

Discourse One

Concerning the Disciplines which are necessary in all states of the Salat, or rather in all worships and rituals. Discussed in Twelve Chapters.

Chapter 1: Cordial Disciplines

One of the cordial disciplines of the worships and the spiritual duties of the traveler along the path to the Hereafter is paying attention to the Might of the Lord and to the humility of servitude. It is one of the important stages for the *sālik* (traveler). The strength of everybody's *sulūk* (journey) is in proportion to the strength of this attention, or rather the perfection or the imperfection of humanity is connected to the perfection or imperfection of this matter.

The more one is overwhelmed by egoism, egotism, self-conceit and selfishness, the farther he will be from the human perfection and from the nearness of the presence of Allah. The veil of self-conceit and egotism is thicker and darker than all other veils. To tear open this veil is more difficult than tearing all other veils, and tearing it is a preparatory step to tearing other veils. In fact, tearing off this veil is the master key for the invisible, the visible and the great door of the ascent to the perfect spirituality.

As long as man has his eyes on his own self, his imagined beauty and perfection, he will be veiled and discarded from the absolute beauty and pure perfection. The first condition for traveling to Allah is to leave this house. Actually, it is the criterion for the struggle between right and wrong. So, every *sālik*, who travels with the steps of selfishness and self-conceit, and is wrapped in the veils of egotism, his sufferings would be in vain and his journey would not be to Allah, it would rather be to his self: “The mother of the idols is the idol of your self.”¹

Allah, the Most High, says:

“And whoever leaves his house migrating to Allah and His Messenger, and then death overtakes

***him, his reward is, indeed, with Allah.*"2**

The formal migration, or the form of migration, is the corporeal migration from the formal house to the *ka'bah* or to the shrines of the holy men [*awliy*] ('a), but the spiritual migration is the going out of the house of the soul and the house of this world to Allah and His Messenger. To migrate to the Messenger and the guardian [*wal*] is also a migration to Allah.

As long as one's soul has an inclination to oneself and to egotism, it is not journeying. And so long as there are residues of Oneness in the *s*'s eyes, and as long as the walls of his own town and the *adh* announcing selfishness have not yet disappeared, he is regarded as a staying one, not a traveler or an emigrant.

It is stated in *Misb* *ash-Shar'* that Imam as-S'idiq ('a) said: "Servitude is a gem whose core is Lordship [*rubbiyyat*]. Whatever is lost of servitude is found in the Lordship, and whatever is hidden of Lordship is obtained by servitude." 3

The one who travels on the foot of servitude, and burns his forehead with the brand of the humility of serfdom, will reach the Glory of (His) Lordship. The way of attaining to the facts of Lordship is journeying along the footsteps of servitude, and what is lost of servitude because of egoism and egotism, can be recovered under the shadow of the Lordship's patronage, until he reaches a stage in which the *Haqq* (Allah), the Most High, will become his ears (hearing), eyes (seeing), hands and legs, as is stated in the true and well-known *hadith* accepted by the two sects. 4

When the *s* forsook his conducts [*tasarrufat*] and completely submitted the kingdom of his existence to Allah, leaving the house to its Owner, and perishing in the Glory of (His) Lordship, the Owner of the house would Himself manage the affairs. Thus his conducts [*tasarrufat*] would become divine, and his eyes would be divine and he would see with the *Haqq's* (Allah's) eyes, his ears would become divine and he would hear with the *Haqq's* (Allah's) ears.

The more complete the lordship of the soul and the more its glory be cherished, the more, in the same proportion, the Glory of the (divine) Lordship decreases and becomes incomplete (in the *s*'s kingdom of existence), because these two stand face to face: "This world and the next are like the two wives of a man." 5

Thus, the *s* to Allah has to recognize his state of humility, and to place the humility of servitude and the Glory of the Lordship before his eyes. The stronger this viewpoint, the more spiritual his worship and the stronger the spirit of his worship, until, if, with the help of Allah and the perfect holy men [*awliy*] ('a), he reaches the truth of servitude and its core; he will catch a glimpse of the secret of worship.

In all the worships especially (in) the *Salat* which has a position of comprehensiveness [*jamiyyat*], and is, among the worships, like the Perfect Man, and like the Greatest Name (of Allah), or rather it is the very Greatest Name these two positions, i.e. the position of the Glory of Lordship, which is a fact, and

the position of the humility of servitude, which accompanies it, are occult. Among the recommended acts the *qunūt*, and among the obligatory acts the *sujūd*, have particular peculiarities to which we shall refer later *inshā' Allāh*.

