, I answer him and if he asks of Me, I give to him.[11]

In sum, there are more testimonies than can be contained in this brief treatise. The purpose of this lengthy discourse is that our brethren in faith come closer to these understandings and remove from their hearts the misconceptions that have arisen accusing some great scholars of Islam of affiliation with Ṣūfism. This is not only for the purification of their holy garments from this taint, but because condemnation and insult by all creation does not belittle servants before God, if they themselves are pure, but rather, their good acts will be increased and it is possible that in the hereafter God, through His abundant grace, will compensate them for whatever they have lacked in worldly good fortune. However, our main point is to draw the eyes of the readers towards divine gnosis and esoteric refinement, both of which are important; indeed they are the purpose for the coming of the prophets and the revelation of the divine books.

O my dear child, may the devil not whisper to you and may he not make you content with what you have. Move a little! Go beyond this form without meaning and this shell without kernel, put your blameworthy traits and your state of pride under the scrutiny of study, and take solace in the words of the imāms of guidance, peace be upon them, and in the words of the great scholars, and in this there is a blessing. Let us suppose that you do not know any great gnostics, then follow those grand scholars whose gnosis

9 * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*.

10 A *mutawātir ḥadīth* is a tradition which has been reported by numerous sources and therefore is deemed beyond doubt as to its authenticity.

11 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 352.

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and morality is accepted by all the scholars: such scholars as his excellency, the knower of God and the striver on the path of God, our master Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs, may God be pleased with him; such as our master, the knower of God, the wayfarer to God, the glorious Shaykh Bahā'ī,[12] may his secret be sanctified; the Shaykh of the possessors of gnosis, our master, Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī,[13] may the grace of God encompass him; and his great son, the master of the scholars of traditions, our master, Majlisī,[14] may the mercy of God cover him. Read the book *Sharḥ al-Faqīh* by our master Majlisī I, which is a precious, important Persian work. If you do not understand it, then ask those who know it, for within it are treasuries of gnosis. Similarly, read the dear books of the two mighty shaykhs, the *Narāqiyyān*,[15] and from the contemporary scholars read the precious and important works of the knower of God, Ḥajj Mīrzā Jawād Tabrīzī,[16] may his secret be sanctified. God willing, perhaps you will be removed from this state of refusal and wandering. Do not spend your life devoid of the degrees of gnosis and humanity. God forbid that in this state you are transferred from this world, after which there are irreparable griefs, regrets, endless darkness, and anguish.

Again, O Lord, awaken us from this heavy slumber and save us from this selfishness and self-conceit from which springs forth all iniquity. Guide us towards the straight path of humanity. Verily, Thou art the benefactor of guidance and success.

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12 This is a reference to Bahā' al-Dīn b. Ḥusayn al-Ḥārithī al-Hamadānī al-'Āmilī (d. 1031–2 AH/1622–3).

13 This is a reference to Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī (d. 1070 AH/1658).

14 This is a reference to Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1111 AH/1698–9).

15 This is a reference to two scholars whose full names are Muḥammad Mahdī b. Abū Dharr Narāqī Kāshānī (d. 1209 AH/1794 in Najaf) and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Narāqī Kāshānī (d. 1245 AH/1829 in Narāq). See translator's introduction.

16 See translator's introduction.

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CHAPTER 2

On the Mysteries of Purification with Water and Earth

Some of the folk of gnosis say that purification is carried out either by water or earth. Water is the secret of life, which, in turn, is the origin of the knowledge of witnessing the Living One, the Self-Subsisting, the High; God the High said: 'We sent pure water down from the heavens so that through it we may bring forth life',[1] and He, may He be glorified and exalted, said: 'And He sends down upon you water from the heavens that thereby He might purify you and take away from you the defilement of the devil.'[2] Earth is the origin of the emergence of man and God the Glorious said: 'From it we have created you',[3] and He, may He be glorified and exalted, said: 'If you cannot find water then make ablution with pure earth.'[4] This is so that you contemplate your own essence and come to an awareness of Him who gave you existence, from what you have been created, and for what purpose He gave you existence. Therefore, be humble before Him and remove arrogance from yourself because earth is the source of submissiveness and humbleness.[5]

The writer says: 'The source of water is the absolute mercy of existence.' God the High said: 'We have made from water every living thing.'[6]

It is reported of Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, that he said: 'Your advance to water is your advance to the mercy of God.'[7] This is the case for the essential theophany of the divine essence being connected to reflection (*mir'āt*) and the determination (*ta'ayyun*) within the scope of signs.[8]

So, if the wayfarer to God finds a path to the theophany of absolute grace and the vision of unlimited beauty, which has no like, through this theophany he will purify the foreparts of his own being for the sake of his arrival at the

1 Q.25:49.

2 Q.8:11.

3 Q.20:55.

4 Q.4:43.

5 * Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī, *Asrār al-'ibādāt wa ḥaqīqat al-ṣalāt*, ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Sabzawārī, Tehran, 1339 SH/1960, p. 16.

6 Q.21:30.

7 Imām Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, Beirut, 1961, p. 15. *Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXVII, p. 339.

8 For al-Kāshānī's three classifications of mirrors, see al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 102.

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dais (*basāṭ*) of closeness, just as the Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, ascended to heaven in the night journey (*miʿrāj*) while he was performing ablution (*wuḍūʾ*). God willing, this will be pointed out. Do not turn towards the earth, which is the source of restriction and limitation. If water, which is the mystery of existence, is lacking, then in the determined mirror of earth and the delimited theophany one will purify some of these foreparts and he will witness the mystery of existence in the cloak of delimitation. 'For earth (*turāb*) is one of the purifiers'[9] and 'the lord of the water is the lord of the earth.'[10] God the High has said: 'He is the one who is God in the heavens and He is the one who is God on the earth.'[11] The mystery of performing ablution is the fading away of multiplicity in the fount of congregation (*ʿayn al-jamʿ*). Ablution with earth (*tayammum*) is the vision of unity (*waḥdah*) in the cloak of multiplicity. The mystery of this mystery of ablution (*wuḍūʾ*) is the vision of God and the negation of all else. 'He is the First and the Last and He is the Apparent and the Hidden.'[12] Ablution with earth (*tayammum*) is the vision of the holy essence in the cloak of otherness. 'If you were led with a rope to the bottom of the earth you would fall upon God.'[13]

In sum, ablution (*wuḍūʾ*) is the washing of otherness from the hands and face, as in the verse 'Save for him who comes to God with a pure heart'.[14] Ablution with earth (*tayammum*) is to see Him in the mirror of things; 'I saw not a thing save I saw God with that thing or within that thing',[15] 'included in things not as an intrusion of a thing in a thing'.[16]

Furthermore, ablution (*wuḍūʾ*) is purification by means of water before its descent, and ablution with earth (*tayammum*) is purification after the descent of water. From this point of view, it is one of the purifiers in accordance with the transmission of the ruling of the esoteric to the exoteric and the unseen to the witnessed. And furthermore, ablution (*wuḍūʾ*) is the purification of imperfections and limitations. Therefore, 'Whatever good befalls you is from God and whatever misfortune befalls you is from yourself.'[17]

9 * Muḥammad Kaẓim Khurāsānī, *Kifāyat al-uṣūl*, Qum, n.d., vol. I, p. 130.

10 * Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil al-shīʿah*, vol. II, p. 965.

11 Q.43:84.

12 Q.57:3.

13 * Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *ʿIlm al-yaqīn*, vol. I, p. 54.

14 Q.26:89.

15 * Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *ʿIlm al-yaqīn*, vol. I, p. 49.

16 See Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Sayyid Hāshim Ḥusaynī Tehrānī, Tehran, 1387 AH/1967, p. 306.

17 Q.4:79.

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Ablution with earth (*tayammum*) is the incidental referring of want to God; 'Say, "Everything is from God".'[18]

18 Q.4:78.

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CHAPTER 3

On the Tradition of Imām al-Ṣādiq Regarding Ablution

It is reported from Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, in *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah*:

> When you set forth for cleanliness (*ṭahārah*) and ablution (*wuḍū'*) your advance to water is your advance to the mercy of God. For God the High has made water a key to His closeness, to intimate communion with Him, and a way to the dais of His worship. Just as His mercy purifies the sins of the servants, likewise nothing other than water purifies apparent impurities. God the High said: 'And it is He who has loosened the winds, bearing good tidings before His mercy and We have sent down pure water from the heavens.'[1] God, may He be glorified and exalted, said: 'We have made from water every living thing.'[2] Just as by it He has given life to each thing of the blessings of the world, so through His grace and mercy He has ordained the life of the heart through acts of obedience. Contemplate the clarity of water, its delicateness, its purity, its blessedness, and the subtle way in which it mixes with everything and in everything. Use it in the purification of the limbs which God has commanded you to purify and accomplish through it what He has made obligatory and what He has recommended. Indeed, in each one of them are many benefits. When you use water with reverence, a spring of its benefits will gush forth for you. So, live with the creation of God the High in the same way as water mixes with things, delivering to each thing its rightful due without undergoing alteration. Consider the saying of the Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants; 'The distinguished believer is like water.' Therefore, your clarity with God in all your acts of obedience should be like the clarity of water when God brings it forth from the heavens and names it pure. Purify your heart with devotion and certainty when you are purifying your limbs with water.[3]

So, you, O gnostic of the divine gnosis and wayfarer on the path of hidden knowledge, since you intend absolute purity and have left behind the restric-

1 Q.25:48.

2 Q.21:30.

3 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, p. 16. * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXVII, p. 339.

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tions of the veils of words and expressions, turn towards the water that descends from the cloud of mercy, purify your outer shell and outward impurities, and set about doing that through the obligatory and recommended observances, because God has established water as the key to His closeness and His intimate communion and the guide to the dais of His service. With your inner being turn towards the water that descends from the heavens of the mercy of forgiveness. Purify the impurities of sin by carrying out the obligatory and recommended observances, which ʿAlī, peace be upon him, taught regarding repentance,[4] because God has established the water of the mercy of forgiveness as the key to His closeness and His intimate communion, and as the guide to the dais of His service. Turn your heart towards the water that descends from the heaven of volition and purify the impurities of the heart and spiritual anguish, because that is the key to spiritual closeness and the guide to the dais of His service. Turn with your spirit to the water that descends from the heaven of oneness and purify the impurities of turning towards the other and otherness, because that is the key to closeness attained through supererogatory acts of worship, and a guide for arriving at the dais of His service. Turn with your mystery towards the water that descends from the heaven of absolute aloneness and purify the impurities of the vision of multiplicity, because that is the key to arriving at the dais of the presence. Turn towards the water that descends from the heaven of the ipseity (*huwiyyah*) and purify the vision of the degree, which is the key to the closeness attained through obligatory acts of worship and absolute annihilation and the guide for arriving at the dais of the One who is present.

Up to this point, the cleanliness and purification of the wayfarers to God has been discussed. After this begins the purification of the folk of arrival (*ahl al-wuṣūl*), which is the result of the closeness attained through obligatory acts of worship, which in turn begins from the esoteric and dawns forth from the heart and ends in the domain of the body. Thus, everyone from amongst the folk of arrival has their own specific purification, the detailed explanation of which is beyond the confines of this treatise. The object of refuge, Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, in accordance with this noble tradition, has prescribed contemplation of the different aspects of water and has established that each one is a means of ascension to a degree, for example, contemplation of its clarity, delicacy, purity, blessedness, subtle permeation, and quality of vivification. You should also obey the command of my master, Imām al-Ṣādiq, the trustworthy, peace be upon him, and establish all its outward aspects as a means of elevation to spiritual degrees.

So, revive your exoteric self by means of purification, remove from yourself

4 * Al-Rāḍī, *Nahj al-balāghah*, saying 409.

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sluggishness, indolence, and lethargy through its blessing, give your outward form clarity, and, with your clean and purified exoteric self, turn towards the dais of His closeness and revive your limbs through obedience to your master. Revive your esoteric self through the life of contemplation of the place of the beginning and the end and the point of origin and return. Enliven your heart through the life of faith and contentment. Enliven your mystery through the life of the theophanies of actions, names, and essence, according to their levels. Contemplate the clarity of water, walk with your master with the footsteps of sincerity and clarity, and, through the levels of purity (*ikhlāṣ*), realise certainty. After this, God willing, we will mention purity and its levels in the chapter on intention.

Live with the folk of God with purity and in the way of God and creation: turn away from exercising your own will. Contemplate the subtlety of the mixing of water with things, for this mixing is for their improvement and causes them to arrive at their own perfection and gives them life. The quality of your social interactions and dealings with the servants of God should also be like this. Look at the servants of God with the eye of affection and kindness. The purpose of their esoteric and exoteric improvement is that you revive them and your guidance of those who go astray and your forbidding of sin to the folk of sin is also for the improvement of their state, not for exercising the implementation of one's own will. If you purify yourself with the aforementioned meditations then, in accordance with the promise of Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, in this noble *ḥadīth*, the springs of gnosis and wisdom will gush forth from your heart and you will enter into the mysteries of purity and its realities, and with unseen assistance and spiritual exercises you will realise their realities and you will be worthy of arriving at the degree of closeness and the dais of intimacy (*uns*).[5]

5 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī dedicates a lengthy section to the concept of intimacy (*uns*) and its ten divisions. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 276.

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CHAPTER 4

On the Mysteries of a Noble Ḥadīth

It is reported from the pure imāms, peace be upon them:

> Verily, when Adam, peace be upon him, walked towards the tree, he turned towards it and ate from it, and he stood underneath it (*fa waḍa'ahā 'ala ra'sihi*) in veneration of it and in yearning for eternal life. This *ummah*, which is the best *ummah*, brought forth for mankind, has been commanded to purify these places by anointing and washing so that they may be purified of the taint of the father who is the origin.

There is a tradition whose meaning is close to this tradition, which is reported by al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq in *Majālis*.[1]

It should be understood that Adam was in a state of rapture (*jadhbah*)[2] in the paradise of encounter and he had no inclination towards the tree. If he had remained in that state of rapture he would not have become human and he would not have undertaken the journey of perfection, which must be accomplished in the arc of ascension, and he would not have comprehended the expanding of the dais of mercy in this world. So, the Eternal Will (*al-irādah al-azaliyyah*) decided to expand the dais of mercy and beneficence in this world, and reveal the opening of the doors of goodness and blessings, and bring forth from the earth of nature the hidden jewels of the souls of the realm of the material world and nature, and bring forth their treasures. This could not be achieved in the way (*sunnah*) of God unless Adam turned towards nature, which is the source of all faults, and came to the state of awareness after self-effacement (*maḥw wa ṣaḥw*) and was removed from the paradise of encounter and divine rapture. So, God imposed upon him internal forces and the external devil, which invited him to this tree, which is the source of the unfolding of perfections and the spring of the opening of the doors of grace. They distanced him from the dais of closeness prior to his descent and invited him to nature so that he could enter into the veils of darkness, because unless he entered these veils he would not have been able

1 * Ibn Bābawayh, *Majālis* (*Amālī*), 1300 AH/1882, no. 35.

2 Even though Khomeini's usage of the word *jadhbah* here should be understood within its context, as a term it is explained by 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī as the nearing of the servant in accordance with the divine providence which has been put forth for him, for whatever he needs to pass through the stations towards God. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 65.

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to pierce them. God, the Most High, said: 'Indeed, We created man in the best of modes, then We reduced him to the lowest of the low.'[3] The reducing to the lowest of the low, which is the last of the veils of darkness, is the result of the comprehensiveness of this divine wonder and necessitates the teaching of the names and attributes according to His knowledge.

Since Adam, peace be upon him, was brought out of the manifestation of the creative angelic realm to the domain of his own being, he became unclean with the greatest uncleanliness and tainted with the greatest impurity. Since this turning took an image in the realm of the similitude (*mithāl*) or the paradise of the world, the world took the form of a tree and Adam was afflicted by fault when he turned and walked towards it and took it in his hand and revered it and gave it honour. So, he and his children must compensate for this fault and the places of its taint, especially this *ummah*, which is the best of the *ummah*s, and which has knowledge of the mysteries from the light of the pure sons.

Therefore, they must purify the taint of their exterior with pure water that descends from the presence of mercy (*raḥmūt*), and they must purify the taint of their interior and their heart with the water of theophanies from the presence of divinity (*lāhūt*). So, when washing the face they must straight away wash otherness from the face of the heart. When washing the hands they must purify the elbow up to the ends of the fingers of the taint of worldly interaction. With the rest of the water they should wipe the most remote throne (*aqṣā al-ʿarsh*)[4] of the turning towards nature and of the result of walking in the direction of attainment of expectations, and they should leave behind the excess of turning towards the realm of matter and the traces of its effects, and they should remove the fault and taint of the first father, who is their origin.

Regarding the *ḥadīth* of the prayer of the Prophet during his ascension to heaven, it is reported in *al-ʿIlal*:

> Then my Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, said: 'O Muḥammad, stretch out your hand so you may receive the water, which is flowing from the right side of My throne.' And so the water descended and I received it with the right hand and for this reason the ablution (*wuḍū'*) commences with the right hand. Then He said: 'O Muḥammad, take that and wash your face', He taught him 'If you wish to look at My majesty you must be pure'. 'Then wash your right and left arms', He taught him 'If you wish to receive My words in your hands', 'anoint your head and feet with the

3 Q.95:4.

4 This means the wiping of the crown of the head with water. The crown of the head symbolises the remote throne of God.

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> remaining water in your hands'; He taught him to anoint his head and his feet, He said: 'I intend to anoint your head and bless you. However, the anointing of your feet is for the sake of My wish that you tread on a place upon which no one has stood upon before you and upon which no one will tread save for you.'[5]

You also, O compassionate gnostic and companion in faith, receive comfort from the mystery of the circle of the folk of gnosis and certainty, stretch out your right hand towards the mercy of God, and receive the mercy of water, which descends from the right side of the throne. For God the High does not turn away empty-handed those who show poverty before Him and He does not turn away empty the beggar's bowl of the folk of need. Therefore, partake of this water of mercy and wash the face, which is tainted by turning towards the world, or rather to what is all other, because you cannot look at the majesty of God with this impurity and taintedness, 'For the world and the hereafter are rivals.'[6] Therefore, wash your hands from the elbow of the vision of power and strength to the ends of the fingers that interact with the vision of egotism and egoity. 'And so, there is no power or strength save in God', because it is not possible to touch the book of truth (*ḥaqq*) with the impurity of the insignificant self-conceit of the soul (*istiqlāl al-nafs*). God the High has said: 'Only those who are purified may touch it.'[7] With what remains of this water, anoint your head and remove from it pride, grandeur, and arrogance, so that you can be anointed by the hand of God. Remove from your mind the thoughts of the other and otherness so that you can be blessed with the blessings of God. Purify your hesitant feet concerning the affairs of multiplicity so that you become an intimate friend of the gathering of intimacy. Humble yourself so that you are worthy of the dais of majesty.

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5 Ibn Bābawayh, *'Ilal al-sharā'i'*, p. 314.

6 Also known as Ibn Jamhūr. * Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Aḥsā'ī, *'Awālī al-li'ālī*, ed. Mujtabā' 'Irāqī, Qum, 1405, vol. 1, p. 277; al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāghah*, saying 100.

7 Q.56:79.

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CHAPTER 5

On the Mystery of the Covering Up of Shame

This, according to the lay folk (*ʿāmmah*), is the covering up of the immodest parts of the body from the eye of the honourable onlooker during the state of prayer.

According to the elite (*khāṣṣah*), it is the concealing of unseemly acts with the garment of devotion, which is absolutely the best of coverings, especially while in the presence of the holy court.

According to the elite of the elite (*akhaṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*), it is the veiling up of the unseemly traits of the soul with the garment of chastity.

According to the folk of faith (*ahl al-īmān*), it is the covering up of the unseemly qualities of the heart with the garment of repose.