It should be noted, however, that absolute servitude is of the highest degrees of perfection and of the loftiest positions of humanity, of which no one has any share except the most perfect of the creatures of Allah, Muhammad (s) at the top, followed by the perfect *walīs* (the Guardians). The others are limping in servitude, and their worshipping and servitude are endued with causes, only with the steps of servitude one can reach the real absolute *mi'rāj*.

That is why the noble *ḥayy* says:

“Glorified is He who carried his servant by night...” 6

It was the step of servitude and the attraction of (His) Lordship that carried that holy person to the *mi'rāj* of proximity [*qurb*] and union [*wusūl*]. In the *tashahhud* of the *Salat* which is a return from an absolute “annihilation” [*fanā*] that was achieved in the *sujūd* there is once again a tendency to servitude, before paying attention to the Messengership. It may also be a reference to the position of Messengership as a result of the essence of servitude. This is a lengthy subject, which is out of the scope of these papers.

1. “The Mother of the idols is your self’s idol,
As those are snakes, and this is a dragon-idol!”

Mawḥw

2. *Sūrah an-Nisā'* 4: 100

3. *Misbāh ash-Sharāh*, “On the Reality of Servitude,” ch. 100.

4. This is a reference to a narrative about “The Approximation by *Nawafil*”, which reads: “...He (Allah’s servant) keeps trying to get closer to Me by means of the *nafilah* until I love him. Loving him, I will become his ears with which he hears, his eyes with which he sees, his tongue with which he speaks and his hand with which he strikes. When he asks Me I answer him, and if he demands from Me I will give him...” *Usūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 4, “Book of Faith and Infidelity,” ch. on “One who Hurts and Despises the Muslims,” *hadīths* 7–8, p. 53.

5. *ʿAwliyy ul-Lāʾih*, vol. 1, p. 277 and vol. 4, p. 115; *Nahj al-Balaghah*, edited by *Fayd al-Isām*, maxim 100.

6. *Sūrah al-Isrā'* 17: 1.

Chapter 2: The Stages Of The Stations Of The People Of *Sulūk*

Know that there are for the people of *sulūk*, in this station (i.e., paying attention to the humility of

servitude and the Glory of His Lordship) and other stations, countless stages and degrees, only to a few of which we can generally refer, since comprehensively knowing all their aspects and counting all the stages are beyond the capacity of this humble creature: “The ways to Allah are as numerous as the breaths of the creatures.”¹

One of those stages is the stage of Knowledge [*ʿilm*], which is such that it proves, by scientific conduct [*suʿk*] and philosophic argument, the humility of servitude and the Glory of (His) Lordship. This is a pure sort of knowledge, since it is clearly proved in the high sciences and supreme philosophy that the entire House of Realization [*dʿr-i tahaqquq*] and the complete circle of existence are mere relation and attachment and nothing but poverty.

The Glory, Kingdom and Sovereignty belong to His Sanctified Essence of Majesty. No one can have any share of Glory and Majesty, while the humility of servitude and poverty is engraved on the forehead of everybody, and is registered in the innermost part of their truth.

The truth of gnosis and vision [*shuhʿd*], and the result of suffering and *suʿk*, are in lifting the veil off the face of the truth, and discerning the humility of servitude and the origin of poverty and lowliness in oneself and in all the creatures. The invocation ascribed to the master of all beings (the Prophet of Islam) (s): “O Allah, show me the things as they are,”² may be a reference to this stage, i.e. wishing to see the humility of servitude which requires discerning the Glory of the Lordship.

Therefore, if the *sʿlik* on the road of the truth, the traveler in the way of servitude, covers this distance with the steps of scientific *suʿk* and the mount of intellectual advance, he will fall in the veils of knowledge and attain the first station of humanity. But this veil is a thick one, as it is said: “Knowledge is the greatest veil.” The *sʿlik* should not stay behind this veil. He is to tear it, since, should he be contented with this stage and keep his heart chained by it; he would fall into *istidrʿj* (being engaged in other than the *Haqq*).

Istidrʿj in this stage, means becoming engaged in the numerous secondary branches of knowledge, presenting many arguments justifying his intellectual roamings in that field, and depriving himself of the other stages, because his heart is attached to this stage only, neglecting the wanted result, which is attaining annihilation in Allah.