According to the folk of gnosis and unveiling (*ahl al-maʿrifah wa al-kashf*), it is the concealing of the unseemly dispositions of the mystery with the garment of witnessing.

According to the folk nearmost to God (*ahl al-walāyah*), it is the veiling of the unseemliness of the mystery of the mystery with the garment of investiture. When the wayfarer reaches this degree he has covered all his shame and he has become worthy of the divine court and for him there is the continuous presence of God.

God the High, great is His mercy and all-encompassing His covering, is the coverer of all shame and all the unseemly traits of creation by blessing human beings with different garments, which cover their outer, physical, and offensive traits. He has covered their unseemly actions with the veil of the angelic realm (*malakūt*). If there was not a veil of covering of the angelic realm (*malakūtiyyah*) over our external acts and if their unknown forms were to manifest, we would be humiliated in this world. However, God the High, the Glorious, through His own covering has covered them from the eyes of the folk of the world. He has covered our immoral traits and the angelic realm (*malakūt*) of possession of impurities with this well-proportioned, well-constituted, material form. If He had torn this veil and if our outer immoral qualities were to become apparent each one of us would be in a form consistent with the state of the esoteric realm. Thus it is in the world other than this one, which is where the mysteries appear and is a day in the day of possession. It is reported in the *ḥadīth*, 'Some men will be gathered in a form in comparison to which monkeys and swine appear better.'[1] It is

1 * Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *ʿIlm al-yaqīn*, vol. II, p. 901.

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reported in the noble *Kāfī*, 'Verily, the arrogant ones will be made in the form of an ant which people will trample until God is finished with the reckoning.'[2]

In sum, this form of man is the veil of the covering of God over the face of our esoteric shame. Likewise, He ordered the covering of the ugly traits of the heart and the mysteries of all material and angelic existents according to their levels by the covering of the divine actions, names, and essence. It is necessary for the wayfarer on the path of the hereafter and the striver in the way of God to cover his esoteric and secret nakedness by holding fast to the degree of forgiveness and covering of God, and to veil and cover himself and his nakedness in the realisation of the reality of repentance, and to enter into the abode of turning to God (*inābah*).[3] We have given a commentary on some of the levels of repentance in our work *Sharḥ ʿarbaʿīn*.

It is reported in *Miṣbāḥ al-sharīʿah* that Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

> The most beautiful clothing for the believers is the garment of devotion and its greatest blessing is faith. God, may He be glorified and exalted, has said: 'The clothing of devotion is the best.'[4] As for outer clothing, it is a blessing from God which covers the shame of the children of Adam, and this is a honour by which God has honoured his servants, the children of Adam, and He has not honoured anyone other than them in such a manner. This is for the believers an instrument for fulfilling what God has ordained upon them. Your best clothing is that which does not occupy you with anything other than God, may He be glorified and exalted, instead it brings you closer to thanking Him, remembering Him, and obeying Him, and does not bear you towards pride, hypocrisy, pretence, vanity, and conceit. These traits are the ruin of religion and they cause hardness of the heart. When you don your garment remember the covering of your sins by God the High through His mercy. Clothe your esoteric state with sincerity just as you have covered your exoteric state with your clothing and so let your esoteric state be covered in awe and your exoteric in obedience. Consider, through the grace of God, may He be glorified and exalted, the fact that He created the provision of clothing, so that you may cover your manifest shame, and that He opened the doors of repentance and turning to Him so that by it you may cover your hidden shame against sins and immoral traits. Do not uncover the faults of others, for God's covering of you is far greater than that. Occupy yourself

2 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 311.

3 ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī gives ten different kinds of turning to God (*al-inābah*) in different contexts. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 195–6.

4 Q.7:26.

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> with your own shortcomings and desist from those matters and states that do not concern you. Be wary that you do not waste your life being concerned with the actions of others and be wary of others trading with your capital while you ruin yourself. For forgetfulness of sin is one of the greatest punishments of God the High in the world and ample cause for punishment in the hereafter. As long as the servant remains occupied with obedience to God the High, the knowledge of his own shortcomings, and the abandoning of what brings disgrace in the religion of God, he is protected from harm and immersed in the sea of the mercy of God, may He be glorified and exalted, and through wisdom and clarity he attains the jewels of beneficence. As long as he remains forgetful of his sins, ignorant of his faults, and reliant on his own strength and power he will never be successful.[5]

Contemplate and meditate on these comprehensive words. For the folk of gnosis and the companions of the heart (*aṣḥāb al-qulūb*), they open the doors of wisdom and knowledge and they indicate how the servant should act towards God.

The wayfarer to God and the striver in the way of gnosis should not neglect, in any state or any situation, his duty to servanthood and to safeguarding the place of the presence of lordship, exalted is His majesty, until he gives of the delight of his heart and soul in ordinary affairs and social matters, and witnesses God the High and His blessing and His gifts in all things. So, when putting on outer clothing, do not neglect the clothing of devotion, faith, and gnosis, which is the best of clothing, for just as outer clothing covers apparent shame, so this clothing covers hidden shame, whose ugliness and hideousness is far greater. The munificence of God the High and the grace of the Holy Being should be accepted. Put on outer clothing in order to fulfil the duties of servanthood and put on inner clothing out of respect for the presence of the court of lordship. The best outward and inner clothing is that which is known to bring one to the remembrance of God and that that does not cause one to be neglectful of His remembrance. So, with regard to the material and the shape of clothing, the wayfarer should choose something which does not cause the soul to transgress, does not lead to the neglecting of God, and does not attach him to the folk of pride, hypocrisy, vainglory, arrogance, and pretence. He should be aware that inclining to the world, even in these matters, has a strange effect on the heart, which leads to its perdition. Let it be known that the effects which some vain clothes produce upon the soul are the ruin of religion and cause hardness of the heart, which itself is one of the

5 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharīʿah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, pp. 11–2.

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main causes of esoteric maladies.

Much attention should be paid to esoteric clothing, to ensure that the devil and the commanding soul do not influence it or afflict it with pride, hypocrisy, transgression, or vanity, and one should not boast to the folk of God of one's religiosity or of one's devotion, obedience, perfection, gnosis, or knowledge, nor should one be arrogant, nor should one consider oneself safe from the outcomes of one's own affairs and the will of God. One should not belittle the folk of God and, even more so, one should not belittle the folk of disobedience who wear the same clothing. This attitude ruins the soul and leads to pride in faith, morality, and deeds, which is the source of all corruption.

While donning the garment one should remember God and His esoteric and exoteric mercies, for He has covered one's sins with His mercy. One should behave towards God the High with purity and veracity. One should beautify one's exoteric state with the covering of obedience and one's esoteric state with the covering of awe and fear. One should remember the favours of God, who has shown mercy by providing coverings for esoteric and exoteric shame, and who has opened the way of repentance and return for the servants so that they may cover themselves with the covering of God's forgiveness and may veil and cover their faults.

Just as God the High is the coverer (*sattār*) of the faults of the servants, so equally He loves those who cover the faults of others and He abhors the violation of covering. Thus, the wayfarer to God is one who covers the faults of the servants of God and does not waste his life in unveiling the coverings of the servants. He covers his eyes from the shame and faults of the servants of God, does not violate anyone's covering, and does not cause pain to the veil of anyone's honour. Since God the Coverer has covered his faults, which are greater and more shameful than the faults of others, he should be afraid that, if he causes hurt to the covering of anyone's faults, God the High will remove the veil of His covering from some of his actions and qualities and He will dishonour and humiliate him before everyone.

The traveller on the way to the hereafter should occupy himself with the study of his own faults and shame instead of the faults of others and he should not examine things which are detrimental or of no benefit to his state. He should not set up his own deeds as the capital for the trade of others by slandering and violating the covering of others. He should not, at any time, become forgetful of his own faults and sins, because forgetfulness of one's sins is one of the greatest of God's punishments in the world, preventing man from remedying them, and it is the greatest cause for punishment in the hereafter.

As long as the servant of God is occupied with obedience to God, close

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examination of his own states, and the study of the faults of the soul, and is distanced from that which is deemed shameful by the religion of God, he will be far from harm, immersed in the sea of the mercy of God, and will attain the jewels of wisdom. If he becomes self-centred, self-conceited, forgetful of his own sins, negligent of his own faults, and reliant upon his own strength and power, he will not find freedom nor achieve salvation.

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CHAPTER 6

On the Removal of Impurity

Impurity (*najāsah*) is remoteness from the gathering of intimacy and separation from the degree of holiness (*maqām al-quds*), and is contrary to the purpose of prayer, which for the believers is the ascension to arrival, and which brings the devoted spirits close to God.

According to the lay folk, it refers to obvious impurities. According to the elite, it refers to spiritual impurities. According to the folk of gnosis and the companions of the heart, it refers to the entire world in terms of otherness, which is the manifestation of the unclean, impure devil. Regarding comportment when alone, it is reported, 'In the name of God and with God, I seek refuge in God from the accursed, unclean, impure, evil, wicked devil.'[1] God the High, the Sublime, said: 'Shun uncleanliness.'[2]

So, distance and separate yourself from that which is repellent to the intimate assembly of the Beloved and the gathering of closeness to the Friend. Flee from external impurity by cleansing the body and clothing, and by clearing the interior (*jawf*) of the affliction of the dirt of the devil, which is an excess of the virtuous city (*al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*). Flee from esoteric impurity, which spoils the great city (*al-madīnah al-ʿuẓmā*) and the mother city (*umm al-qurā*),[3] with complete cleansing and perfect purification, and flee from the source of these origins and the accursed wicked tree (*al-shajarah al-malʿūnah al-khabīthah*)[4] by fleeing from egotism and egoity and by

1 Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, vol. 1, p. 16. * Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil al-shīʿah*, vol. 1, p. 217.

2 Q.74:5.

3 Khomeini here associates exoteric impurity and its removal with the virtuous city; this image evokes the philosopher al-Fārābī's treatise of the same title and his closely-knit discussion of how the excellent city resembles a healthy body. He then links the removal of esoteric impurities with 'the great city' and 'the mother of cities'. 'The great city' is, on the one hand, another allusion to the Fārābian ideal of the union of all human societies, and on the other hand is an allusion to *madīnat al-nabī*, Medina, the city of the Prophet. The mother of cities, meanwhile, is Mecca (see Q 42:7). Khomeini thus links exoteric purity with societal perfection and human interaction, while linking esoteric purity with the mystery of revealed truth. See Richard Walzer, *al-Farabi on the Perfect State: Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī's Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍila*, Oxford, 1985, pp. 229–31.

4 This is an allusion to Q.17:60. The interpretation of the accursed tree within Shīʿī exegesis is firmly established as referring to the Umayyad clan, seen as the wicked opposition to the Prophet's clan of Hāshim. Reference is made in this regard to such pairings as Abū Sufyān's warring against the Prophet, Muʿāwiyah's revolt against ʿAlī, and Yazīd's killing of al-Ḥusayn.

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abandoning the other and otherness. When you arrive at this degree, you will have left behind the influence of the evil, wicked devil, you will have fled from dirt and impurity, and you will have become worthy of being present at the court of the glorious one and worthy of being presented with the robe of honour of the intimate friend. And one element of spiritual migration, traversing to God, and ascension to arrival will have been realised, and that is departure from the dwelling and abode of the self. What remains is the second element, which is realised in prayer itself, and that is a movement towards God and arrival at the doors of God and annihilation in God. God the High said: 'Whosoever goes forth from his house an emigrant to God and His Envoy, and then death overtakes him, his wage shall have fallen on God.'[5]

Thus, it becomes known that this spiritual journey and true ascension to closeness consists of two elements. One of these elements is realised through purification; its mystery is cleansing; and the mystery of the mystery of this is detachment; and the hidden mystery of this is exaltation (*tanzīh*); and the veiled mystery of this mystery is the exaltation of the exaltation and delimitation (*taqyīd*). The greater of these is realised in prayer; the mystery of which is divine self-revelation; and the mystery of the mystery of this is individuation (*tafrīd*);[6] and the hidden mystery of that is oneness (*tawḥīd*); and the veiled mystery of that mystery is glorification of oneness (*tawḥīd*) and delimitation (*taqyīd*). 'And so, cast aside the lantern; the morn has dawned.'[7]

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5 Q.4:100.

6 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī gives a greatly detailed discussion of how individuation (*al-tafrīd*) may be understood, dividing it into no less than nine separate types. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 375–6.

7 This last sentence is inspired by the last statement of Imām 'Alī in the *ḥadīth* of Kumayl on reality where he says, 'Blow out the lamp; the morn has arisen.' The whole tradition is as follows:

> Kumayl asked the Prince of the Believers: 'What is reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*)?'
> And so he, peace be upon him, replied: 'Wherefore, O Kumayl, you and reality?'
> And so Kumayl asked: 'Am I not the companion of your mystery?'
> And he, peace be upon him, replied: 'Yes, yet sprinkles over thee what overflows from me.'
> And he asked: 'Does one such as thee dash down the one who asks?'
> He, peace be upon him, replied: 'Reality is the unveiling of the splendours of majesty without allusion.'
> He said: 'Add ye to the explanation for me.'
> He, peace be upon him, said: 'The obliteration of the imagined and the unclouding of the known.'
> And he said: 'Add ye to the explanation for me.'
> He, peace be upon him, said: 'The veil rent and the mystery victorious.'
> He said: 'Add ye to the explanation for me.'
> He, peace be upon him, said: 'Aloneness drawing unto the mark of oneness.'
> He said: 'Add ye to the explanation for me.'
> He, peace be upon him, said: 'A light dawning forth from the morn of eternity and its

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If time affords the divine gnostic the opportunity, he will be able, through the above mentioned divine admixture (*ma'jūn*) and by means of the cable (*ḥabl*) which connects the Creator and created, to draw forth all the levels of the wayfarers and stages of ascension of the gnostics from the abode of wakefulness to the most remote abode of oneness (*tawḥīd*). However, this aspiration is beyond explanation and the confines of our discourse.

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rays breaking forth over structures of oneness.'
He said: 'Add ye to the explanation for me.'
He, peace be upon him, said: 'Blow out the lamp; the morn has arisen.'

The term *al-mawhūm* has been translated in the above passage as 'imagined', which is employed in the second sense according to the OED: 'Conceived (in the mind), supposed, fancied'. The third explanation and the translation thereof follows the clause as it occurs in Aḥmad b. Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsā'ī's (d. 1241 AH/1826) 'First Epistle'; see al-Aḥsā'ī, *Rasā'il al-shaykh*, Kuwait, 1421 AH/2000, p. 18. However, the third explanation as noted by 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī should read 'The veil rent by the victorious mystery.' The translation of the rest of the text follows the tradition as it occurs in al-Kāshānī, *Sharḥ su'āl kumayl b. ziyād li amīr al-mu'minīn*, Ms., Princeton University Yehuda Arabic Collection, no. 3604, fol. 126 r-v. * Qāḍī Nūrullāh Shūshtarī, *Majālis al-mu'minīn*, Tehran, 1354 SH/1975, vol. II, p. 11.

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CHAPTER 7

On the Location of Prayer

According to the lay folk, this is well known and its conditions have been enumerated in the books of law. According to the folk of gnosis, the whole universe is the place of worship and all beings are the worshipper. God willing, it will be mentioned in the chapter on the mysteries of Qur'ānic recitation during prayer that the entire universe of being (*ʿālam al-wujūd*), with all its existential ipseities (*al-huwiyyāt al-wujūdiyyah*), is praising and glorifying the holy degree of God the High, and all are humble worshippers at His court. At this point, Let it be known that the throne of realisation is the dome of the place of worship for all beings, and the earth of determination (*taʿayyun*) is their place of prostration. All beings are occupied, in this place of worship under the dome of the presence of lordship, with worship of God, seeking God, desiring God, and adoring God. 'If you split open the heart of every atom',[1] by way of the light of the nature of God, which calls them to absolute, perfect submission, 'You will see in it His light.'[2] 'Whatever is in the heavens and the earth praises Him.'[3] 'Nothing is that does not proclaim His praise, but you do not understand their extolling.'[4]

According to the folk nearmost to God (*ahl al-walāyah*), all the determinates of the names and actions are the place of worship of God the High, and the one who prays is the Holy Being Himself. So, regarding the determinations of the names and attributes, the One who prays is God, the place of His prayer is the determinates themselves, and the determination of the greatest name is itself the Kaʿbah. It is reported in the *ḥadīth*, 'Praise cannot encompass Thee in the manner in which Thou hast praised Thyself.'[5] In terms of the theophany of divine action (*al-tajallī al-fiʿlī*) through the absoluteness of the holy effusion (*al-fayḍ al-muqaddas*), the place of the one who prays is the determination of the universe and it is God the High who prays in this theophany of divine action. It is reported in the following *ḥadīth*, 'Verily, thy Lord prays; He says, "The Glorious, the Holy is the lord of the angels and the spirit."'[6] The perfect man and the Seal of the Prophets, may the blessings of God be with him and his descendants, is the Kaʿbah. It is reported in the fol-

1 * This is a verse from a poem by Hātif Iṣfahānī.

2 Poem by Hātif Iṣfahānī.

3 Q.59:24.

4 Q.17:44.

5 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharīʿah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, p. 9. * Al-Aḥsāʾī, *ʿAwālī al-liʾālī*, p. 389.

6 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 442–3.

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lowing *ḥadīth qudsī*, 'My earth and My heavens cannot encompass Me, but the heart of My believing servant encompasses Me.'[7]

Thus, in the manifest theophany of the arc of descent the determination of the universe is the temple of God (*ma'bad al-ḥaqq*) and God the High is the worshipper and the one who is worshipped. And in the hidden theophany of the arc of ascent, all beings are the temple, the worshipper is the locus of the manifestation, and the one who is worshipped is the one who is manifest. In the realm of the being of man, which is the sum total of the universe and comprehensive being (*al-kawn al-jāmi'*), the locus of manifestation of the powers of the angelic realm and the divine forces are the mosques[8] of the acts of worship of the existents, and the temples for their submissiveness and praise. In the perfect man, in accordance with the manifestation of truth, in the perfect locus of manifestation, God is the worshipper and the worshipped and man, from the determination of the remote parts of the hidden heart to the utmost limit of the determination of witnessing, is the mosque of lordship in accordance with the theophanies of the essence, names, and actions. In the arc of ascent God is the one who is worshipped and the perfect man, with all the divine forces, the worshipper.[9]

Summary

It is reported of Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, in *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah*, that he said:

> When you arrive at the door of the mosque know that you have betaken yourself to a great king, upon whose dais only the purified ones tread and who only allows the veracious into His company. Approach the dais of His service in awe of the King, for surely you are in great danger if you are negligent. Know that He has the power to do whatever He wills, whether he shows you His justice or His grace. If He is compassionate to you it is due to His grace and mercy, and He will accept from you a little obedience and in return He will give you abundant, manifold reward. If He demands from you, as He deserves, veracity and purity according to His justice, He will veil you and reject your obedience even though it may be abundant. For He does what He wills. Confess your weakness, shortcomings, destitution, and poverty before Him. For you have turned towards

7 * Al-Aḥsā'ī, *'Awālī al-li'ālī*, vol. IV, p. 7; Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *al-Maḥajjah al-bayḍā'*, ed. 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, Qum, n.d., vol. V, p. 26.