He, thus, would spend his life in the veil of argument [*burhʿn*] and its branches. The more these branches are, the thicker the veil and the greater the distance from the truth. The *sʿlik*, therefore, should not be deceived, in this stage, by Satan, secluding himself from the truth and reality, and stopping his journey to the goal on the pretext of being a great scholar, a very learned person and a powerful man of argument. He must set to work briskly, be serious in his quest for the real demand, and take himself to the next stage, which is the second stage.

And that is such that he should write what (his) reason has understood through irrefutable proof and scientific conduct, with the pen of intellect on the tablet of the heart, to convey the truth of the humility of

servitude and the Glory of Lordship to the heart and free himself from the chains and the veils of knowledge. We shall refer to this stage presently, *inshā' Allāh*. So, the result of the second stage is acquiring belief in the facts.

The third stage is that of “tranquility and calmness of the soul,” which is, in fact, the perfect stage of faith. Allah, the Exalted, said to his “friend” [khalīq] Ibrāhīm:

“Have you not believed [yet]?” He said: “I have, but just to have a calm heart.”³

A reference to this stage may come later.

The fourth stage is that of “vision” [*mushāhadah*], which is a divine light and a divine manifestation, as a consequence of the manifestations of the Names and the Attributes appearing in the secret of the *sālik*, and lightening his complete heart with the visionary light. This stage comprises many degrees that are out of the capacity of these pages. In this stage an example of the effect of the *nafīlahs*: (I would be his hearing, sight and hand)⁴ will appear, and the *sālik* will see himself drowned in limitless ocean, beyond which there is another very deep ocean, in which the secrets of “fate” are partly disclosed.

Each one of these stages has its special *istidrāj* (being engaged in other than the *Haqq*) through which the *sālik* is exposed to great perishing [*halākat*]. So, he will have to rid himself, in all stages, of egoism and I-ness. He should not be self-conceited or egotistic, both of which are the sources of most of evils, especially for the *sālik*. However, we shall have another reference to this subject presently *inshā' Allāh* [Allah willing].

1. This hadīth is ascribed to the Prophet (s) in *Jamī' al-Asrār wa Manba' al-Anwār* by Sayyid Haydar ḥmulī, pp. 8, 95 and 121. Also in the *Lahj*'s Commentary on *Gulshān-i Rūz*, p. 153; *Naqd an-Nusūs*, p. 185; *Minhaj at-Talībīn*, p. 221; *Al-Usūl al-'Asharah*, p. 31.

2. In *'Awāliy ul-Lā'ih*, vol. 4, p. 132, it is stated: “Oh Allah, show us the facts as they are.” Commenting on the same, quoting *at-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* by al-Fakhr ar-Rūzī, vol. 6, p. 26, and in *Mirṣad al-'Ibād*, p. 309, it is stated as follows: “Show us the things as they are.”

3. *Sūrah al-Baqarah* 2:260.

4. Refer to footnote 21

Chapter 3: Concerning Submissiveness

[*Khushī'*]

One of the things necessary for the *sālik* in all his worships, especially in the *Salat*, which is at the head

of all worships and has a position of comprehensiveness [*j'amiyyat*], is submissiveness [*khush*]. It is, in fact, a complete submission [*khud*] mixed with love or fear. It is the result of comprehending the Greatness, Power and Majesty of Beauty and Glory. The detail of this generality is that the hearts of the people of *sulūk* are different according to their disposition and nature:

Some of the hearts are amorous and of the manifestations of Beauty [*jam*] and, driven by their nature, they are attracted to the Beauty of the Beloved. When, in the *sulūk*, they comprehend the shadow of the Beautiful, or witness the origin of the Beauty, the Greatness hidden in the secret of the Beauty effaces them, and they go into rapture, for in every beauty there is a hidden glory, and in every glory there is a covered beauty.

There is probably an allusion to this point in his saying when the guardian of the gnostics and of the *s'liks*, Amr al-Mu'min (Commander of the Faithful), may Allah bless him and all his offspring, says: **“Glory be to the One whose compassion is vast for His friends despite His severe revenge, and whose revenge is severe for His enemies despite His vast compassion,”**¹

Thus, the Majesty, Greatness and Power of Beauty envelop them and they fall into a state of submission [*khush*] before the Beauty of the Beloved. This state, at the beginning, causes agitation to the heart and engenders anxiety. Then, after submission [*tamk*], it changes to a state of familiarity, and the agitation and anxiety, caused by the Greatness and Power, turn into familiarity and peace, and there happens a state of tranquility, as was the state of the heart of *khal' ar-Rahm* (Allah's Friend = Ibr'ahim) (a).