8 The word for mosque is *masjid*, the literal meaning of which is 'place of prostration'.

9 See Qummī, *Rūḥ al-ṣalāt*, pp. 49–50.

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> Him to worship Him and be intimately close to Him. Place your secrets before Him and know that the secret and open matters of all creation are not hidden from Him. Be as His poorest servant before Him. Empty your heart of every preoccupation that veils you from your Lord, for He receives not save from the most pure and the most sincere. See from which register of deeds your name is called out. If you have tasted the sweetness of intimate communion with Him and the delight of His conversation, and if you have drunk from the chalice of His mercy and His munificence, from the goodness of His turning towards you and His response to you, you will be fit for His service. Therefore enter, for you have been granted allowance and safety. Otherwise, halt as the halting of the one who is destitute, whose means have been severed, whose expectations have fallen short, and for whom the appointed hour has been decreed. When God knows from your heart the sincerity of your seeking refuge in Him, He will look towards you with the eye of compassion, mercy, and grace, and He will make you successful in that which He loves and that which pleases Him. For surely He is munificent and loves munificence for his servants, who are destitute before Him and who are consumed at His door with seeking His pleasure. God the High said: 'He is the one that replies to the one who is destitute when he calls out to Him.'[10]

I have conveyed all these noble words because for the folk of striving and spiritual disciplines it is a comprehensive teaching, and for the folk of gnosis and wayfaring it is a spacious threshold.

The folk of divine gnoses, when they witness that the universe is the mosque of lordship, must take care that they step into it with esoteric and exoteric purity and clarity, since only the pure are able to set foot on the holy dais of God and only those who are veracious and pure are granted an audience with Him. So, in every state they see themselves in great danger and are fearful of being heedless in the holy presence of the King of Kings and their hearts beat fast out of fear of His awe-inspiringly majestic holiness, lest He should deal with them according to His own justice and demand purity and veracity, veil them from the dais of His closeness, and exclude them from the intimate gathering. So, they should acknowledge weakness and shortcomings and confess their poverty and need, and they should empty their hearts of preoccupations and multiplicity, which veil them from the intimate gathering and prevent them from turning towards Him, because they know that only the most pure and the most sincere heart will be received in the court.

10 Q.27:62; al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, pp. 17–8. * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXX, p. 373.

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Since their concerns have become one and they have not preoccupied themselves with their numerous goods and children, they will obtain the delight of the sweetness of intimate communion, become intoxicated through the chalice of His mercy and His munificence, and become fit for service and worthy of intimacy. Therefore, they take a step into the vast universe, which is the mosque of lordship, with allowance and safety from God, and their actions are neither oppressive nor unjust.

Those who have not attained this allowance and safety are the usurpers of the house of God and the ones who do wrong to God the High. They must become aware of their own predicament, and consider their own means and provision severed, and belittle their own desires and sincerely take refuge in the holy degree of God, great is His glory, from shortcomings, sins, defects, and weaknesses, and they should cry out in a tongue that is according to their state and heart; 'He is the one that replies to the one who is destitute when he calls out to Him.'[11] When God the High sees the veracity of their words He will compensate for their defects through His mercy, and He will have mercy on them and grant them success in realising His pleasure. 'For He is munificent and loves munificence for his servants, who are destitute before Him.'[12]

11 Q.27:62.

12 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharīʿah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, pp. 17–8.

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CHAPTER 8

On the Permissibility of a Location of Worship

According to the elite (*khāṣṣah*), this is to go beyond the influence of the devil by not transgressing the divine limits.

According to the folk of gnosis (*ahl al-ma'rifah*), it is to go beyond the influence of the self (*nafs*) by losing sight of one's own power and strength.

According to the ones nearmost to God (*awliyā'*), it is to go beyond any influence regarding the essence, names, and attributes.

So, as long as the limbs and the heart are under the influence of the devil or the self, the place of worship of God and the divine forces are usurped and the worship of God the High therein takes no form, and all the acts of worship will be performed for the devil or the self. Inasmuch as one goes beyond the forces of the devil, one will enter into the influence of the forces of the Compassionate so that the three victories take place. These are: (I) the victory close at hand (*al-fatḥ al-qarīb*), which according to us is the victory over the seven climes (*al-aqālīm al-sab'ah*) by the expelling of the forces of the devil from them, and the result thereof is the theophany of the unity of divine actions, 'Help from God, and a nigh victory';[1] (II) the manifest victory (*al-fatḥ al-mubīn*), which is the victory of the Ka'bah of the heart by the expelling of the whispering devil from it, as in the verse 'Surely we have given thee a manifest victory';[2] and (III) the absolute victory (*al-fatḥ al-muṭlaq*), which is abandonment of the creaturial traits and the annihilation of the hidden and witnessed determinates. 'When comes the help of God and victory.'[3] After this, all divine influences are victorious and the result of the proximity attained through supererogatory acts of worship is realised. The details of this are beyond the confines of these pages.[4]

1 Q.61:13.

2 Q.48:1.

3 Q.110:1.

4 For a more precise exposition of the 'three victories' see 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 152–3.

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CHAPTER 9

On the Mysteries of Time

According to the way (*maslak*) of the folk of gnosis and the font (*mashrab*) of the companions of certainty (*aṣḥāb al-īqān*), the time of prayer begins from the spreading (*istiwā'*) of the sun of reality in its fullest manifestation, according to the aloneness of drawing together the names, which is the time of the *Ẓuhr* prayer, which is the prayer of the Lord and the prayer of the Envoy of God, may God bless him and his descendants, during his ascension, which is the manifestation of the spreading (*istiwā'*) of the light (*nūr*) of aloneness and the Aḥmadian totality, which itself is the throne of the ascendancy (*istiwā'*) of the Oft-Compassionate, 'The Oft-Compassionate ascends upon the throne.'[1] From this the mystery of the occurrence thereof is understood in the heavenly ascension which occurred during the night, until the beginning of the dawning forth of the sun of possession (*shams al-mālikiyyah*) from the horizon of the day of resurrection, which is the day when certainty is given; 'Worship your Lord until certainty comes to you.'[2] So, the time of prayer for those who are brought close (*muqarrabūn*) and the foremost folk of goodness takes place from the onset of the decline from the zenith (*istiwā'*) of manifestation, which is the veiling of the face of the sun of aloneness in the horizon of determinates and the stretching forth of shadows—'Hast thou not regarded thy Lord, how He has stretched forth the shadow?'[3]—to where it sets under the horizons of bodies; 'When the sun declines the two times come on.'[4] This is the time of the *Ẓuhr* and *'Aṣr* prayers, which are the most excellent of prayers, and the middle prayer (*al-ṣalāt al-wusṭā'*) is one of these two. Even though the most appropriate view, according to the jurists, is that it is the *Ẓuhr* prayer, however, according to the gnostics, it is both of these prayers through being apparent (*ẓāhiriyyah*) and manifested (*maẓhariyyah*), and foremost (*awwaliyyah*) and lastmost (*ākhiriyyah*), 'Verily, these are the four in the place of four.'[5] Both these prayers have been described as the middle prayer (*al-ṣalāt al-wusṭā'*) in the reported traditions.

The time of the *'Aṣr* prayer corresponds to the time when Adam, peace be upon him, erred by entering the veiling of determination and inclining towards the tree of nature.

1 Q.20:5.

2 Q.15:99.

3 Q.25:45; on the shadow also see 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 184.

4 Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, vol. I, 140.

5 * Al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'ah*, vol. III, p. 211.

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However, the two dusk prayers take place at the time of nature's dark obscurity and the complete veiling of the sun of reality and the *Maghrib* prayer is for the sake of being brought out of this darkness with true repentance from the instinctual erring of the father of mankind, peace be upon him. Being brought out of the darkness of the grave, the bridge (*ṣirāṭ*), and resurrection, which are the remnants of the darkness of nature, takes place through the one that follows on (*mushāyiʿah*). Just as it is reported in the *ḥadīth* of the folk of the house of infallibility and purity, which states that the time of sunset is the time when Adam repented. Thus he performed three inclinings of prayer, one for his erring, one for the erring of Eve, peace be upon her, and one for his repentance. The *'Ishā'* prayer is for the sake of removing the darkness of the grave, for the resurrection, and for illuminating the bridge (*ṣirāṭ*).[6]

The *Fajr* prayer takes place from the dawning forth of the effects of the day of gathering (*yawm al-jamʿ*) till the rising of the sun of reality on the horizon of the day of resurrection. When the sun has risen, responsibility ceases, the curtain of night is parted, and the mystery of 'The Master of the Day of Judgment'[7] becomes clear.

According to another explanation, in accordance with the terms of the folk of gnosis, the time of the four prayers, which contains the two sides of divinity and creation and which is the obligation of God and the Prophet, 'Perform the prayer at the sinking of the sun to the darkening of the night',[8] takes place from the beginning of the decline of the light of reality from its zenith (*istiwāʾiyyah*) and its setting under the veils of nature, which is the beginning of the night of measure, to the point of its utmost veiling in the veils of determinates, which is the midpoint of the night and the end of the arc of descent and the utmost end of the night of measure.

The time of the supererogatory night prayers, when night prevails, takes place from the beginning of the disappearance (*inḥidār*) of the stars, which is the time of the return of the sun from the veiling of the determinates to the most high horizon, which is the beginning of the day of resurrection, till the rising of the sun from the horizon of the day of resurrection. The time of the ordained morning prayer, which is an obligation to God alone, is when day prevails; 'Surely, the recital of dawn is witnessed.'[9] So, when the sun rises 'certainty comes to you and wayfaring is cut off'. Thus, the entire circle of being is a single night of Muḥammadian measure, if you can know the measure of it, and it is a single day of Aḥmadian resurrection, if you rise to service.

6 * Ibn Bābawayh, *Majālis* (*Amālī*), no. 35, p. 114.

7 Q.1:4.

8 Q.17:78.

9 Ibid.

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Summary
On the Safeguarding of the Time of Prayer

Let it be known that the safeguarding of the times of prayer, which are the meeting points of the presence of the Lord and the promised times of His lordship, is one of the most important matters according to the folk of watchfulness (*ahl al-murāqabah*), which the folk of intimate communion and wayfaring await and prepare themselves and their hearts, and they receive it[10] in a state of exoteric and esoteric purity, and immediately remove themselves from other preoccupations, completely sever their hearts from all else, and turn towards the promised court of God.[11]

It was reported of one of the wives of the Prophet, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, that she said: 'The Envoy of God spoke to us and we to him, but when the time of prayer arrived it was as though he did not recognise us and we did not recognise him, he being occupied with God and no other thing.'[12]

The master of the ones who profess the oneness of God, Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, may blessings and peace be upon him, when the time of prayer would arrive would become restless and would tremble. He was asked, 'What happens to you, O Prince of the Believers?' Thus he replied, 'The time of trust has arrived, which God the High put forward to the heavens and the earth, which they refused to accept, and which they were fearful of.'[13] When Imām 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon them both, prepared for ablution (*wuḍū'*) his colour would change. He was asked what the cause of this was. He replied, 'Know you not in whose presence I rise up?'[14] It is reported in the traditions that 'To sit in the mosque waiting for prayer is an act of worship.'[15]

In sum, those who do not consider worship of God, intimate communion with the only Beloved, and discourse with the King of Kings, to be a responsibility and burden, were they of the folk of love and passion, would not substitute the delight of intimate communion with God and yearning for the encounter with the Beloved for the entire realm of existence, and they would be passionately in love with God and with worship of Him. If they were of the folk of faith, they would know that the life in the realm of the hereafter and the capital of this life is the realm of the act of worshipping God, and the

10 The pronoun refers to the time of prayer.

11 Safeguarding (*murāqabah*) is another important term in Islamic gnosis. See 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 228–9.

12 * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXI, p. 258.

13 * Ṭabarsī, *Mustadrak al-wasā'il*, ch. 2, no. 14.

14 * Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *al-Maḥajjah al-bayḍā'*, vol. I, p. 351.

15 * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXX, p. 380; al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'ah*, vol. III, p. 84.

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corporeal paradise and its creatures and palaces are the external form of the acts of man, 'And whosoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it and whosoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it.'[16]

After that, when man has faith in the outcome of deeds and gives importance to them, certainly he will safeguard their timing. Before this we explained that one of the great mysteries of these acts of worship is that each one has an effect and a form in the heart, which illuminates it and, for its part, the realm of matter is humbled before the presence of the angelic realm and manifests the state of perfect submission for the forces of the self in relation to spirituality, and the will of the self becomes stable. Each one of these matters is important and they have an effect in the unseen realms, and the unseen form of some of them is the paradise of the divine attributes, which is superior to the paradise of divine actions. These results are not established on the basis of deeds, especially not prayer, which is the best of deeds, unless man brings it about by contemplation, meditation, and presence of the heart.[17]

A matter that aids man entirely in realising the presence of the heart is the safeguarding of time, which is an appointed covenant, and the appointed timing of the promise of God. The wayfarer to God and the striver in the way of God, if he cannot devote all his time to God, must safeguard these five times of prayer at least, which God the High has appointed for him and through which He has invited him to encounter Him. With all his heart and soul he should give thanks to God the High that He has granted him permission to enter into intimate communion and to serve in the intimate gathering and holy assembly. So he should not be forgetful of this, and should not turn away from the promised court of God. Perhaps, by paying attention to the times of prayer and safeguarding the promised time of the encounter, which at first seems to be a matter without any meaning or form, as a result of the success granted by God and with the assistance of the holy essence, great is His glory, he may find reality and meaning in this. Then he will attain the delight of intimate communion and intimacy with the Beloved, he will attain the true mystery of the acts of worship, the doors of the act of worship of the spirit and the heart will be opened for him, and, gradually, he will see the divine forces in the realm of his own being rise to the worship of God and examples of the splendours of the awe-inspiring majesty and beauty will be unveiled upon his heart. He will realise the first splendour of the unity (*tawḥīd*) of divine actions and, after that, the path of wayfaring to God will

16 Q.99.7–8.

17 For the paradise of divine attributes and divine actions see 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 67–8.

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open up for him and he will be considered worthy to enter into true prayer by the granting of God the High.

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CHAPTER 10

On the Mystery of Turning Towards the Kaʿbah

The Kaʿbah, which is the mother of all cities (*umm al-qurā'*) and the centre of the entire expanse of the earth, 'and the earth, after that He spread out',[1] 'and it is the hand of God, and is facing God, and is facing the *bayt al-maʿmūr*',[2] which is the mystery of the heart and which is in the fourth heaven. So, the Kaʿbah, the mother of all cities, is the mystery of this *bayt al-maʿmūr*, which is the mystery of the heart, and the mystery of that mystery is the hand of God, and the mystery concealed in that is the greatest name, *Allāh*.

So, the folk of gnosis and the companions of the heart extend the rule of unity from the secret to the known and from the esoteric to the exoteric; just as in the mystery of one's heart different directions are completely annihilated in total oneness (*al-waḥdah al-tāmmah*) and they realise in the exoteric the mystery of 'a glittering star, kindled from a blessed tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West'.[3] The directions of East and West are annihilated in the mother of all cities, which is the seat of centrality and is neither of the East nor of the West, and they realise the mystery of 'facing God' and the mystery of facing the *bayt al-maʿmur*.

In the prayer of the nearmost to God the turning towards the orientation point (*qiblah*) is the manifest mystery of aloneness in the realm of the body. They witness according to the mystery of existence whatever is the face of the hidden aloneness; they turn towards that and they witness the mystery of 'There is no creature that crawls, but He takes it by its forelock';[4] they obtain the mystery of 'neither of the East nor of the West';[5] they turn towards the degree of the awe-inspiring subtlety of the aloneness of the drawing together of the names of the essence, which 'do not have a West where the essence disappears nor an East from where the multiplicity of the names and attributes appears'; and with the degree of the mystery of the spirit they turn towards the presence of the drawing together of oneness, which is the degree of the greatest name, *Allāh*, and which is not of Oriental appearance (*sharqī al-ẓuhūr*) nor Occidental hiddenness (*gharbī al-buṭūn*). With the degree of the heart they turn towards the mystery of the *bayt al-maʿmūr*,

1 Q.79:30.

2 *Bayt al-maʿmūr* is the celestial archetype of the Kaʿbah in heaven, which directly corresponds to the Kaʿbah in Mecca.

3 Q.24:35.

4 Q.11:56.

5 Q.24:35.

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which is the degree of the theophany of the divine action of the greatest name. They obtain the mystery of 'neither of the East nor of the West' and with the exoteric face they turn towards the essential reality (*ʿayn*) of the Kaʿbah, which is beyond the dwelling-place (*maʿmūrah*) of the Orient and the Occident, and they witness God with total vision in the aloneness of drawing together.

Know that the manifestation of the mystery of oneness (*waḥdah*) is limited to a specific aspect and to a fixed mode. This is required of the gnostic at every instant in the reckoning of the five presences, and any definition beyond this is defective; 'To God belong the East and the West; whithersoever you turn, there is the face of God.'[6]

Thus, the gnostic of God witnesses the Truth (*ḥaqq*) in all places and domains, and he sees everything to be the Kaʿbah of hopes and a facet of the beauty of the Beloved, which is beyond being confined in any mirror. He will say, 'I saw not a thing save I saw God with it and in it',[7] and he will exclaim, 'Included in things, not like an intrusion of a thing in a thing',[8] and he will hear and witness with all his being, 'He is with you wheresoever you are.'[9] All praise is to God, in the beginning and in the end, outwardly and inwardly.

6 Q.2:115.

7 * Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *ʿIlm al-yaqīn*, vol. 1, p. 49.

8 Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Tawḥīd*, p. 306.

9 Q.57:4.

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PART 2

On the Linkings of Prayer and their Correspondences



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CHAPTER 1

On the Mysteries of the Calls to Prayer

The call to prayer (*adhān*), according to the folk of gnosis, is the proclamation of the virtues of the material and angelic realms in the greater and lesser man (*al-insān al-kabīr wa al-ṣaghīr*),[1] in preparation for being present in the court of God the High. The second call to prayer (*iqāmah*) is performed in order to make these forces present, and by means of them to step into the presence of the Holy, the Magnificent, may He be glorified and exalted. So, through the opening magnifications offered up to God (*takbīrāt*) is proclaimed the weakness of the existents in rising to the praise of God, and their shortcomings in terms of their suitability for His presence is announced, and it prepares them to be awakened through their own humility, obedience, fear, dread, and submission so that perhaps attention will be paid to them. Through the negation of essential divinity (*al-ulūhiyyah al-dhātiyyah*) and the negation of active divinity (*al-ulūhiyyah al-fi'liyyah*) from all other, the confinement of this to the holy essence negates any other from being worthy of praise and confines it to God. Through the testimony of the prophethood of the Seal of the Prophets, regarding the hidden and the witnessed, by petitioning (*tawassul*) the holy degree of the absolute advocate (*al-shafi' al-muṭlaq*), and through being in the company of this holy being, which is the degree of absolute nearmostness (*al-walāyah al-muṭlaqah*), this divine wayfaring reaches an end and the ascension of arrival is attained.

Our shaykh, the perfect gnostic, may my soul be a ransom for him, said: 'The testimony about the nearmostness (*walāyah*) of the ones nearmost to God is included in the testimony concerning prophethood because nearmostness is the inwardness (*bāṭin*) of prophethood'. Therefore, the holy degree of nearmostness is also a companion during this wayfaring. It is reported in a *ḥadīth*, 'Through 'Alī prayer is established'.[2] Moreover, it is reported in another *ḥadīth* that Imām 'Alī, peace be upon him, said: 'I am the prayer of the believers and their fast.'[3]

So, when the wayfarer to God announces that praise will be confined to

1 The idea of the greater and lesser man evokes that of the human as macrocosm and as microcosm, that is to say that within the perfect man is contained the whole of creation. For a detailed exposition of this concept see al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 667; Khomeini, *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 71.

2 * Qummī, *Asrār al-'ibādāt wa ḥaqīqat al-ṣalāt*, p. 23.

3 See Qummī, *Rūḥ al-ṣalat*, in *al-Arba'īniyyāt li kashf anwār al-qudsiyyāt*, p. 38. * Qummī, *Asrār al-'ibādāt wa ḥaqīqat al-ṣalāt*, p. 23.

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God the High and chooses a friend and companion—as it is said: 'First the friend then the way'[4]—he announces readiness for prayer by saying, 'Come to prayer', and he recites it with the virtues of the material and angelic realms. After this, the mystery of prayer is generally announced by him saying 'Come towards salvation' and 'Come towards the best of deeds'.[5] This in turn makes man and his material and angelic forces aware that his nature (*fiṭrah*) is inclined to seek freedom and perfection, both of which are of divine nature, and all of mankind is born with this natural disposition. After the awakening of his innate nature (*fiṭrah*) and the readying of the virtues, he offers up magnification to God (*takbīr*) and repeats the acclamation (*tahlīl*) 'There is no god but God' (*lā ilāh illā Allāh*), so that weakness and shortcomings are acknowledged and established in the hearts and the mystery of firstness and lastness becomes clear.

During the second call to prayer (*iqāmah*), the ranks and forces of the angelic and material realm are straightened and mobilised, and by the repetition of its phrases the aforementioned realities are confirmed, intercession (*istishfā'*) and petition are affirmed, and the nature (*fiṭrah*) of man is awakened. When the servant reaches this point he announces his presence 'and so prayer is established' (*fa qad qāmat al-ṣalāt*).[6]

Thus, the wayfarer to God and the striver in the way of God makes the heart, which is one of the chosen forces of God, the imām in this domain, and gathers the remaining virtues which have been dispersed in various directions and makes them follow the imām (*ma'mūm*). He brings together the different virtues in his inward and outward climes, which have been conquered by the heart, and the angels who reside in the angelic realm are turned by him and assemble and follow him in prayer.

Since the wayfarer sees himself followed by the divine forces of the angels and the virtues of the angelic realm itself, and sees himself as a leader in this divine traversing and as present in the presence of lordship, he must protect and safeguard his prayer and must not be neglectful and forgetful of the fact that the responsibility for the prayer of those who follow him is in his trust, 'And so the believer is a congregation unto himself.'[7] If he safeguards this congregation, the excellence of his prayer will be increased according to the number of those who follow him, and perhaps through the success granted by God some of the mysteries of 'Thee only we worship and to Thee alone we pray for succour',[8] which is stated using the plural pronoun, will be unveiled

4 * Al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'ah*, vol. VIII, p. 299.

5 These three formulae are from the call to prayer (*adhān*).

6 This is a formula repeated in the second call to prayer (*iqāmah*).

7 * Al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'ah*, vol. V, p. 379.

8 Q.1:5.

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to him. If he does not protect and safeguard this, he will be lying during these sayings and acts of prayer and he will be included in the company of the hypocrites. Furthermore, he will have wasted his prayer and the prayer of the angels of God because the leader of prayer (*imām*) is the guarantor of the Qur'ānic recitation during the prayer of those who follow him in prayer. Indeed, he also bears responsibility for whatever remains of the elements and prerequisites of this prayer.

The safest and closest way to salvation is that the one who prays, in everything he says and does, surrenders himself to the spirituality of the Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, or to the degree of the treasury of nearmostness,[9] or the Imām of the Age, peace be upon them, and through their tongue he praises God. Also, as regards deeds, he holds fast to their deeds. He who leads (*imām*) the angels and the divine forces in prayer in turn becomes the follower (*ma'mūm*) of the degree of prophethood and nearmostness, and he traverses this spiritual wayfaring and ascends to the divine ascension through the guidance of these aforementioned great ones by sincerely following them and surrendering to them alone, because 'Alī, peace be upon him, is the straight path (*ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*),[10] the prayer of the believers, and the Khiḍr of the path of wayfaring; 'Do not traverse these stages without being led by Khiḍr.'[11]

Summary

It is reported in *al-Ilal*, with a chain of transmission from Abū 'Abd Allāh, peace be upon him, in a lengthy *ḥadīth*, in which he describes the prayer of the Prophet during his ascension to heaven:

> He said: 'God, the Mighty, the Omnipotent, sent down to him a carriage of light within which there were forty kinds of lights from the kind of light which surrounds the throne, and His throne, may He be blessed and exalted, overwhelms the eyes of the onlookers. Yet, one of them was yellow and, as a result of that yellowness, glistened, and one of them was red and, as a result of that redness, glowed... he sat in it and by that he ascended to the heaven above the world, and the angels scattered to the corners of the heavens and cast themselves down in prostration and said, "All glory and holiness be to our Lord and the lord of the angels and the spirit. How like this light is to the light of our Lord!" Gabriel cried out,

9 This refers to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.

10 * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. xxxv, pp. 363–75.

11 * This is from a poem by Ḥāfiẓ.

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> "God is the greatest, God is the greatest." And so, the angels fell silent and heaven opened, and the angels gathered and came in groups and greeted the Prophet, may God bless him and his descendants. Then they said, "O Muḥammad! How is your brother?" He replied, "He is well." They said, "When you see him deliver our greetings to him." The Prophet, may God bless him and his descendants, said, "Do you know him?" They replied, "How could we not know him when God, the mighty and exalted, has taken from us a covenant for you and for him..."[12]

So, he said that he ascended to the second heaven and when the angels saw him they scattered to the corners of the heavens and cast themselves down in prostration and cried out, 'How like this light is to the light of our Lord!' Then Gabriel cried out twice, 'I bear witness that there is no god but God.' Then they gathered and said similar things to the Most Noble Envoy. Thus, forty kinds of light were added, just as it was increased in the first heaven. Then, he ascended to the third heaven and in a similar fashion the angels scattered and prostrated and glorified God and Gabriel, peace be upon him, bore witness to his prophethood. They gathered and said similar things until he ascended to the fourth heaven where the angels fell silent. Then, the doors of heaven were opened and the angels gathered and Gabriel, peace be upon him, recited the remainder of the second call to prayer (*iqāmah*).[13]

In this noble tradition there are mysteries and realities which we fall short of comprehending, and if I were to mention that which I understand in my limited way the discussion would become lengthy and would be beyond the scope of these pages. The aim in mentioning some of this is to bring as a testimony the point that when the second call to prayer was recited the angels of God assembled.

It is reported in the authentic tradition of Muḥammad b. Muslim[14] that he said:

> Abū 'Abd Allāh said to me: 'When you have recited the second call to prayer and begin to perform the prayer, two rows of angels pray behind you. And if you recite the second call to prayer without the first call to prayer only one row of angels will pray behind you.'[15]

In some of the traditions he has limited the two rows to the East and West and

12 Ibn Bābawayh, *'Ilal al-sharā'i'*, pp. 312–3.

13 * Ibn Bābawayh, *'Ilal al-sharā'i'*.

14 Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Thaqafī was a Kūfan and an important follower of the imāms al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq.

15 * Al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'ah*, vol. IV, p. 620.

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expanded them to being between the heavens and the earth.[16] This difference is according to the difference in the degrees and levels of the ones who pray and their prayer.

16 * Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil al-shīʿah*; Ibn Bābawayh, *Thawāb al-aʿmāl*, ed. ʿAlī Akbar Ghaffārī, Tehran, 1391 AH/1971, p. 54.

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CHAPTER 2

On the Mysteries of Standing During Prayer

According to the elite, the act of standing in prayer (*iqāmah*) is firmness (*ṣulb*) in the holy court of God, the tucking up of the hem for the obeying of the command, and it is the leaving behind of the coverings and rising through the warning, 'O thou shrouded in thy mantle, arise and warn! Thy Lord magnify and thy robes purify.'[1] It is firmness in morals (*akhlāq*), justice in character, and the lack of an inclination for excess and carelessness. Just as has been previously pointed out in the *ḥadīth* of Rizām, the client of Khālid b. 'Abd Allāh, that Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said regarding the reality of prayer, 'And he stands between renunciation and covetousness, between fortitude and anguish, as though the promise has been wrought forth for him and the threat has befallen him.'[2] Standing before God in a manner so that fear does not overwhelm hope and hope does not overwhelm fear, and so that fortitude does not become endurance (*tajallud*), which, according to the doctrine of the lovers, is a most reprehensible trait.

> It is noble to appear stout-hearted (*tajallud*) against the enemy,
> Whereas weakness is reprehensible save nigh friends.

Anguish should not be excessive and opposed to acceptance, and his repose should be such that he constantly sees the day of recompense and the promise and the threat, and this is one of the highest levels of faith.

According to the folk of traversing, it is to stand firm in the degree of humanity and to go beyond the renunciation of Judaism and the exaggeration of Christianity; 'Abraham was not a Jew neither a Christian, but one who was pure of faith and submitted to the one God.'[3] It has been reported in a *ḥadīth* that the Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, drew a straight line and then drew other lines around it and said: 'This straight line is my way.'[4] They say that he said: 'This verse in the *sūrat* Hūd turned my hair white',[5] alluding to the word of the high, 'So stand thou firmly straight (*fa-istaqim*), as thou hast been commanded, and whoso

1 Q.74:1–4.

2 * Ṭāwūs, *Falāḥ al-sā'il*, p. 23.

3 Q.3:67.

4 * A report similar to this is reported in Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *'Ilm al-yaqīn*, vol. II, p. 967.

5 * Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *'Ilm al-yaqīn*, vol. II, p. 971.

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repents with thee.'[6] The perfect gnostic, Shaykh Shāhābādī, may my soul be a ransom for him, said: 'This command is because standing firmly straight by the *ummah* has been demanded on the part of the Prophet and, due to this, this noble verse is also in *sūrat* al-Shūrā, and this command has not been given directly to them because they are not included in it.'

In short, at every stage standing firmly straight and not leaving the middle way is a very difficult matter for the wayfarer, who must, while standing before God, be timid and lower his head because of his failure to rise to the command; fix his eyes on the place of prostration, which is the dust of humility; remember his own degree of humility, faults, and shortcomings; see himself in the holy court of the King of Kings, who has all the atoms of the universe under the circle of His sovereignty, force, and power; remember the degree of omnipotence (*qayyūmiyyah*) of the holy essence; realise that the standing of the abode of realisation (*dar al-taḥaqquq*)[7] is subsistent through Him; and in the heart firmly establish the comprehension of omnipotence, this state of suspended-hung (*al-tadallā*), and the annihilation of the universe. In this way, gradually he may reach the mystery of standing firmly straight and obtain actual unity (*tawḥīd*), the mystery of which is known to the folk of gnosis. Thus, the degree of manifestation through the theophany of divine action will be unveiled upon his heart and the mystery of 'There is no compulsion (*jabr*) or empowerment (*tafwīḍ*), rather it is a matter beyond these two matters'[8] will become clear for him. Hence, he will become worthy of entering the court and some of the mysteries of the opening magnifications offered up to God (*takbīrāt*), the Qur'ānic recitations, and the raising of the hands during the magnifications will be unveiled to him.

6 Q.11:112.

7 The abode of realisation is to be understood as all existence.

8 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 160. * Ibn Bābawayh, *'Uyūn akhbār al-riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 124.

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CHAPTER 3

On the Mysteries of Intention

According to the lay folk, this is the resolve (*'azm*)[1] to be obedient out of hope or fear; 'They call unto their Lord in fear and hope.'[2]

According to the folk of gnosis, it is the resolve to be obedient out of reverence and awe, 'And so serve your Lord as if you see Him, for even if you do not see Him He sees you.'[3]

According to the folk drawn to divine grace (*jadhbah*) and love, it is the resolve to be obedient out of yearning and love. The Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, said: 'The most excellent person is the one who loves (*'ashiqa*) service (*'ibādah*), embraces it, and loves it with his heart.'[4] Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said: 'However, I serve Him out of love for Him, the Glorious, the Exalted, and that is the service of the noble-hearted.'[5] In another *ḥadīth* it is reported as, 'And this is the service of the free.'[6]

According to the ones nearmost to God, peace be upon them, it is the resolve to be obedient out of dependence (*tab'*) and jealousy (*ghīrah*) after witnessing the beauty of the Beloved in absoluteness (*istiqlāl*) and in essence, and after the annihilation in the presence of lordship, in essence, attribute, and action. The saying of Imām al-Ṣādiq, 'I serve Him out of love for Him', is perhaps one of his general degrees. Just as the knower of God, our perfect master the gnostic, may his shadow remain, said: 'This type of service is one of those particular to them and in some situations it is just as has been reported in a *ḥadīth* from the Noble Envoy, who said: "I have moments with God which no angel of closeness and no sent prophet has encompassed."'[7] It has been reported of Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, 'One day while he was praying he fell unconscious and then he was asked about this, and he said: "I remained repeating it until I heard it from the one who spake it."'[8] The

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1 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī gives ten kinds of resolve (*al-'azm*) dependent on context. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 268–9.

2 Q.32:16.

3 * Ṭabarsī, *Makārim al-akhlāq*, p. 459.

4 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 83.

5 Ibn Bābawayh, *'Ilal al-sharā'i'*, pp. 12–3. * Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, p. 188; al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'a*, vol. I, p. 45.

6 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 84.

7 * Majlisī, *al-Arba'īn*, Qum, 1358 SH/1399, p. 177.

8 * Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *al-Maḥajjah al-baydā'*, vol. I, p. 352.

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great master, Shihāb al-Dīn,[9] said: 'At that instant the tongue of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq was like the tree (*shajarah*) that Moses, peace be upon him, witnessed when He called out from it: "Verily, I, I am God."'[10] The prayer during the night journey of the Prophet was like this, as is clear from the report in *'Ilal*.[11]

Let it be known that intention (*niyyah*) is a very important duty of the heart, through which the form of service is perfected. Its relationship to the form of acts is like the relationship between the esoteric and the exoteric, between the spirit and body, and between the heart and the possessor of the heart.

For the lay folk, one of the most important duties and one of the most difficult requirements of intention is the purification (*takhlīṣ*) of intention. The smallest intention can have real purity. Indeed, absolute purity is the highest level of the perfect nearmost ones because purity means a deed free (*taṣfiyyah*) of blending with any other than God.

Regarding the worship of the lay folk, this is to be free of manifest and concealed polytheism (*shirk*), such as affectation, conceit, and boastfulness; 'Verily, the pure religion is for God alone.'[12]

Regarding the worship of the elite, it is to be free of the blending with hope and fear, which, according to their way, is polytheism.

Regarding the worship of the companions of the heart, it means to be free of the blending with egoity and egotism, which, according to the way of the folk of gnosis, is the greatest polytheism and unbelief; 'The mother of all idols is the idol of your own self.'[13]

Regarding the worship of the perfect ones, it means that the intention is free of the blending with the vision of servanthood and service, and even the vision of the entire universe (*kawn*), just as the imām, peace be upon him, said: 'The pure heart is the one that meets his Lord and in it there is none other than Him.'[14]

When the wayfarer to God disregards his own share of success, or rather he disregards his own and the world's share, and he immediately purifies himself of seeing any other and otherness, and when nothing other than God resides in his heart, and when he clears the idols from the house of God with the hand of nearmostness (*walāyah*) and empties it of the influence of the devil,

9 The name given here has been identified by the editors of the Persian text as Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Futūḥ al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl, the founder of the Illuminationist (*ishrāqiyyah*) school of philosophy.

10 Q.20:14.

11 Ibn Bābawayh, *'Ilal al-sharā'i'*, p. 312–6.

12 Q.39:3.

13 * Verses from a poem by Rūmī.

14 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 16.

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his religion, his action, and his esoteric and exoteric being become pure for God. God the High has chosen for himself such a religion; 'Every heart within which there is doubt or polytheism is rejected.'[15]

15 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 11, p. 16.

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CHAPTER 4

On the Mystery of the Opening Magnifications

O wayfarer to God and striver in the way of God, when you stand firm in the court of closeness and have purified your intention before God the High, when you have purified your heart and you have entered into the fold of the folk of fidelity, prepare yourself to enter the door and seek permission for the opening of the doors, move from the abode of nature, and remove and throw aside its thick veils by holding firm to the degree of magnificence (*kibriyā'*). Then enter another veil of the reciters of the magnification of God (*takbīr*), remove it, throw it aside, say the magnification (*takbīr*), and then remove the third veil because you have reached the mystery of the abode of the door to the heart. Then halt and recite the reported invocation, 'O God! Thou art the Real, the Manifest King (*al-malik al-ḥaqq al-mubīn*).'[1]

Negate the kingdom of all other than God and accept that all influences are from the holy essence so that you do not consider yourself the remover of the veil or worthy to recite the magnification of God, 'For He is far greater than He can be described'.[2] Confine divinity to God and seek forgiveness for your sins.

After that, remove the fourth and fifth veils and cast them aside, repeat the magnification (*takbīr*), and open the eye of your heart so that you hear the call, 'Enter'. If the sweetness of the court and delight of entering or awe and majesty of the presence manifest in your heart, know that the permission to enter has been granted. Therefore, in a state of fear, hope, devotion, and humility, say, 'Here I am, my happiness is from Thee, goodness is in Thy hands, and evil is not from Thee...'[3] Contemplate the realities of these noble invocations within which are the openings to gnosis and which contain the etiquette of the presence itself.

Remove the sixth veil and say the magnification (*takbīr*) after removing any description of God, after praising Him, and after entering His presence and removing His holy degree from description. If you consider yourself worthy, remove the seventh veil, which is the seventh subtlety, otherwise stop and knock at the door of the beneficence of God and from your heart acknowledge your faults and say, 'O Beneficent One! The one who sins has come unto Thee.'[4] Make sure that you are truthful while saying this and that

1 * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXI, p. 206.

2 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. I, pp. 117–8. * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXI, p. 366.

3 * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXI, p. 206.

4 * Ṭāwūs, *Falāḥ al-sā'il*, p. 155; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXI, p. 375.

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you are actually knocking at the door of beneficence, otherwise be warned and be afraid of being hypocritical in the court of the Lord of Awe-Inspiring Majesty.

After that, remove the seventh veil and cast it aside by raising the hands and say the magnification of inviability (*takbīr al-iḥrām*) and consider yourself bereft of all other because you have entered into the sanctuary of magnificence. Then say, 'I have turned my face to Him who brought forth the heavens and the earth.'[5]

Know that a great danger approaches you, and that is hypocrisy at the onset of service in the court of the knower of the realms of the mysterious and the hidden. If, like this veiled writer, you see yourself as deprived of these degrees and of every perfection and gnosis, bound to the attachments of the world and the love of the self, and inflamed with desire and anger, then do not disgrace yourself before the court of God and the angels of closeness, but confess your shortcomings and weakness, and be ashamed of your faults and veiledness. Enter with modesty, shame, and a humble heart and repeat the invocations as uttered by the nearmost ones, of which you yourself are not worthy, because as long as you do not trample upon yourself and the two worlds you will not utter these sayings sincerely. As long as you do not truly submit to God you are not one who has submitted to Him, and as long as you are self-conceited you will not leave the confines of polytheism, and as long as you have not achieved absolute annihilation of the self you cannot say, 'Verily, my prayer, devotion, life, and death are for God, the Lord of all Realms.'[6] Therefore, if you do not see yourself as a man of this arena, never enter the ranks of the folk of gnosis but be ashamed of yourself before those who are free.