Some other hearts are “fearing” and they are of the manifestations of Glory [*jal*]. They are in continual understanding of the Greatness, Grandeur and Glory. Their submission is of fright, and the Subjugative and Majestic Names are manifested to their hearts, as was the state of Prophet Yahy (may Allah's peace be upon him and our Prophet and his progeny). So, submission is sometimes mixed with love, and sometimes with fear and fright, though in every love there is fear, and in every fear there is love.

The degrees of submission are according to the degrees of understanding the Greatness, Majesty and Beauty. Now as we, in our case, are deprived of the light of visions, we have but to indulge in acquiring submission by means of knowledge and faith [*im*]. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“Successful, indeed, are the believers who are submissive in their Salats.”²

Submission in the *Salat* is regarded as a sign of faith [*im*]. So, whoever is not submissive in his *Salat*, will, according to Allah's saying, be excluded from the faithful [*ahl-i im*]. Our *Salats* which are not accompanied by submission are caused by a deficiency of faith or by lacking it. Belief [*itiqad*] and knowledge are other than faith, our knowledge of Allah, His Names and Attributes and of other divine knowledge [*ma'rif*], is other than faith.

Satan according to the testimony of Allah, has information about the Beginning and the Resurrection,

yet, he is a disbeliever. He said:

“You have created me of fire, while You created him of dust,”³

So, he believes in Allah and in His being the Creator; and he says: **“Respite me until the day they are resurrected.”** ⁴ So, he believes in the Day of Resurrection, too. He knows about the Books, the Messengers and the angels. Nevertheless, Allah addresses him as a disbeliever, excluding him from the group of the believers [*mu'minīn*].

Thus, the people of knowledge are distinct from those of faith. Not every man of knowledge is a man of faith. Therefore, after acquiring knowledge, one has to join the believers, and to convey the Greatness, Majesty, Brightness and Beauty of Allah, the Most Exalted and High, to his heart, so that it may become submissive, since mere knowledge does not result in submission. You can realize it in yourself: although you do believe in the Beginning and the Resurrection and in Allah's Majesty and Glory, your heart is not submissive.

As to Allah's saying:

“Has not the time yet come for those who believe that their hearts should be submissive when remembering Allah and what has come down of the truth,”⁵

it may be that it is the formal faith the very belief in what the Prophet (s) has brought which is intended here, for the true faith is accompanied by a degree of submission; or the submission in the noble *ḥayāh* may refer to a submission at its complete degree, as sometimes they apply the word, *ʿalīm* (erudite) to the one whose knowledge has reached the limit of faith.

In the noble *ḥayāh*:

“...verily only the erudite among Allah's servants fear Him,”⁶

The reference may be to them. In the terms of the Book and the *Sunnah*, knowledge, faith and Islam refer to different degrees, the explanation of which is out of the scope of these papers.

Generally speaking, the *sūlik* on the way to the Hereafter specially if with the *mi'rāj* (ascending) step of the *Salat* will have to make his heart submissive by the light of knowledge and faith, so as to strengthen, as much as he can, this divine gift and the beneficent gleam, in his heart, trying to keep this state during the whole length of the *Salat*. This state of consolidation and stability, though a bit difficult at the beginning for people like us, it becomes quite possible by practice and by exercising the heart.

My dear, acquiring perfection and the provision for the Hereafter requires demand and seriousness, and the greater the demand, the more it deserves being serious about it. Certainly, with such a state of weakness, laxity and carelessness, one cannot ascend to the divine proximity and to be in a place neighboring the Lord of Might.

One has to manly set forth in order to reach what one wants. Since you do believe in the Hereafter, and

find no way of comparability between that world and this whether regarding their happiness and perfection, or their sufferings and calamities, as that world is eternal, with no death and perishing, where the happy live in comfort and dignity and in everlasting bliss, a comfort which has no like in this world, a divine glory and sovereignty, the like of which cannot be found in this life, and a bliss which never occurs in anybody's imagination, and similarly regarding the sufferings of that world, its pains, torments and evils can have no match in this world you should know that the way to happiness runs through obeying Allah, the Lord of Might.

None of the acts of worship and obedience can be on the same footing as that of the *Salat*, which is a comprehensive [ʃiʕmiʕ] divine mixture [maʕjʕn] undertaking the happiness of humanity. If it is accepted, all other acts (of worship) will be accepted. So, you are to exert utmost seriousness in obtaining it, never to feel tired in the quest, and to bear whatever hardship there may be, though there will be none.