It is reported of Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, that he said:

> When you offer up to God magnification (*takbīr*) you should consider all that is between the high heaven and the low earth to be insignificant save for His magnificence. For, when God examines the heart of His servant whilst he is offering up the magnification, if in his heart there is something that is preventing him from being true to His magnification, He says, 'O liar! Are you deceiving me? By My might and by My awe-inspiring majesty I shall deny you the sweetness of My invocation and veil you from My closeness and the joy of My intimate communion.' Examine your heart during your prayer and if you experience in your self its sweetness, joy, and delight, and if your heart is delighted with His intimate com-

5 Q.6:79.

6 Q.6:162.

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> munion and gladdened by His converse, then know that he has accepted your magnification of Him (*takbīr*). Otherwise, you will know from the absence of delight in intimate communion and the lack of sweetness of service that this is proof that God has rejected you and has turned you away from His door.[7]

However, the prayer of the nearmost ones, as previously mentioned, is the mark of divine theophanies. For since they have orientated their pure hearts towards the unseen realm and have turned the mirror of their own being towards the true sun, according to the suitability of their hearts, a special theophany will be revealed to them from the presence of the unseen (*ḥaḍrat al-ghayb*). At first, since theophany is delimited (*taqyīdī*) at the outset of this matter, they recite the following magnification (*takbīr*): 'He is far greater than any particular theophany.' They consider this to be one of the veils of light and they turn their hearts away from it and by the raising of the hand they demonstrate the mystery of the removal of the veil of the heart. After the removal of the veil, another theophany takes place in their heart which is more elevated and lofty than the previous theophany. Then they say a magnification (*takbīr*) and that veil is also removed. In this manner, they remove the seven veils until they realise the attainment of the utmost munificence. So, since the theophany of the essence has been revealed to their hearts without delimitation or veiling, they declare, 'I have turned my face to Him who brought forth the heavens and the earth',[8] and enter into prayer and they exclude themselves from the thought of all other than God by the magnification of inviability (*takbīr al-iḥrām*), they consider themselves forbidden from everything other than the Friend, and they know that turning towards any other is to turn one's back on the true direction of orientation (*qiblah*) and they believe that this invalidates prayer. They consider returning to one's own egoity and egotism to be one of the causes of the interruption of prayer. Since they are firmly established in this degree they are faithful to God's order, 'So the appointed time of the Lord is complete.'[9] The folk of gnosis say that the noble verse 'When the night outspread over him'[10] is a reference to the manner of the mystical traversing and spiritual wayfaring of Abraham, the intimate friend of God (*khalīl Allāh*).

An allusion to some of what you have read is contained in the noble *ḥadīth*, reported in *al-Ilal* with a chain of transmission from Hishām al-Ḥakam[11]

7 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, p. 19. *Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXI, p. 230.

8 Q.6:79.

9 The author is making an allusion to the Qur'ānic verse 142 in *sūrah* 7.

10 Q.6:76.

11 Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179 AH/795) was a follower of the imāms Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and

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from Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā, peace be upon them. He reports:

> I asked, 'For what reason is it better to offer the opening magnification (*takbīr*) seven times?' He replied, 'O Hishām! Verily, God created seven heavens, seven earths, and seven veils. When He took His Prophet, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, on the night journey and when he was suspended at two bows'-length or nearer, one of His veils was removed for him. So the Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, offered up the magnification to God (*takbīr*) and began to say the words of 'God is most magnified'. When the second veil was lifted for him he offered up a magnification to God, and he continued in this way until he reached the seventh veil and then he magnified God by offering seven magnifications. It is for this reason that God is magnified at the beginning of prayer with the offering up of seven magnifications of 'God is most magnified'.[12]

It is clear from the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet's ascension to heaven that the light of majesty was illuminated three times for the Seal of the Prophets, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, during the opening magnifications. Just as the delimited lights (*al-anwār al-taqyīdī*) were illuminated three times for Abraham and it was after this that the arrival was attained.[13] In the following *ḥadīth* it also says, 'When he finished the magnification and the saying of God is magnified, then God, may He be glorified and exalted, said: "Now you have arrived unto Me", and He called me by my name.'[14]

Mūsā al-Kāẓim and an important early theologian amongst the Shīʿah.

12 Ibn Bābawayh, *ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ*, pp. 332–3.

13 The author is making an allusion to what is understood from verses 76–9 of *sūrah* 6.

14 Ibn Bābawayh, *ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ*, p. 315.

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CHAPTER 5

On Some of the Mysteries of Qur'ānic Recitation During Prayer

Qur'ānic recitation during prayer, as with the other aspects of prayer, has levels and degrees according to the degrees of the folk of worship and wayfaring. In a general manner we shall explain these levels:

Firstly there is the Qur'ānic recitation of the lay folk. The basis of this is the proper and correct pronunciation of its form. The perfection of this is the contemplation of its customary meanings and concepts.

Secondly there is the Qur'ānic recitation of the elite. This is awareness in the heart of the subtle realities of the divine word through the power of reasoning (*burhān*) or through the perfection of gnosis (*'irfān*). The perfection thereof is attained by arriving at some of the levels of the mysteries of Qur'ānic recitation.

Thirdly there is the Qur'ānic recitation of the companions of gnosis. This is the gift (*tarjumān*)[1] of one's own witnessing after the gnosis of the reality of the divine word and the divine book.

Fourthly there is the Qur'ānic recitation of the companions of the heart. This is the gift of the states of the heart after the realisation of some of the levels of the truth of the Qur'ān.

Fifthly there is the Qur'ānic recitation of the folk of nearmostness. Regarding this, broadly speaking, there are three degrees: (I) The degree of the gift of the theophanies of divine action (*al-tajalliyyāt al-fi'liyyah*) in the heart of the one nearmost to God (*walī*). (II) The gift of the theophanies of the divine names. (III) The gift of the theophanies of the divine essence. In these three degrees the reciter praises God with the tongue of God because the example of the closeness of the supererogatory acts of worship begins with the degree of the theophanies of the divine action (*al-tajalliyyāt al-af'āliyyah*); 'God comes to be the tongue of the servant.'[2] Hence, the wayfarer

1 *Tarjumān* has been translated here and in what follows as 'gift', which is a metaphysical meaning as given in Steingass' *Persian-English Dictionary*. Normally, *tarjumān* would mean interpreter or translator, as in the old popular European usage in the Middle East of 'dragoman', a word derived from *tarjumān*, meaning interpreter or translator. In these circumstances here the translation of *tarjumān* in its usual usage would seem odd. Gift as a metaphysical meaning fits better.

2 This is a well-known *ḥadīth qudsī*; see Khomeini, *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 90.

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praises God through the tongue of God, just as, in the closeness attained through obligatory acts of worship, God the High praises Himself through the tongue of the servant, 'The servant comes to be the tongue of God. 'Alī is the eye of God and the hand of God and the tongue of God the Most High.'[3] For each one of these degrees there are further levels, the detailed explanation of which is lengthy.

Summary

Therefore, since you have raised the veil and opened the doors, enter the sanctuary of magnificence and seek refuge from the mischief of the devil, who is the brigand lying in wait on the way to God through the holy degree of the greatest, all-uniting name (*al-ism al-jāmiʿ al-aʿẓam*), the Lord of the Perfect Man, and revile the devil with sincerity. If you have cast him aside while raising the hands during the offering up of magnifications and reviled him and his manifestations, consider this act of reviling more perfect than the reviling by the throwing of pebbles at the three pillars (*jamarāt*)[4] during the pilgrimage, because here while raising the hands in prayer the devil is thrown behind one's head whilst there in Minā pebbles are thrown at him while facing him, and so there it is done with pebbles whereas here by indication, that is, through raising the hands. Pebbles mean taking recourse to instruments, but the indication is conviction in the annihilation thereof.

Since you have abandoned the two universes and the two realms, consider yourself addressed by the address, '"Now you have arrived unto Me" and He called me by my name.'[5] Otherwise consider yourself on the path of the forces of the devil and a worshipper of idols. Since you have heard the divine address with the ear of insight and have been allowed into His presence, enter whilst saying, 'In the name of God' (*bismillāh*).[6] If you remember God sincerely and truthfully and have realised the reality of the name and the named according to the instruction, 'He taught the names',[7] you will be included in the address, 'My servant invokes Me.' Otherwise, you will be cast out according to the saying, 'O liar! Dost thou deceive Me?' Therefore, be silent and await the address of God, 'He praises Me.' With a sincere heart

3 Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Tawḥīd*, p. 164. * *Maʿānī al-akhbār*, p. 70.

4 These three pillars are situated in the valley of Minā outside Mecca. One of the rituals of the *Ḥajj* is the throwing of pebbles at these pillars, which represent the devil who came to Abraham three times when Abraham was undertaking to sacrifice his son for God.

5 Ibn Bābawayh, *ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ*, p. 315.

6 Q.1:1.

7 Q.2:31.

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and the purity of the esoteric confine all praise to God so that you may be included in the address, 'My servant praises Me.' Otherwise, consider yourself to be the subject of the address, 'O hypocrite!' If you entreat God truthfully through the mercy of His oft-compassionateness and ever-mercifulness, you will be proud to be the subject of the address, 'My servant praises Me.' When you invoke, 'The Master of the Day of Judgment',[8] await the call, 'My servant extols Me.' During the invocation, 'Thee only we worship and to Thee alone we pray for succour'[9] consider yourself, through the presential address, to be beyond the unseen determinates (*ghayb al-ta'ayyunāt*), even beyond the veil of the names and attributes, so that He who is beyond need is worshipped and praised through the tongue of neediness. If you are of the folk of intimacy and have abandoned your own intimateness, then leave behind the veil of yourself so that you are worthy of, 'This is between Me and My servant and My servant receives what he asks for.' Therefore, through the tongue of God request that which God has apportioned for you, and when you reach the end of the *sūrah* await, 'This is for My servant.'[10]

One of the folk of gnosis says:

> Therefore, *sūrat* al-Ḥamd is divided between God and the servant, as is understood from the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet.[11] So, from the beginning of the *sūrah* to 'Thee only we worship' is on the part of God and the verse 'Thee only we worship and to Thee alone we pray for succour' is shared between God and the servant. From there until its end, the *sūrah* specifically relates to the servant. Similarly, prayer is divided in this manner: Hence, prostration (*sujūd*) is specifically for God because the servant is in a state of annihilation (*fānī*) and the standing (*qiyām*) is for the servant because he stands before the master in service. Bowing (*rukū'*) is a state that is shared, in which the divine lights appear in the dwelling (*mawṭin*) of the servant.[12]

The present writer also maintains that as long as the servant remains in the cloak of servanthood his prayer and all his actions are on the part of the servant. When he is annihilated in God all his actions are on the part of God and he himself has no charge upon them. When he attains awareness after self-effacement and subsistence after annihilation, worship is from God in the mirror of the servant. This is not shared, rather it is 'a matter beyond the two matters'.

8 Q.1:4.

9 Q.1:5.

10 * Qummī, *Asrār al-'ibādāt wa ḥaqīqat al-ṣalāt*, p. 46.

11 * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXIX, p. 226.

12 * Qummī, *Asrār al-'ibādāt wa ḥaqīqat al-ṣalāt*, p. 47.

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Also, as long as he is a wayfarer, worship comes from the servant, and when he arrives worship comes from God. This is the meaning of the cessation of worship after arrival, 'Worship your Lord until Certainty comes to thee',[13] meaning until death. When complete death and absolute annihilation occurs God becomes the worshipper and the servant has no determination in this. This does not mean that the servant does not worship but rather that he should worship 'God who is his hearing, his sight, and his tongue'.[14] What some of the ignorant from amongst the Ṣūfīs have thought regarding this matter is wrong. When the servant returns to himself worship takes place through God in the mirror of the servant, 'And the servant is the hearing of God and the tongue of God.'[15]

13 * Q.15:99.

14 * Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 352.

15 See Khomeini, *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 122.

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CHAPTER 6

On the Mystery of Seeking Refuge in God

The reality of this is to seek refuge from the devil and his influences and guises in the degree of the all-inclusive name *Allāh* (*ism Allāh al-jāmiʿ*), which is the Lord of the Perfect Man. So, as long as the wayfarer is clothed in multiplicity and considers himself influential in affairs, he is under the charge of the devil, and his Qurʾānic recitation during prayer is done with the tongue of egotism, which is the eloquent language of the devil, and that which he utters will not be the name of God. When he goes beyond this multiplicity and does not see himself in charge and sees the splendour of God's action in manifest creation, he will obtain the first level of the seeking of refuge (*istiʿādhah*) of the folk of wayfaring. This seeking refuge is standing during prayer (*qiyām*) and the Qurʾānic recitation during prayer because these two are the degree of the unity of divine action (*al-tawḥīd al-fiʿlī*).

As for standing during prayer, as has been said, it is the mentioning of the self-subsistence of God (*qayyūmiyyah*). For the folk of nearmostness to God, realisation happens through this and the degree of suspended-hung (*tadallā*) happens through the degree of the divine volition.

Regarding Qurʾānic recitation, or in other words the mention of the name of God, which is the degree of the absolute divine volition, the confining of all praise to God and the mention of the degree of oft-compassionateness, ever-mercifulness, and dominion, the coming to the plural pronoun of 'we worship' (*naʿbudu*)[1] and 'we seek assistance' (*nastaʿīn*)[2] and the mention of the degree of adherence to the straight path without inclining towards exaggeration or renunciation, this is all in accordance with the unity of divine actions (*tawḥīd al-afʿāl*). This is understood by the folk of this way.

When the wayfarer goes beyond the multiplicity of the divine attributes, when he sees that all the names and attributes have faded away, and when he is in annihilation, the second level of seeking refuge occurs, which is seeking refuge through bowing during prayer (*rukūʿ*), and the invocation of God during it, because bowing and invocation therein are an allusion to the degree of unity of the divine attributes, whose mystery shall be drawn out, God willing.

When the abode of realisation (*dār al-taḥaqquq*) is cleansed of the fog of multiplicity, and the light and dark veils are driven aside, and total annihila-

1 Q.1:5.

2 Ibid.

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tion is brought about through the degree of unity of the divine essence, the true seeking of refuge is brought about for the wayfarer. This is seeking refuge through prostration and invocation therein, because, as will be explained, it is an indication of the degree of the unity of the divine essence. It is possible that what the Envoy, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, said alludes to those three degrees, 'I seek refuge in Thy forgiveness from Thy punishment, I seek refuge in Thy pleasure from Thy wrath, and I seek refuge in Thee from Thee.'[3] What has been explained, namely that standing and Qur'ānic recitation during prayer are an allusion to the degree of the unity of divine action (*al-tawḥīd al-fi'lī*), is not contrary to what we have explained in the third chapter of the introduction regarding the general mystery of prayer. Saying 'Thee only we worship' is the returning of the servant to God through absolute, total annihilation because for each one of the recitations, bowings, and prostrations there are degrees, and it is possible that, in accordance with each degree, there is an allusion to a degree of the three unities, but each one of them is appropriate to its own degree.

Therefore, standing during prayer (*qiyām*) is most suited to the degree of unity of divine actions, although esoterically it contains the unity of essence and attribute. This is similar to what the folk of gnosis say concerning the divisions of the names by action, attribute, and essence and, in addition to this, they consider every name to be an all-inclusive name. So, they consider a name of action to be a name, which appears exoterically as a theophany of divine action, and it is esoterically the theophany of divine attribute and essence, and it is the same for a name of attribute or essence.

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3 * Al-Aḥsā'ī, *'Awālī al-li'ālī*, vol. IV, p. 114; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. XCV, p. 417.

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CHAPTER 7

On the Mysteries of Sūrat al-Ḥamd

Know that the folk of gnosis consider the *bismillāh* of every *sūrah* to belong to each individual *sūrah*. In this respect, in my view, the *bismillāh* of every *sūrah* has its own meaning and indeed, a *bismillāh* which is uttered in any saying or action will be different from yet another *bismillāh*. The explanation of this, in a general manner, is that through the fluent interconnectedness of reality, which is the abode of realisation (*dār al-taḥaqquq*)[1] from the furthest limit of the most sublime, holy, divine intellects to the lowest extremity of the universe of prime matter and nature (*ʿālam al-hayūlī wa al-ṭabīʿah*), is the manifestation (*ẓuhūr*) of the greatest name, *Allāh*, and it is the locus of manifestation of the theophany of the absolute divine volition, which is the mother of the names of action. Just as they have said: 'Being manifests through the name *Allāh*, the Oft-Compassionate, the Ever-Merciful.'[2] So, if we consider the multiplicity of manifestations and determinates, every name appears through an action or words, which are the result of the name. The first step for the wayfarer in his journey to God is to understand in his heart that all determinates manifest through the name *Allāh*. In fact, everything is the name *Allāh*. The names differ in this kind of witnessing, and the broadness and the straightness, the encompassing and the unencompassing of every name is subject to the locus of manifestation and is subject to the mirror within which it appears. Even though the name *Allāh*, according to the principle of existence, is prior to the manifestations, constitutes them, and is the basis for their subsistence, however, with regard to the determination, it is posterior to them, as has been established in the discussion of this issue. When the wayfarer eliminates everything extraneous (*iḍāfah*) and renounces all determinates, he will reach the unity of divine action and all forms, words, and actions become a single *bismillāh* and the meaning of all becomes one.

According to the first consideration, in the Qur'ānic *sūrah*s there is no name more comprehensive (*jāmiʿ*) and encompassing than the *bismillāh* in the blessed *sūrat* al-Ḥamd, as is also made clear in the well-known *ḥadīth* attributed to the master of masters, Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, because the object of this *bismillāh* is more encompassing than the objects of the other names; as the folk of gnosis say, 'praise' (*ḥamd*) alludes to the unseen universes of the intellect, which are mere praise, and praise of God and the tongue of their

1 Here the abode of realisation is to be understood as 'all existence'.

2 See above in footnote number 5 of introduction, chapter 1. * Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah*, vol. I, p. 102.

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praise is the tongue of the essence. 'The Lord of all Realms'[3] is an allusion to the appearance of the name *Allāh* in the mirror of nature according to the degree of lordship, which is the return from defect to perfection and from matter (*mulk*) to spirit (*malakūt*), and this is specific to the substance of the material realm (*mulk*). Oft-compassionateness and ever-mercifulness are attributes specific to lordship. 'The Master of the Day of Judgment'[4] is an allusion to total return to God and the greater resurrection.

When 'the morn of eternity'[5] breaks and the light of the unveiling of aloneness illuminates the heart of the gnostic during the rising of the sun of the day of resurrection, then the presence of the absolute assists the wayfarer. Then, in the intimate gathering the holy degree is addressed with the presential address through, 'Thee only we worship and to Thee alone we pray for succour'.[6] When he returns to himself from the rapture of aloneness and regains awareness after self-effacement, he will seek the degree of his own guidance and his companions whilst traversing unto God.

So, *sūrat* al-Ḥamd is the entire chain of being (*wujūd*) in essence and knowledge, in realisation and wayfaring, in self-effacement and regaining awareness, in direction and guidance. The name that manifests this is *Allāh*, which is the greatest name and the absolute divine volition. Therefore, He is the key to the book and its end, He is its opening and its sealing, just as the name *Allāh* is the outwardness (*ẓuhūr*) and the inwardness (*buṭūn*) and the opening (*miftāḥ*) and the ending (*makhtam*). '*Allāh* is the light of the heavens and the earth.'[7] The exegesis of this *sūrah* according to the font of the folk of gnosis is as follows: Through the manifestation of the name *Allāh*, which is the degree of the absolute divine volition, the greatest divine name, and has the degree of the divine volition of oft-compassionateness, which is the expanse of absolute being, and the divine volition of ever-mercifulness, which is the expanse of the perfection of being, the realm of absolute praise and the foundation of all praise—which extends from the presence of the first unseen determination to the furthest point of the horizon of the realm of the imaginal world (*mithāl*) and is the first isthmus—is established for God, that is, for the degree of the all-uniting name (*asl-ism al-jāmi'*), which is *Allāh*. For Him is the degree of lordship and instruction of all realms, which is the degree of otherness and the degree of the appearance of nature.

This degree of lordship manifests through the oft-compassionateness and ever-mercifulness of lordship, which spreads the grace of oft-compassionate-

3 Q.1:2.

4 Q.1:4.

5 This is a reference to and direct quote from the famous Tradition of Kumayl. See above.

6 Q.1:5.

7 Q.24:35.

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ness in the places which are receptive to it, and through the manifestation of ever-mercifulness they are instructed in the cradle of prime matter (*mahd al-hayūlī*) and they reach their own specific degree. He is the 'Master of the Day of Judgment',[8] who seizes all the atoms of being through the seizing of possession and returns them to the degree of the unseen, 'As He brought you forth so shall you return.'[9] This is the entire circle of being, which is mentioned in a general manner in 'In the name of God, the Oft-Compassionate, the Ever-Merciful'[10] and which is mentioned in a detailed manner in *sūrat* al-Ḥamd, though up to the verse 'Master of the Day of Judgment'[11] the *sūrah* is purely for God, just as is alluded to in the *ḥadīth*.[12]

When the servant who is wayfaring to God, through the ladder of 'recite and ascend'[13] and ascending by means of 'Prayer is the ascension of the believer',[14] witnesses the return of all beings and the annihilation of the abode of realisation in God, and when God unveils ever-oneness for the servant, he says through the innate tongue of unity, 'Thee only we worship and to Thee alone we pray for succour.'[15] When the light of the nature of the perfect man encompasses all the partial lights, and when the act of worship and his turning is the turning of the abode of realisation, he invokes with the plural pronoun, 'We praised Him, then the angels praised Him. We hallowed Him, then the angels hallowed Him. If it were not for us the angels would not have praised Him.'[16]

Thus, when the wayfarer unhesitatingly presents himself and his egoity and egotism to the holy essence and when he effaces and erases (*maḥq*)[17] everything other than God, eternal providence encompasses him from the degree of the hidden aloneness (*aḥadī*) through the most holy effusion (*al-fayḍ al-aqdas*), and brings him to himself and helps him to recover awareness after self-effacement and returns him to his own domain in the true being (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqqānī*).[18] When he is within multiplicity he is fearful

8 Q.1:4.

9 Q.7:29.

10 Q.1:1.

11 Q.1:4.

12 * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXIX, p. 226.

13 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 606.

14 * Majlisī, *I'tiqādāt*, p. 29.

15 Q.1:5.

16 * Al-Aḥsā'ī, *'Awālī al-li'ālī*, vol. IV, p. 122; Ibn Bābawayh, *'Uyūn akhbār al-riḍā*, vol. I, p. 262; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. XXV, p. 1.

17 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī defines erasure (*al-maḥq*) as the annihilation of the being of the servant in the essence of God. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 100.

18 For the difference between true being and created being see Khomeini, *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, pp. 89–90, where he also specifies that true being

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of separation and hypocrisy and seeks his own guidance, which is absolute guidance (because all other beings are the leaves and branches of the blessed tree of the perfect man) through the straight path of humanity, which is the traversing towards the all-uniting name (*al-ism al-jāmiʿ*) and the return to the presence of the greatest name, *Allāh*, which is beyond the limitation of exaggeration and renunciation, which are for 'those upon whom is anger'[19] and 'those who are astray'.[20] Otherwise he may seek guidance through the degree of isthmuseity (*barzakhiyyah*), which is the degree wherein there is no dominance of oneness (*waḥdah*) over multiplicity and no dominance of multiplicity over oneness (*waḥdah*), and which is the central point in the veiling of oneness (*waḥdah*) through the veil of multiplicity, which is the rank of 'those upon whom is anger'[21] and is the veiling of multiplicity through oneness (*waḥdah*), which is the degree of 'those who are astray'[22] and those who are confused by the awe-inspiring majesty (*jalāl*) of His magnificence.

Summary

It is reported in *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* on the authority of Imām al-Riḍā, peace be upon him, that when he was asked about the explanation of *bismillāh*, he said: 'The meaning for anyone who says "*bismillāh*" is "I am marking myself with a mark from the marks of God" and that is an act of worship.' The reporter said: 'I asked him: "What is a mark?" He replied: "It is a sign."'[23]

It is apparent from this noble *ḥadīth* that the wayfarer must be established at the degree of the name *Allāh* during the act of worship. Ascertainment of this degree is the reality of servanthood, which is annihilation in the

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is only for the infallibles. He bases his argument on the statements made in *al-ziyārah al-jāmiʿah*—the text of which is a primary source for a clear understanding of the divinely designated status of the infallible imāms—reported from the tenth imām ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Naqī. Khomeini explains, by way of example, that true being is that of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, who, he maintains, is the hearkening, sight, and hand of God. For the only extant comprehensive commentary on *al-ziyārah al-jāmiʿah* see Aḥmad b. Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsāʾī, *Sharḥ al-ziyārah al-jāmiʿah al-kabīrah*, Beirut, 1420 AH/1999. For an excellent study on the metaphysics of Aḥmad b. Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsāʾī see Idris Samawi Hamid, *The Metaphysics and Cosmology of Process According to Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī: Critical Edition, Translation, and Analysis of Observations in Wisdom*, PhD diss., State University of New York, Buffalo, 1998.

19 Q.1:7.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Tawḥīd*, pp. 229–30.

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presence of lordship. As long as he remains in the veil of egoity and egotism he is not robed in servanthood, rather he is self-seeking and self-worshipping and the object of his worship is his own selfish caprices; 'Has thou seen him who has taken his caprice to be his god?'[24] His sight is the sight of the cursed devil, who saw Adam, peace be upon him, through the veils of his egotism and considered himself superior to him and said: 'Thou createdst me of fire, and him Thou createdst of clay'[25] and thus he was expelled from the holy court of those who are close to God. So, if the one who says *bismillāh* attributes to himself the 'mark of God' and the 'sign of God' and reaches the degree of the name, his sight will become the insight of Adam, peace be upon him, who saw that the realm of realisation (*'ālam al-taḥaqquq*)[26] is the name *Allāh* of which he himself was a result. 'And He taught Adam the names, all of them'.[27] In this state, his giving of names (*tasmiyyah*) is the giving of names to reality and it is realised through the degree of worship, which is the casting aside of selfhood and self-worship and is attachment to the holy majesty and total devotion to God; as it says in the *ḥadīth* reported by Rizām from the object of resort Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, who said: 'He cuts off the clinging of concerns from anything other than the one to whom he betakes himself, and towards whom he comes, and from whom he seeks help.'[28]

When the wayfarer is aided by the degree of the name, he will see himself immersed in divinity; 'Servanthood is substance and its essence is lordship'.[29] Thus, he sees himself as the name of God, the sign of God, and annihilated in God, and he also sees all other beings similarly. If he is a perfect nearmost one (*al-walī al-kāmil*) he is firmly established in the absolute name and he is aided in realising absolute servanthood and he becomes a true servant of God.

It is possible that the description of the servant (*'abd*) in the noble verse 'Extolled be the glory of Him who transported His servant by night'[30] is about the one who ascends to the ascension of closeness, the horizon of holiness, and the intimate gathering with the steps of servanthood and poverty, and who forsakes the dust of egotism, selfness, and insignificant self-conceit. The testimony to prophethood during the testimony uttered in prayer (*tashahhud*) comes after the testimony to servanthood, because servanthood is the

24 Q.25:43.

25 Q.7:12; Q.38:76.

26 While Khomeini speaks here of the 'realm (*'ālam*) of realisation', rather than his more usual term 'the abode (*dār*)...', this too may be understood as referring to all existence.

27 Q.2:31.

28 * Ṭāwūs, *Falāḥ al-sā'il*, p. 23.

29 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, p. 127.

30 Q.17:1.

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ladder to prophethood. During prayer, which is the ascension of the believers and the manifestation of the heavenly ascension of prophethood, it begins after the veils are lifted by means of the *bismillāh*, which is the reality of servanthood; 'Exalted be the glory of Him who transported His prophet by night by means of the ladder of absolute servanthood.' He captivated him through the steps of servanthood with the horizon of aloneness and liberated him from the domains of matter (*mulk*) and spirit (*malakūt*) and from the realms of omnipotence (*jabarūt*) and divinity (*lāhūt*). The rest of the servants, who are purified under the canopy of the shade of this light by one of the marks of God and the ladder of realisation by the name *Allāh*, whose esoteric is servanthood, attain closeness through ascension.

When the wayfarer sees that the entire circle of being is the name *Allāh* then, according to the extent of his wayfaring, he is granted access to the opening of the book of God and the key to the treasure of God. So, all praise returns to God (*ḥaqq*), i.e., to the degree of the all-uniting name (*al-ism al-jāmi'*), and he sees no superior excellence for any being because establishing superior excellence and perfection for any being other than God contradicts the vision of this naming. If he says *bismillāh* truly, he is also able to say 'Praise be to God (*al-ḥamdu lillāh*)' truly, but if, like Iblīs, he is veiled from the name in the veil of creation then he will also not be able to return praise to God. As long as he remains in the veil of egotism he will be veiled from servanthood and naming (*ismiyyah*), and as long as he is excluded from this degree he will not reach the degree of giving praise. However, if he reaches the degree of giving praise with the steps of servanthood and the reality of naming, he will also know that the quality of giving praise is established for God, and he will consider and see God both as the One who gives praise and as the One who is praised. So, as long as he sees himself as the one who gives praise and sees God as the one who is praised, he is not praising God, rather he is praising God and creation. In fact, he is only praising himself and is veiled from God and His praise. When he reaches the degree of giving praise he says, 'Thou art just as Thou hast praised Thyself',[31] and he goes beyond the veil of giving praise, which is attached and closely connected to the claim and the affirmation of the One who is praised. So, the utterance of the servant wayfaring in this degree would be as follows, 'By His name praise is for Him, from Him is praise, and for Him is praise'. This is the result of the closeness attained through supererogatory acts of worship, which has been alluded to in the noble *ḥadīth* that says, 'When I love him I become his hearing, his sight, and his tongue.'[32]

31 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, p. 9.

32 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. II, p. 352.

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Regarding the verse 'Lord of all Realms',[33] if the realms are the forms of the divine names, which are the permanent archetypes (*al-aʿyān al-thābitah*), then the degree of lordship is essential lordship (*rubūbiyyah dhātiyyah*) and it refers to the degree of essential divinity (*al-ulūhiyyah al-dhātiyyah*), which is the greatest name, *Allāh*, because the permanent archetypes are brought forth by realised knowledge through the essential theophany in the degree of oneness (*wāḥidiyyah*) subject to the all-uniting name, which is determined by the theophany of the most holy effusion. The meaning of lordship in this holy degree is a theophany in the degree of divinity, which is determined by all the names. Firstly, the perfect man is a permanent archetype and the other archetypes are determined in its shadow; and oft-compassionateness and ever-mercifulness are expressions of these archetypes from the hidden ipseity (*ghayb al-huwiyyah*) to the horizon of absolute witnessing. The innate nature of passionate love and love of total perfection is deposited in the substance from which they are created (*khamīrah*), which is the innate nature of the driving force of passionate love and possessive, overwhelming rapture, which takes hold of their forelocks and leads them to the degree of absolute reward, which means being drowned in the sea of the perfection of oneness; 'Verily, unto God all affairs return.'[34]

So, in this manner, the final aim of hope, the end of all movement, the utmost limit of yearning, the point of return of all beings, the Beloved of the universe, the Beloved of the lovers, and the desired object of those who are enraptured is the holy essence. This is so even though they themselves are veiled from seeking this and consider themselves the worshipper, the lover, the seeker, and enraptured in other objectives. This is the greatest veil of nature, which the one wayfaring to God must rend with the steps of gnosis, and as long as he does not reach this degree he has no right to say 'Thee only we worship',[35] meaning we only seek You, we do not seek other than You, we only want You, we do not praise other than You, and we seek help in all our affairs from none other than You. We all, the chain of beings and the atoms of the universe, from the lowest of the low levels of matter to the highest level of the hidden permanent archetypes, are seeking and searching for God, and everyone in every objective seeks You and with each beloved You are the one loved, 'God's nature upon which He originated mankind'.[36] 'All that is in the heavens and the earth praises Him.'[37]

33 Q.1:2.

34 Q.42:53. For an explanation of these concepts see Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah ilā al-khilāfah wa al-wilāyah*, intro., pp. 19–20.

35 Q.1:5.

36 Q.30:30.

37 Q.59:24.

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When this witnessing helps the wayfarer and he sees himself with all the parts of his being, from the material powers to the hidden mysteries, and the entire chain of being, as the lover and seeker of God, and when he demonstrates the expression of this love, he will seek help from God in arriving and guidance on the straight path, which is the path of the Lord of Man; 'Verily, my Lord is on a straight path.'[38] That path is the path of those who are bestowed with divine favour from the perfect prophets and the truthful ones, which is an expression of the returning of the permanent archetypes to the degree of *Allāh*, and annihilation in that and not annihilation in other names, which are in the limits reduction and curtailment. It is attributed to the Noble Envoy that he said: 'My brother Moses was blind in his right eye and my brother Jesus was blind in his left, and I am the possessor of two eyes.'[39] For the object of resort Moses, multiplicity prevailed over oneness (*waḥdah*) and for the object of resort Jesus, oneness (*waḥdah*) prevailed over multiplicity. For the Seal of the Envoys it is the degree of the greater isthmus, which is the middle limit and the straight path.

Up to this point, the exegesis of the *sūrah* has been established on the basis that 'all realms' (*'ālamīn*)[40] are the archetypal presences. However, if 'all realms' were to be the presence of the names of the essence, or the names of attributes, or the names of action, or the non-material realms, or the material realms, or both, or all of the above, the exegesis would differ.

Similarly, if the name *Allāh* in the noble verse '*Bismillāh*...'[41] were to be a degree other than the degree of the divine volition of the names of the essence and so on, or the permanent archetypes, or the archetypes brought forth into being, or the hidden and witnessed realms, or the perfect man, then the exegesis of the entire *sūrah* would differ. Similarly, if the name *Allāh* is taken as essential or manifested divinity, and if the 'Oft-Compassionate' and 'Ever-Merciful' in the *bismillāh* are understood to be the attributes of the terms 'name' (*ism*) and *Allāh*, the exegesis of the noble *sūrah* would differ. Equally, if the letter *bā'* of *bismillāh* is for seeking help or is invoked for assistance or companionship, or is connected to *ẓahara*,[42] or relates to the *sūrah* itself, or relates to each of the parts of the *sūrah*, different meanings would be realised. Similarly, also in accordance with the degrees of the reciters of the Qur'ān, whether it be from the veil of multiplicity, or while being overwhelmed by oneness (*waḥdah*), or when regaining awareness after self-ef-

38 Q.11:56.

39 Cited in Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī, *Ta'līqah 'alā al-fawā'id al-riḍawiyyah*, n.p., n.d., p. 71.

40 Q.1:2.

41 Q.1:1.

42 See the beginning of this chapter regarding the manifestation of being through the name of God. Also see chapter 1 of the author's introduction.

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facement, or while in one of the other degrees which have been previously mentioned, the exegesis of the *sūrah* would necessarily differ. Encompassing all these different aspects through the actual exegesis of the Qur'ān, which is the comprehensive divine word, is beyond the capacity of those such as this writer. 'Verily, the Qur'ān is known by the one to whom it is addressed',[43] and that which has been mentioned has been done so on the basis of different possible understandings. And God is the guide.

43 *Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. XLVI, p. 349.

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CHAPTER 8

On an Allusion to the Exegesis of the Noble Sūrat al-Tawḥīd

Let it be know that the possible understandings of the *bismillāh* of this *sūrah* and what is connected to it are the same as that which has been given concerning the noble *sūrat* al-Ḥamd. However, at this point, with regard to the connection between *bismillāh* and *qul huwa* ('say He'),[1] whether saying it from the degree of the holy essence insofar as He is, or from the degree of the hidden ipseity (*ghayb al-huwiyyah*), or from the degree of the names of the essence, the wayfarer must necessarily be in a state of annihilation in every single one of these degrees, and he should say the noble word *huwa* with the complete removal of the determinates of the names and attributes.[2] So, it is possible that the names in this degree are a hidden theophany, which through the most holy effusion connects the essence and the names of the essence, or the hidden and the names of the attributes. Therefore, the speaker said: 'O Muḥammad! You are detached from the horizon of multiplicity and determination, and through the steps of passionate love and affection you have forsaken the dust of the multiplicity of names, attributes, and determinates, and through the degree of the theophany of the most holy effusion in the degree of the hidden ipseity and pure oneness (*waḥdah*) say "*huwa*".' This indicates either the degree of the essence, the hidden ipseity, or the names of the essence. Equally, that is the absolute hidden and that is *Allāh*, which is the degree that encompasses all the names and the presence of aloneness. This multiplicity of the names does not contradict absolute oneness (*waḥdah*) and singularity (*basāṭah*). Hence, He is alone (*aḥad*). Nonetheless, He has perfection in multiplicities and, in fact, He is the origin of multiplicity, He is the sublime (*ṣamad*) and absolutely free from defects. Thus, He has no quiddity, is not contingent (*imkān*), and has no need (*jawf*). Therefore, nothing is separate from Him and He is not separate from anything. The entire abode of realisation in manifestation and theophany ends with Him and it is in being, in attributes, and in action, annihilated in His essence, names, and attributes. He has no like, example, equal, or partner.

Therefore, *huwa* is an allusion to the degree of the hidden (*ghayb*) as is reported in a *ḥadīth*.[3] The name *Allāh* is an allusion to the degree of the names of perfection and oneness (*wāḥidiyyah*), which is the degree of the

1 Q.112:1.

2 Also see Khomeini, *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 113.

3 Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Tawḥīd*, p. 88.

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greatest name. From *aḥad* to the end of the *sūrah* there are names of transcendence. Hence, this noble *sūrah* relates to God in every degree and it is possible that *huwa* is an allusion to the essence insofar as He is He and *aḥad* is an allusion to the names of the essence. 'He is the possessor of knowledge.'

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CHAPTER 9

On Some of the Mysteries of Bowing During Prayer

This, according to the elite, is to leave the station of standing in prayer (*qiyām*) by divine command (*amr*) and to be steadfast (*istiqāmah*)[1] in service, which according to the folk of gnosis necessitates claim (*daʿwā*).

According to the folk of love (*ahl al-maḥabbah*), it is to leave the station of disloyalty and sinfulness, and to enter the station of submissiveness, poverty, humility, and self-abasement, which is the station of those of the middle way (*mutawassiṭūn*).

According to the companions of the heart (*aṣḥāb al-qulūb*), it is to leave the station of standing for God through the degree of standing through God, and to leave the station of witnessing the self-subsistent (*qayyūmiyyah*) through the witnessing of the lights of majesty, and to leave the degree of the unity of divine actions through the degree of the unity of the divine names, and to leave the degree of suspended-hung (*tadallā*) through the degree of two bows'-length (*qāba qawsayn*), just as prostration is the degree of or nearer (*aw adnā*).[2] After this chapter, an allusion to that shall be made, God willing.

So, the reality of standing (*qiyām*) is to be suspended-hung through the self-subsistence of God and arrival at the horizon of the divine volition. The reality of bowing (*rukūʿ*) is the completion of the arc of servanthood and its annihilation in the light of the majesty of lordship. The bowing of the perfect nearmost ones is realised through this degree, according to their rank and their portion from the presence of the all-encompassing, all-inclusive, essential, and attributive divine names, the details of which are beyond the capacity of these pages.

Thus, when the wayfarer reaches the station of bowing, which is the station of annihilation of the names, he says the magnification of God and raises his hands in the same manner as he did at the time of the opening magnifications of God. This magnification and raising of the hands is the esoteric aspect of one of the opening magnifications of God. The magnification of God for the prostration is also thus. In this degree, which is from the degrees that include the servant and which accompanies him to the end of his wayfaring, he magnifies God beyond description. With his own hand he removes and forsakes the degree of suspended-hung, servanthood, and

1 'Abd al-Razzāq supplies nine separate types of steadfastness (*al-istiqāmah*). See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 236–7.

2 See Q.53:8–9.

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subsistence through self-subsisting, which is not devoid of the semblance of endurance and claim (*daʿwā*) and turns empty-handed towards the station of bowing. During the annihilation of the station of two bows'-length the light of the majesty of the throne of the presence of ever-oneness and aloneness theophanises in his heart and he exalts and glorifies God, and considers himself unworthy of magnifying God. So, with a fearful heart and the embarrassment of falling short in fulfilling the duty of this station, which is one of the great stations of the folk of unity (*tawḥīd*), he accomplishes this by fulfilling the duties, the best of which is to describe God majestically, which happens after the exalting of God in all the stations of nearmostness. After that, he accomplishes this by praising God, which is an allusion to the unity of the divine attributes in the degree of the essence.