Actually if you continued it for a while and got cordially familiar with it, you would get, in this very world, so much pleasure out of your talk with Allah a pleasure which cannot be compared with anyone of this world's pleasures. This will be quite obvious if we study the states of the people supplicating to Allah.

In general, to sum up our discussions in this chapter, we may say that, having comprehended the Greatness, the Beauty, and the Majesty of Allah, either by means of reasoning and proofs, or through the explanations of the prophets (ʿa), one must remind his heart of it, and then, by gradual reminders, cordial attention and continual remembering Allah's Greatness and Majesty, he has to bring about the state of submission in his heart, so as to attain the required result.

At any rate, the *sālik* should not suffice himself with his present station, as any station which we may obtain is not worth a farthing in the market of the people of knowledge, nor is it worth a grain of mustard in the bazaar of “the people of heart”. The *sālik* must, in all situations, remember his own faults and deficiencies, so that he may find, through this, a way to his happiness. And praise be to Allah.

1. Nahj al-Balagh^h, sermon 90.

2. S^{ur}ah al-Muʿminⁱⁿ 23:1-2.

3. S^{ur}ah al-Aʿraf 7:12.

4. Ibid., 7:14.

5. S^{ur}ah al-Had^{id} 57:16.

6. S^{ur}ah F^{at}ir 35:28

Chapter 4: Tranquility

Of the important cordial disciplines of worships, especially the invoking worships, one is tranquility [*tumah'nah*], which is not the same tranquility as demanded by the jurists (may Allah be pleased with them) in the *Salat*. It is that the *s'lik* should perform his worship with a quietude of the heart and a tranquility of the mind, because if the worship was performed in a state of anxiety and with shaky heart, the heart would not have any reaction, and no effects of worship would appear in the dominion of the heart, and the reality of the worship would not become an inner image of the heart.

One of the significances of the repetition of worships and the increase of supplications and invocations is that the heart is affected by them and there will be an emotion until, gradually, the reality of worship and supplication forms the innermost part of the *s'lik*, and his heart unites with the spirit of worship. Should the heart lack tranquility [*itm'nan*], quietude and serenity, there would be no effect of the supplications and the rituals on it, and they would not pass from the outer appearance and limits of the body to the dominion of the inner soul, and the cordial parts of the truth of worship would not be effected.

This is one of the clear matters that need no explanation, as it could be understood by a little contemplation. If a worship was such that the heart could have no information whatsoever about it, and there was no effect at all in the interior, it would not be kept in other dominions, nor would it ascend from the kingdom of this world to the kingdom of the heavens. And it may be that at the time of the throes of death and its horrible agonies, and the terrors and calamities of after death, the image of such a worship may completely be effaced God forbid! From the plane of the heart, and that man may stand at the sacred presence of Allah empty-handed.

For example, if one recites the noble supplication: *L' il'ha illall'h, Muhammadun Ras'lull'h* (There is no god but Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) with a calm and tranquil heart and teaches his heart to repeat it, the tongue of the heart will gradually become talking, and the outer tongue will be a follower of the heart's tongue, and then the heart will supplicate first, and the tongue will follow it.

This is referred to by Imam as-S'idiq ('a) as is stated in *Misb'ah ash-Shar'ah* (the Torch of the Islamic Law). He said: "Let your heart be your tongue's *qiblah*, and do not move it except by the heart's order, the reason's assent and the faith's consent." 1

At the beginning, before the tongue learns talking, the *s'lik* on the way to the Hereafter is to teach it and to instruct it, in tranquility and quietude, with the supplications. As soon as the heart finds its tongue, it becomes the *qiblah* (the focus of attraction) of the mouth's tongue and of the other organs of the body. When it starts supplication, the whole kingdom of the human existence becomes supplicant.

But if the noble supplication is recited without the tranquility and calmness of the heart, but with haste, trouble, and unbalanced senses, it will have no effect on the heart, and will not pass the limits of the

animal tongue and ear of the outer body to the interior and the human hearing, and its truth will not be implemented in the core of the heart, nor will it become a perfect and non-transitory image of the heart. Thus, when there are terrors and difficulties, especially the terrors of the agonies of death and the difficulties of the throes of the last breaths, one completely forgets supplication and it will be erased from the plane of the heart.

Even the name of Allah the Exalted, the Seal of the Prophets (s), the noble religion of Islam, the divine sacred Book, the Imams of guidance (‘a) and other knowledge [ma‘rif] which have not been conveyed to the heart, will be forgotten, and when he is questioned in the grave, he cannot answer, and the *talqin* will be of no avail, because he does not find in himself any trace of the truth of Lordship, prophethood or other knowledge [ma‘rif], and that what he used to chatter about, and had no image of in his heart, vanishes from his memory, and thus he will have no share of testifying the Lordship, prophethood and other knowledge [ma‘rif].