The tongue of the servant in this degree, while exalting, venerating, and praising God, is the tongue of God. Just as it is reported in the following *ḥadīth*: 'When the verse "Then praise the name of thy Lord, the Almighty"[3] was revealed, the Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, said: "Ordain that to be in the bowing."'[4]

Some of that which has been mentioned in this degree has been alluded to in the *ḥadīth* regarding the prayer of the Prophet during his heavenly ascension. After the Prophet was commanded to bow, he was told, 'And so, look at My throne.' The Envoy of God said: 'I looked at a majesty which overcame me; I fainted; then I was inspired to say "Praise be to my Lord, the Almighty, with His praise", because of the grandeur of what I saw. When I said this, my unconscious state lifted until I had repeated it seven times. Then I returned to my former self.'

'Throne' can have a variety of meanings, and in this degree it probably is intended to mean the throne of ever-oneness, and the majesty of the degree of oneness, and the presence of the names and attributes, all of which is the throne of the essence. It is possible that the unconscious state of the Prophet alludes to the degree of annihilation in the presence of majesty and the casting aside of egotism. Similarly, overcoming the self is also pertinent to this degree and therefore, glorification, veneration, and praising are done through the tongue of God. The inspiration of the holy essence is for the sake of the vision of this majesty and grandeur in the presence of the oneness and aloneness of the drawing together of the names.

Let it be know that for those arriving at the degree of closeness at the beginning of the theophanies—even though they are theophanies of love—there is amazement and bewilderment, which shake and devastate their

3 Q.56:74.

4 Ibn Bābawayh, *ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ*, p. 333. * Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil al-shīʿah*, vol. IV, p. 944.

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pure hearts under the lights of the theophany of majesty. If the hearts do not have any more capacity and ability they remain in this bewilderment and amazement until the end; 'My nearmost ones are under My cloak, no one knows them save Me.'[5] Among the angels such a class is also found, which are known as the 'bewildered angels' (*al-malā'ikah al-muḥayyamah*). If the receptivity of the hearts, which is one of the primary gifts of the most holy effusion, is increased, then, after this self-effacement, bewilderment, amazement, incomprehension, obliteration, agitation, fear, dumbfounding, perplexity, and loss of consciousness, that receptivity will be helped gradually by the state of stillness, wakefulness, awareness, alertness, and repose until a state of complete awareness is realised. In this degree, which is the degree of investiture, they become worthy of more elevated theophanies. In the same way, the theophanies take place in accordance with their hearts until they arrive at the utmost limit of closeness and perfection. If they are from the perfect ones, the state of the greater isthmus aids them. This inspiration, which entered the devoted, pure, Aḥmadian, Muḥammadian heart from the presence of the unseen, perhaps was of subtle theophanies to comfort that pure light because of the unconsciousness caused by the theophany of majesty.

Summary

According to the authority of *Misbāḥ al-sharī'ah*, Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

> A servant of God does not truly bow (*rukū'*) save that God the exalted adorns him with the light of His magnificence, shades him in the shade of His awe-inspiring majesty, and clothes him in the garment of His chosen ones. Bowing is foremost and prostration is second. And so whosoever comes forth with the meaning of the foremost is appropriate for the second. In the bowing there is training (*adab*) and in the prostration there is closeness (*qurb*). Whosoever accomplishes not the training is not suited for closeness. And so bow a humble bowing to God with a heart that is humble and fearful under His sovereignty, a heart that lowers all the limbs of the body to Him, fearfully and sadly because of what it has missed of the availments of those who bow. It is reported that al-Rabī' b. Khuthaym[6] used to spend all night till dawn in vigil in a single inclining of prayer. In the morning he would rise up and say, 'Ah! The pure ones

5 See al-Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī Baḥr al-'Ulūm (attr.), *Risālah fī al-sayr wa al-sulūk*, ed. Ḥasan Muṣṭafawī, Qum, 1401 AH/1980, p. 31.

6 Al-Rabī' b. Khuthaym was a Kufan well known for his piety, who died c. 63 AH/682.

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> have gone ahead and we have been separated.' Complete your bowing by straightening your back, for your zeal in undertaking His service would have been diminished were it not for His help. Flee with your heart from the whisperings, deceptions, and tricks of the devil. For God the High raises up his servants in accordance with their humility before Him and He guides them to the roots of humility and submissiveness in accordance with the awareness of His majesty in their hearts.[7]

In this noble *ḥadīth*, there are also allusions to some of what has been mentioned regarding the bowing. Such as it is possible that the 'adorning' (*tazyīn*) of the servant with the 'light of the magnificence of God' (*nūr bahā' Allāh*) is an allusion to the realisation of the degree of the names and attributes according to the states of the wayfarers because 'magnificence' (*bahī*) comes from the names of the attributes; just as the 'shading' (*iẓlāl*) in the 'shade of majesty' (*ẓilāl al-kibriyā'*) is the annihilation of the servant under the great light of majesty; and the 'clothing' (*takassī*) in the 'garment of the chosen ones' (*kiswat al-aṣfīyā'*) might be an allusion to subsistence (*baqā'*) after this annihilation, because being chosen is in accordance with the presence of the most holy effusion of God and is of the primary favours and gifts, since the degree of annihilation of servanthood in divinity, which is the reality of lordship and the substance of servanthood, is realised through wayfaring; but, being chosen by God and being clothed in the garment of the chosen ones, which is the degree of being bestowed with the robe of prophethood, does not come under the wayfaring of servanthood but under being chosen by lordship. The primary nature of bowing and the secondary nature of prostration, and the connection to the appropriateness of entering the station of prostration through the entering into the station of bowing and fulfilling their duty, emphasises what has been mentioned. The training for absolute closeness, which is attained in the station of prostration, is realised through the reality of the divine names and attributes and annihilation in His presence.

As for the statement of the object of refuge, Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, 'And so bow...';[8] it is the model for the manner of bowing for those of the middle way among the folk of wayfaring. This, according to this *ḥadīth*, is comprised of several matters:

One of these is that, during the entire station of bowing with his heart, fearful and submissive and under the sovereignty of majesty and grandeur, the wayfarer is, in all his inward elements and outward bodily parts, responsive, and is fearful of being deprived of the degree of those who bow and

7 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, p. 21. *Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXII, p. 108.

8 Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXII, p. 108.

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being excluded from this noble station, and in every state obtained he should consider himself helpless and incapable. Just as was reported of Rabīʿ b. Khuthaym, perhaps the eternal favour and the inclusive mercy of God, may He be glorified and exalted, may encompass his state and set aright the shortcomings, that he might achieve a little of the bowing of the folk of gnosis and the companions of the heart.

Another of these matters is that he should straighten his back while bowing and seek freedom from the crooked sovereignty of the soul, and step on its desire and vision, and remove the rust of his desire from the mirror of his own heart and remove the undertakings of his egotism and egoity, because until he sees himself standing through the command of God and taking aspiring steps in this court, he will be deprived of the availments of bowing and the degree of those who bow. When he crushes the head of desire he comes under divine help, 'and there is no strength or power save in God'.

Another of these matters is that he should safeguard the heart from devilish thoughts, deceptions, and tricks, which in this degree, in accordance with the state of the folk of wayfaring, differ, and during annihilation in the names these thoughts colour him.

In short, the path of guidance and wayfaring is one of humility, submissiveness, and abasement before the sovereignty of majesty, which in every degree in some way is exhibited in the heart of the wayfarer. The more the light of majesty and grandeur illuminates the heart and the more that the lights of the theophanies overwhelm the secrets of the heart, the more humility, submissiveness, abasement, and servanthood increases. God is the guide.

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CHAPTER 10

On the Mystery of Raising the Head after Bowing

The raising of the head after bowing is the turning away from the multiplicity of the names, annihilation in the attributes, and being confined to and made to stand (*tawqīf*) in these degrees, because this is also a part of the veils of light which are between the servant and God. Indeed, the permanent archetype of the servant in the presences of knowledge is also in this degree one of the veils; 'the perfection of unity is the negation of His attributes.'[1]

So, when the wayfarer is aided by the state of awareness during the annihilation of the attributes, he finds himself turning towards shortcoming and leaves the station of bowing, which is the witnessing of the multiplicity of the names and a diminishing of unity. When he listens to the praises of the angels of God, or rather all beings, he says through the tongue of God, 'God hears whomsoever praises Him.'[2]

When he straightens up from multiplicity and stands absolutely firm, he becomes worthy of the degree of closeness and turns towards the degree of intimacy.

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1 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 140–1.

2 This formula is repeated while standing, after having performed the bowing and before proceeding to prostration.

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CHAPTER 11

On the Mystery of Prostration

This, according to the folk of mystery (*ahl al-sirr*), is the mystery of the complete prayer and the complete mystery of prayer, and it is the last station of closeness and the furthest limit of arrival. Indeed, this must not be considered in terms of degrees and stations. For its companions it is a state and time in which all allusions are severed and all tongues become dumb, and all explanations of this degree fall short, and anyone who alludes to it is uninformed of this and 'he who was informed no news came back from him',[1] and that which has been mentioned or is mentioned regarding this degree is by those who are veiled; or rather it, itself, is one of the causes of the veils.

The gnostic scholar al-Anṣārī[2] said:

> As for the third unity of God, it is the unity which God has made unique to himself and it is worthy of His status. He shows a glimpse of it to the hearts of a group of His chosen ones and He makes their tongues unable to describe it and He makes them incapable of explaining it. That which is alluded to, by the tongues of those who allude to it, is the idea that it is the annihilation of momentary existence (*isqāṭ al-ḥadath*) and the establishment of the eternal. Given the fact that this allusion to that unity is a cause, that unity would only be possible through the annihilation of momentary existence... This explanation of His unity adds to its hiddenness, and the description of His unity adds to its estrangement, and the exposition [of His unity causes] difficulty...
>
> No one unites the One with any individual one,
> When everyone who unites with Him is a rejecter.
> The unity of the one who speaks of His qualities,
> Is a deprivation that the One rejects.
> His unity is His unity,
> And the description of the one who describes Him is heresy.[3]

Thus, it is not possible to reveal the mystery of prostration, which is an allu-

1 * This is taken from a poem by Sa'dī.

2 He refers here to Khwājah 'Abdullāh Anṣārī (d. 481 AH/1088), the well-known scholar and spiritual master of Khurāsān in the eleventh century.

3 For a detailed analysis of these verses see al-Āmulī's *Kitāb naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 366–7.
* Anṣārī, *Manāzil al-sā'irīn*, 1315 SH/1936 see chapter concerning *tawḥīd*.

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sion to the last stages of unity and ends in the realisation of the degree of no degree, which the noble words 'or nearer' allude to, according to the way of the folk of gnosis. What we are alluding to in this degree lies behind seventy thousand veils of light and seventy thousand veils of darkness, not one of which is revealed to the heart of those of us who have remained aloof from the way of the folk of truth and reality. In this state of apathy, feebleness, weakness, and death, which we are now in, there is also no hope of goodness, unless God the High gives us a gift of mercy from the treasures of His munificence, extends His favour, breathes the breath of life into our dead hearts, and bestows a spark of the angelic realm in our feeble hearts, so that what remains of our life may compensate for bygone days and so that we may benefit from some of the mysteries of the prayer of the folk of spiritual poverty.

In short, according to the folk of gnosis and the companions of the heart, prostration is to close the eyes to all other, to die to all multiplicity—even the multiplicity of the divine names and attributes—and to be annihilated in the presence of the essence. In this degree in the hearts of the nearmost ones there is neither mark of servanthood nor any indication of the sovereignty of lordship, and God the High Himself, in the being of the servant, is established by the divine command (*amr*), 'And so, He is his hearing and his sight, rather there is no hearing, no sight, no listening, and no insight. Allusion to this degree is cut short.'[4]

With regard to this, in accordance with the states of the divine sages (*'ulamā' bi Allāh*) there are degrees and stages, which in a general and complete manner are as follows:

Firstly, there is the degree of comprehending this degree through knowledge and speculation by way of contemplation and through the steps of reason and knowledge. This is the stage of the folk of the greatest veil, in other words the scholars and philosophers.

Secondly, there is the degree of faith, the perfection of which is reposedness. This is the degree of the believers and the lords of certainty.

Thirdly, there is the degree of the folk of witnessing and the companions of the heart, who witness absolute annihilation through the light of witnessing, and the presence of complete unity theophanises in their hearts.

Fourthly, there is the degree of the folk of realisation and the perfect nearmost ones, who are consumed in the realisation of the degree of sheer oneness (*waḥdah*), for whom the multiplicity of two bows'-length has been removed from the space between, and who, through the essential ipseity (*al-huwiyyah al-dhātiyyah*) in all its configurations, are consumed in the spring of totality (*'ayn al-jam'*), lost in the light of eternity, and who vanish

4 See Khomeini, *Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa miṣbāḥ al-uns*, p. 112.

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in aloneness and are annihilated in the hidden ipseity (*ghayb al-huwiyyah*). So, absolute self-effacement gives assistance, complete dumbfoundment is attained, total annihilation takes place, complete unconsciousness occurs, and the dust of servanthood is removed from the space between.

If the vessel of the heart of the wayfarer is narrow, and if the degree of his receptivity, which in accordance with a theophany is given through the most holy effusion in the presence of knowledge, is lacking, he will remain for eternity in this unconsciousness and self-effacement, and will not return to the state of awareness. Perhaps 'My nearmost ones are under My cloak, no one knows them save Me'[5] is an allusion to this group of the folk of God. However, if his heart is capacious and if the theophany of the most holy effusion has descended upon it, he will not remain in this state of self-effacement and he will recover from this unconsciousness through subtle theophanies, and the state of investiture and reposedness (*ṭama'nīnah*) will help him, and he will return to the state of awareness after self-effacement. In this degree, he will witness God in every exoteric, esoteric, subtle, and overwhelming aspect. On entering the endless sea of oneness (*waḥdah*) he will not be annihilated by the theophany through the covering of multiplicity, and on entering the presence of multiplicity in no way will a veil come between him and the presence of aloneness. Creation is not a veil of God for him, as it is for those of us who are veiled and excluded, nor is God a veil of creation, as it is for those who have arrived through the annihilation of lordship and those who are annihilated in the presence of aloneness.

In this sublime degree the wayfaring of the wayfarer is of no effect and the steps of servanthood are completely cut off. A spiritual gnostic has alluded from this aspect to these two degrees when he says:

> Through acts of worship it is possible to be divine,
> Moses could not be God's speaker (*kalīm Allāh*).

In the first hemstitch, he is alluding to the degree of the folk of wayfaring and the companions of arrival, which is entered through the steps of servanthood. In the second hemistich, he is alluding to the state of awareness after self-effacement, which is entirely beyond the horizon of servanthood. In accordance with the language of one of the folk of gnosis, whilst alluding to the theophany of this most holy effusion, he states, 'All fear the end whereas I am afraid of the beginning.'[6] In the noble traditions there are ample allusions to this degree. This is of the greatest mysteries of 'predestination' (*qadr*), the folk of

5 See Baḥr al-'Ulūm (attr.), *Risālah fī al-sayr wa al-sulūk*, p. 31.

6 The author here refers to Khwājah 'Abdullāh Anṣārī.

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which have sealed their lips against disclosing it, and they are not permitted to express it.

In sum, after self-effacement the folk of awareness are not veiled from what is hidden and witnessed, their own being is through true being, and they witness the universe through true being and say, 'I did not see anything except that I saw God before it, after it, and with it.'[7]

No single one of the veils of the theophanies of the essence, names, and actions veils them, rather they also witness the theophanies of the essence and attributes in the theophanies of actions. Similarly, they witness the theophanies of actions and attributes in the theophanies of the essence, and in the theophanies of the attributes they witness the other two. An allusion has been made to some of that whilst mentioning the *ḥadīth* about prayer during the Prophet's heavenly ascension, where it is referred to after the completion of bowing and an explanation of its mysteries:

> And so He said: 'Raise your head'; then I raised my head and so I looked at a thing which took away my reason. Then I turned to the ground with my face and my hands and I was inspired to say, 'Glory be to my Lord, the Most High, and unto Him be praise', because of the exaltedness of what I had beheld. And so I repeated it seven times and I returned to myself. Whenever I said one of these invocations my lack of consciousness lessened. Then I sat, and prostration commenced in which I said: 'Glory be to my Lord, the Most High, and unto Him be praise.' The sitting between the two prostrations commenced as a rest from unconsciousness and as an exaltation of what I had seen. Then my Lord, may He be exalted and glorified, inspired me, and my soul asked me to raise my head. I raised it and looked towards that exaltedness. And so I lost consciousness and fell down and my face and hands turned to the ground. I said: 'Glory be to my Lord, the Most High, and unto Him be praise.' I repeated it seven times, then I raised my head and sat down before standing to praise the vision of that exaltedness. Due to this there came about two prostrations and an inclining of prayer and due to that the sitting before the standing was very brief...[8]

Praise be to God. What mysteries, which cannot be expressed by the pen, have been deposited in this noble *ḥadīth*, which causes the hand to fall short in the hope of explaining it? This light of majesty, which the Prophet witnessed while bowing and which caused him to become unaware of himself, and that which

7 * Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *'Ilm al-yaqīn*, vol. I, p. 49.

8 Ibn Bābawayh, *'Ilal al-sharā'i'*, vol. II, p. 316.

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he witnessed after the station of bowing—which he did not even describe as majesty—was it from the names of the essence, or was it the theophany of the names without veils? Was the repetition of looking at exaltedness for the sake of investiture, or does it have another mystery? By which name did God the High inspire the Prophet when he was in a state of unconsciousness and struck by divine light, which resulted in glorifying and describing exaltedness, which is the first name of the essence, which God has chosen for Himself and which resulted in praising because praise is one of the necessities of theophany in multiplicity? God is the knower.

Summary

It is reported on the authority of the *Miṣbāḥ al-sharīʿah* that Imām al-Sādiq, peace be upon him, said:

> By God, whosoever performs the true reality of prostration will not suffer loss even if it is only once in his life. There will be no success for the one who, alone with his Lord in the like of that state, is as one who deceives himself, being negligent and careless of the intimacy of this world and the comfort of the next, which God has laid down for those who prostrate. There is never any distance from God for the one who rightly draws himself close to God in his prostration. There is never any closeness for the one who is evil in his manner and who destroys his own sanctity by attaching his heart to any other than Him while prostrating. Therefore prostrate in humility and lowliness to God the High. He knows that he has been created from dust, upon which creatures have trodden, and that He took you from a drop which everyone regards as unclean, and He formed it before when it was not. God ordained the meaning of prostration as a means of closeness to Him through the heart, the mystery, and the spirit. Whosoever is close to Him is far from anything other than Him. Do you not see that in the exoteric world the state of prostration is only equivalent to hiding from everything and veiling oneself from all that the eyes see? It is the same for the esoteric world. The heart of whomsoever, in the course of the prayer, is attached to anything other than God the High is close to that thing and distant from the reality of what God wishes from him in his prayer. 'God has not assigned to any man two hearts within his breast.'[9] The Envoy of God, may God bless him and his descendants, said that God the High said: 'I do not look at the heart of a

9 Q.33:4.

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> servant without knowing of the love of true devotion in it to obedience to Me for My sake and a desire for My pleasure. Otherwise, I would turn away from his affairs. Whosoever is occupied with anything other than Me is of those who make a mockery of themselves and his name is written in the register of those who lose.'[10]

Reflect upon this noble *ḥadīth* and do not consider the prayer of the folk of God to be like our prayer. The reality of being in solitude with God is to abandon all other and even the self (*nafs*), which is one of the greatest others and the thickest of veils. As long as man is occupied with himself he is heedless of God and far be it that he be in solitude with God.

If, throughout one's life, in the course of only a single prostration true solitude is achieved, it will compensate for the losses in the rest of one's life, and the favour of God will aid him and he will be removed from the circle of the assembly of the devil. If his heart is occupied with any other during the state of prostration, which is an expression of abandoning otherness and rejecting egotism, he will be attached to the circle of hypocrites and the folk of deception. One should seek refuge in God the High from the trickery of the self and the devil, and from loss, disappointment, and humiliation in the court of lordship.

That which has been bestowed upon those who prostrate is the pleasure of the intimacy of the Beloved in the world, which is better for them than the world and that which is in it, and it is the unveiling of the veils and the bestowal of special graces in the hereafter, which is the coolness of the eyes of the nearmost ones.

Therefore, we who are destitute and bewildered in the valley of misguidance and whose heads are intoxicated by the goblet of negligence and self-worship are excluded from the prayer of the folk of gnosis and prostration and the companions of the heart. It is good that we keep in mind the state of our faults and shortcomings and our own abjectness and baseness, are regretful of our state of deprivation, lament at the manner of our veiledness, and seek refuge in God the High from this loss and from the sovereignty of the self and the devil. Perhaps a state of constrainment will help and the holy essence will respond to those who are constrained, 'He who answers the constrained, when he calls unto Him, and removes the evil'[11] So, in a constrained and agitated state and with a dejected and sad heart we should place our heads in the dust of humility, which is the origin of our creation, and we should remember the realms of our humility and poverty, and seek and

10 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, pp. 22–3. * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXII, p. 136.

11 Q.27:62.

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entreat with our mute eloquence God the High, who is the granter of blessings, the one who compensates for our faults: O Lord, we are in the dark veils of the realm of nature and commit great sins, of worshipping desires and self-seeking, and the devil has influence in our veins, skin, and blood; from head to toe we are under the sovereignty of the devil and we have no choice but to seek refuge in Your holy essence from the hands of this powerful foe. You Yourself help us please and turn our hearts towards You. O God, our turning to any other than You is not out of mockery. Who are we and what are we that we should mock or be arrogant in the absolute holy court of the King of Kings. Yet, our own shortcomings and the faults of our veiled hearts have turned us away from You. If it were not for Your protection and refuge, we would remain in our own wretchedness for eternity and we would have no way to salvation. O God, what are we? The prophet, David, peace be upon him, said: 'If it was not for Your protection I would have sinned!'

A Second Summary

It is reported in the *ḥadīth*, 'When the verse "Praise the name of thy Lord, the Exalted"[12] was revealed, the Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, said: "Include this in your prostration."'[13] It is reported in a *ḥadīth* in *al-Kāfī* that, 'The first name that God took for Himself was "the Exalted (*al-ʿalī*), the Mighty" (*al-ʿaẓīm*).'" Perhaps this is the exaltedness of the essence, which, according to the sincere folk of gnosis, concerns the presence of the names of the essence in the degree of aloneness. Glorification in this degree means the transcendence of God from the multiplicity of the names. The degree of lordship means lordship through the most holy effusion, which the shaykh alluded to when he said 'the receiver of His most holy effusion'.[14]

What is realised through the invocation of prostration, according to the font of the nearmost ones, is the glorification of the multiplicity of oneness and the turning towards essential lordship, which is realised by a theophany through the most holy effusion and the seeking of refuge in the names 'the First, the Most High, the Most Exalted (*al-awwal, al-ʿalī, al-aʿlā*)', and praising, glorifying, and describing all take place through the tongue of the essence in the presence of aloneness by breaking the looking-glass and the mirror. Reposedness in this degree is to be bestowed with the investiture of this presence. Similarly, the raising of the head is also to be bestowed with the

12 Q.87:1.

13 Ibn Bābawayh, *ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ*, p. 333.

14 * Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, Mashhad, 1361 SH/1982, see the chapter regarding the wisdom of Adam.

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investiture, and intimacy with other theophanies.

Prostration on the earth is an allusion to the state of realisation, and the degree of realisation of the union between the exoteric and the esoteric and the first and the last, 'To him who has a heart',[15] He who in heaven is God and on earth is God,[16] He is the First and the Last, the Exoteric and the Esoteric.'[17]

Through prostrating on the earth the circle of the perfection of man is completed. Being bestowed with the investiture of this degree is the total perfection of the perfect man. This is the reality of the ascension to all the names and archetypes, and at this point the mystery of true prayer appears in the hearts of the folk of the heart, and the mystery of 'There is no creature that crawls, but He takes it by the forelock. Surely my Lord is on a straight path'[18] becomes apparent. All thanks be to Him at the beginning and at the end.

15 Q.50:37.
16 Q.43:84.
17 Q.57:3.
18 Q.11:56.

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CHAPTER 12

On the Mystery of the Testimony and the Invocation of Peace in Prayer

Let it be know that, just as the prostration on the dust is to return to multiplicity without being veiled from oneness (*waḥdah*) through posture and practice, the testimony and the invocation of peace is to return to this through word and remembrance. Due to this, in the testimony there is, firstly, the testimony to divinity and ever-oneness and the negation of any partnership with it, accompanied with praise and the returning of all praise to the holy essence of the greatest name, *Allāh*. After this, there is the turning to the degree of the servanthood of the absolute nearmost one, Muḥammad, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, and to the degree of his prophethood, which corresponds to the theophanies of the essence and actions in the mirror of multiplicity. The greeting of peace is for the Prophet. Then, it is the return of the wayfarer to himself and the seeking of peacefulness for himself and for the devoted servants of God during the return from this perilous journey; 'Peace be upon me, the day I was born and the day I die and the day I am raised up alive.'[1] This greeting is for the day of resurrection and the return from true death. After that, he turns towards all the angels of God, the prophets, and the angelic powers that have accompanied him on this journey and he seeks from God the High their peace during this return from the wayfaring, just as is alluded to in the *ḥadīth* about the prayer of the Prophet during his heavenly ascension where it is said:

> Then I turned around and, behold, I was in the ranks of the angels, the prophets, and the envoys. He said to me, 'O Muḥammad! Greet them with a greeting of peace.' And so I said: 'peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you.' He said: 'O Muḥammad! I am the peace and the greeting; the mercy and the blessings are you and your descendants.' Then, my Lord, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, ordered me not to turn to my left.[2]

Perhaps the command of God the High, may He be glorified and exalted, not to turn to the left alludes to not turning towards 'what follows from creation' or towards untrue, dark things. It is necessary that the wayfarer turn completely

1 Q.19:33, these are the words of Jesus from the Qur'ānic *sūrat* Maryam.

2 Ibn Bābawayh, *'Ilal al-sharā'i'*, p. 316.

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to the right side of things, which contains the aspect of the light of the Lord, 'And the earth shall shine with the light of its Lord.'[3]

The reality of peacefulness during this journey of ascension means that the wayfarer is to be free of the self (*nafs*) and egotism. If he gains peacefulness at this stage, he will also have peace in the following stage, which is granted through the grace of God. This peacefulness means to turn towards the right and not to the left, which is the origin of being veiled and crookedness.

Summary

It is said on the authority of *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah* that Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

> The testimony (*tashahhud*) is a eulogy for God the High. And so, be a servant to Him in your heart, be humble before Him in action, just as you are a servant to Him through words and claims. Join the truth of your tongue to the purity of the truth of your heart. For He created you a servant and He ordered you to worship Him with your heart and your tongue and your limbs, so as to realise your servitude to Him through His lordship over you; and to know that the forelocks of the creatures are in His hand. They have no breath or perception, save through His power and His volition; they are incapable of carrying out the least thing in His kingdom without His permission and will. God, may He be glorified and exalted, said: 'Thy Lord creates whatsoever He wills and He chooses; they have not the choice in their affairs, glory be to God! High be He, exalted above that which they associate with Him.'[4] And so be a servant, thankful in deed, as you are a servant, one who invokes in word and claim. Join the truth of your tongue with the purity of your heart, for He created you; and so, glory be to Him, that will and volition should be for anyone save through His preceding will and volition. And so, endeavour to use your servanthood for the pleasure of His judgement and in worship for fulfilling His commands. He has ordered you to call for blessings upon His prophet, Muḥammad, may the blessings of God be upon him and His descendants. And so, join your prayer to Him with blessings upon the Prophet, and your obedience to Him be attained through your obedience to him, and your testimony of Him be attained through your testimony of

3 Q.39:69.

4 Q.28:68.

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> him. Beware that the blessings of the gnosis of his sanctity do not escape you, lest you be deprived of the availment of his blessings, of his prayer for forgiveness for you, and of his intercession for you. This is so that you fulfil your duty with regard to God's commands and prohibitions and with regard to the customs and ceremonies (*al-sunan wa al-ādāb*), and so that you know the greatness of his rank nigh God, may He be glorified and exalted.[5]

This *ḥadīth* also alludes to the reality of the testimony, its ceremony, and its mystery. Therefore, he said: 'The testimony is the eulogy for God the High.' This is the reality of the testimony, or rather it is the reality of all acts of worship, just as was alluded to previously, namely that the acts of worship are the eulogies of the degree of lordship, each one through a divine name or names.

As for its ceremony, or rather the ceremony of all acts of worship, the best of this is that which is alluded to in these noble words, that attention should be paid to the states of the heart and the permeation of servanthood in secret, so that the claim is not meaningless. The wayfarer must strive to make his verbal invocations and his claim reach the heart, and to make the heart the one that remembers and worships because, if the heart rises to servanthood, then all the virtues of his domain and his exoteric and esoteric forces will rise to servanthood. So, at the beginning of the affair, the heart is reminded through the invocation performed by the tongue, and at the end of the affair, the tongue and all other parts of the body are interpreters of the heart.

After this, in the following *ḥadīth* a model is given for the attainment of the degree of thankfulness (*shukr*), and after that there is the instruction of the degree of contentment (*riḍā*), both of which have a lengthy explanation, which at this point cannot be accommodated.[6]

One of the important ceremonies of the testimony and the invocation of peace, which are the conclusion of prayer, is the knowledge of the sanctity of the Noble Final Envoy, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, which the wayfarer must make his heart understand, for were it not for the complete unveiling of the Prophet, no one would have the knowledge of the way to servanthood of God and arriving at the degree of closeness and ascension to gnosis. Therefore, just as at the beginning of prayer, it was mentioned that the friends and companions of the way of gnosis and true ascension are the Prophet and the infallible pure imāms; it must also be men-

5 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, pp. 23–4. *Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXII, p. 284.

6 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī gives nine types of contentment and ten types of thankfulness, contingent on different contexts and instances. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 248–51.

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tioned at the end of the journey that they are the blessed nearmost ones, the means of arrival for the folk of gnosis, and the intermediaries for the revealing of the blessings and theophanies of the presence of lordship, glorified be His majesty. 'If it were not for them, the Oft-Compassionate would not have been worshipped and the Oft-Compassionate would not have been known.' Anyone who knows a little of the reality of nearmostness and prophethood would know what kind of relationship the nearmost ones, peace be upon them, have with creation; we have mentioned this, praise be to God, in our treatise *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah*.

However, the allusion to the mystery of the testimony, in the way that we have mentioned, where the imām said: 'And to know that the forelocks of the creatures are in His hands',[7] is a subtle reference to the degree of the realisation of awareness after self-effacement, where the multitude are no longer the veils of the beauty of the Beloved, and the virtue and volition of God are seen to be implemented and manifested in the mirror of creation. The permission (*idhn*), which is mentioned in the noble *ḥadīth*, is the divine permission to bring something into being (*al-idhn al-takwīnī*) and is the permeation of the exoteric by the esoteric. In this degree, the mystery of 'predestination' and the reality of 'a matter beyond two matters' is unveiled upon the heart of the wayfarer in every degree of the essence, attribute, and action. In this brief work there is no room for the details of this issue.

A Second Summary

On the authority of *Misbāḥ al-sharī'ah*, Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace upon with him, said:

> The meaning of 'peace' (*al-salām*) at the end of each prayer is protection (*al-amān*), i.e., whosoever carries out the command of God and the custom of His Prophet with a humble heart shall be protected from the tribulations of the world and granted exemption from the chastisement of the hereafter. Peace (*al-salām*) is one of the names of God the High, which He has entrusted to His creatures so that they may use its meaning in their actions, trusts, and dealings with one another, in being truthful in companionship and in the soundness of their relationships. When you want to place peace in its proper place and fulfil its meaning, be mindful of God; and your religion, your heart, and your reason should be at peace

7 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, p. 23. *Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXII, p. 284.

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> with yourself. Therefore, do not pollute it with the darkness of disobedience. Be at peace with your guardians, so that you do not grieve, weary, or distress them by dealing in evil towards them; then behave in the same way to your friend and your foe. For if the one who is closest to man is not at peace with him then the one who is more distant from him is more likely not to be at peace him. Whosoever does not place peace in its proper place in this instance has not invoked the invocation of peace and salutation, and is a liar in his invocation of peace, even though he declares it amongst creation.[8]

In this noble *ḥadīth* there is a hidden reference to the mystery of the greeting of peace, to its outward ceremony, and to the realisation of its reality.

However, its mystery, as has already been alluded to, is the petitioning for peace and protection during the return journey. Protection, according to the nearmost ones, means not being veiled from the beauty of the Beloved by the veils of multiplicity, which itself is the highest degree of chastisement for the lovers. As the master of the nearmost ones said: 'My Lord, granted that I have fortitude for Thy chastisement, yet how will I have fortitude in being parted from Thee?'[9] For the lover of the beauty of God there is no chastisement more painful than the grief of being parted. So, the final greeting of peace in the prayer of the nearmost ones is a protection from the tribulation of the dark veils of the world and the veils of light of the hereafter, each one of which is a painful chastisement in itself.

However, the allusion to the realisation of this reality is made where he says, 'Peace (*al-salām*) is one of the names of God the High, which He has entrusted to His creatures.'[10] This is an explanation of the manifestation of the names in the manifestations of creation and the realisation of the truth of the names means to be removed from the darkness of egotism and to witness the portion of lordship in the mirror of one's own being. As long as man is in the veils of multiplicity and the influence of the devil, and as long as his heart is usurped by the foe of God, he cannot witness the portion of lordship and the degree of naming (*ismiyyah*)[11] in himself or in any beings.

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8 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, pp. 24–5. * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXII, p. 307.

9 This is a phrase taken from the well-known supplication taught to Kumayl b. Ziyād by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. It is commonly known as the supplication of Kumayl and is recited on Thursday evenings. * See Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid wa silāḥ al-muta'abbid*, p. 778.

10 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, p. 24. * Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXII, p. 307.

11 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī defines the name (*ism*) in the gnostic context not as an expression but as the very essence that is named, through the consideration of its existential

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When the veil is lifted he will witness himself as the manifestation of the divine names. In sum, whilst returning from this spiritual journey he will have a secure peaceful heart and a protected mind and his vision in relation to all beings will be the vision of purity and peace, he will see the truth of the name 'Peace' flowing through all beings, he will interact with all of them in the realisation of its truth, and he will witness the universe as the abode of peace (*dār al-salām*) and as the manifestation of peace (*maẓhar al-salām*), and he will see the influence of the hand of the deceivers entirely falling short of the ever-beautiful beauty (*jamāl al-jamīl*).

Thus, he will see his own entire being and the universe immersed in the name 'Peace'. At this stage he will obtain the mystery of perfection from the mysteries of 'destiny' (*qadr*). If he is disposed to knowledge and speculation, he will realise the mystery of the statement of the philosophers when they say, 'Being is sheer goodness' (*al-wujūd khayr maḥḍ*).[12] If he is of the disposition of the folk of gnosis and unveiling then, according to its capacity, goodness, peace, and divine protection shall theophanise in his heart. God is the Knower. However, these ceremonies do not need any explanation.

A Third Summary
On One of the Mysteries of the Invocation of Peace

Of that which has been mentioned of the mystery of prayer—the reality of which means the journey to God, in God, and from God—regarding the mystery of peace another understanding becomes clear. This is that, when the wayfarer is helped in the state of prostration by becoming absolutely absent from all beings, when he becomes hidden from all beings, when the state of awareness aids him during the last prostration, and when in the testimony this state takes hold, suddenly he is transferred from the state of being hidden from creation to the presence, he enacts the ceremony of presence in His presence, and at the end of the testimony he finds himself turning towards the degree of prophethood and finds himself in the court of the nearmostness of the Prophet where he enacts the ceremony of presence in his presence, which is a vocalised invocation of peace. After this, turning towards the determinates of the light of nearmostness, which are the exoteric and esoteric virtues of 'the devoted servants of God' and himself, he keeps in mind the ceremonies being

attribute. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 54.

12 This is a concept which may be found in Neoplatonic philosophy and in the Arabic paraphrastic renditions thereof. See *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ fī al-khayr al-maḥḍ*, in 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *al-Aflāṭūniyyah al-muḥdathah 'ind al-'arab*, Kuwait, 1977, pp. 1–33; also Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, tr. E. R. Dodds, Oxford, 1963, prop. VIII, pp. 9–11.

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in their presence. Then, after that, through the absolute multiplicity of the hidden and witnessed, he turns to finding the required ceremonies while being in the presence and presents a vocalised invocation of peace, and the fourth journey, which is 'from the creation to the creation',[13] is complete.

There are more details pertaining to this general statement than this, which now 'I have no ability to say or the creatures to hear.'[14]

13 See Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'āliya fī al-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, vol. 1, pp. 13–8.

14 * Verse from a poem by Sa'dī.

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EPILOGUE

On the Mystery of the Three Final Magnifications

This is the general mystery of the opening magnifications of God. So long as the wayfarer does not remove the seven veils, he will not arrive at the door of God and the doors of admission to the court will not open for him, and it is by removing the veils that the splendours of beauty and awe-inspiring majesty are revealed to him. In the same way, after returning from the degree of arrival and sheer annihilation and attainment of the state of awareness, the theophanies of the essence, of the names, and of the actions—in the sequence opposite to that of the wayfaring to God—take place in his heart, and for each one of the theophanies he utters a magnification to God. Since these theophanies do not take place through the multitude of veils of the beauty of the Beloved, the wayfarer, with each raising of the hand, alludes to not being veiled from any degree. Just as during the first magnification offered up to God he witnessed the splendour of the essence in the presence of the names and attributes, so with the raising of the hand he alludes to the fact that the determinates of the names and attributes do not veil the theophany of the essence. During the second magnification offered up to God he witnesses the theophanies of the names in the presence of the archetypes, or rather he also witnesses within them the theophanies of the essence, and with the raising of the hand he alludes to not being veiled. During the third magnification offered up to God, he witnesses the theophanies of the essence, names, and actions in the mirror of the external archetypes, and with the raising of the hand he negates their veiledness.

So, the opening magnifications are for the sake of witnessing the theophanies, from the exoteric to the esoteric, and from the theophanies of actions to the theophanies of the essence. The raising of the hand during them is for the sake of removing the veils until he arrives at the degree of spiritual closeness and true ascension. The final magnifications are for the sake of witnessing the theophanies from the esoteric to the exoteric and are for the sake of witnessing the theophanies from those of the essence to those of the actions, and the raising of the hand during them is an allusion to not being veiled and the removal of veils. Praise be to God, firstly and lastly, exoterically and esoterically.

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A Concluding Supplication

O God, connect our steps of action to goodness, and, in conclusion, grant us gnosis and God-seeking. Cut short of our hearts the deviating hand of the accursed devil; light up our hearts with the spark from the fire of Thy love, so that we may become enraptured. Burn the harvest of our egoity and self-worship with the light of the fire of Thy love, so that we do not see and seek any other than Thee, and so that the burden of our hearts is not unburdened save at Thy threshold.

O Beloved, even now that we are far from Thee and covered from Thy ever-beautiful beauty, Thy generous hand reaches forth. Remove the thick veils from between us so that we may be compensated in our remaining days of life for what has passed. Indeed, Thou art the Bestower of Blessings.

Finished by the hands of this poor author on 21 Rabīʿ al-Thānī 1358 AH/1939.

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