It is stated in a *hadith* that a group of the people [ummah] of the Messenger of Allah (s), on being entered into Hell, forget the name of the Prophet because of the fearfulness of the Hell-keeper, despite the fact that the same *hadith* states that they are of the believers and their hearts and features glitter brightly because of the light of faith. 2

The great narrator, the late Majlis, in *Mir‘at al-‘Uq* explaining the expression: “I will be his hearing and his seeing,” says: “One who does not dedicate his eyes, ears and other organs to the way of obeying Allah, will not obtain spiritual eyes and ears, as his corporeal eyes and ears will not go to the other world, and so he will be without ears and eyes in the worlds of the grave and the Resurrection, whereas the criterion for the questionings of the grave is those spiritual organs (the end of the sum of his translation).” 3

In short, the noble *Hadiths* about this kind of tranquility and its effects are many. The Glorious Qur’an orders that it (the Qur’an) should be recited in *tartil*, and it is stated in the noble *Hadiths*: “Whoever forgets a *surah* from the Qur’an, it will appear before him in Paradise in a most beautiful image. When he looks at it he says: “What are you? How wonderful you are! I wish you were mine.” It will reply: “Do you not know me? I am so-and-so *surah*. If you had not forgotten me, I would have lifted you to this high rank”. 4

In another *hadith* it is stated: “Whoever learns the Qur’an as a young man, it will mix with his flesh and blood.” This is because the heart of a young man is less engaged and less tarnished, and so, it is affected quicker and easier, and the effect remains longer.

There are many *Hadiths* in this respect, to which we shall refer when we discuss “recitation,” *insh’ Allah*. In a noble *hadith* it is said: “Nothing is more loved by Allah than a deed which is done persistently, no matter how small the deed may be.”⁵ Its important point may be that such a deed becomes the inner image of the heart, as it has already been noted.

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1. Misbāh ash-Sharāh, ch. 5, "On Supplication"; Mustadrak al-Wasīl, "Book of as-Salat," sec. on "Supplication," ch. on "Rarities," hadīth 2.
 2. 'Ilm al-Yaqīn, vol. 2, p. 1039.
 3. Mir'at al-'Uqūl, vol. 10, p. 392.
 4. Usūl al-Kifāy, vol. 4, p. 410, "Book of the Merit of the Qur'an," ch. "One who Learnt the Qur'an then Forgot it," hadīth no. 2.
 5. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 137, "Book of Faith and Infidelity," ch. "Economy in Worshipping," hadīth 2.

Chapter 5: Protecting The Worships From Satan's Intrusion

One of the important cordial disciplines of the *Salat* and other worships which is of the chief cordial disciplines, and to implement it is one of the great affairs and minute problems, is protecting the worships against the intrusion of Satan. The noble *ḥayah*:

"And those who keep guard on their Salats"¹

Probably refers to all degrees of keeping guard, a degree of which, or rather the most important one of them, is to guard against Satan's intrusion.

To go into details, we say that it is quite explicit to the people of knowledge and the men of heart that as bodies require material food for nourishment, and that the food should be suitable for their disposition so that they may be brought up corporeally and have vegetable growth, similarly the hearts and the souls require a particular food to suit them both, so that they may be educated with it, and feed on it to grow up spiritually and progress inwardly.

The nutrition suitable for the growth [*nash'ah*] of the souls is the divine knowledge [*ma'rīf*] from the beginning of existence till the ultimate end of the system of existence. It is expressed in defining philosophy by the great experts that: "It is man's development into a mental world matching the material world in its form and perfection."² This is an indication of the said spiritual nutrition, as the hearts feed on spiritual merits and divine rites.

It must be noted that each one of these foods, if kept away from Satan's intrusion and prepared by the hands of the guardianship of the Seal of the Prophets and Allah's great friend (s), the soul and the heart would be nourished by them and would attain the perfection becoming of humanity and ascend to the proximity of Allah.

Getting rid of Satan's intrusion, which is a preliminary step to sincerity, cannot really be brought about,

unless the *sālik* is in quest of Allah in his *sulūk*, and tread upon his selfishness and self-conceit, which are the origin of all evils and the inner diseases. This, in its full meaning, is not possible except by the Perfect Man, or, rather, by the sincere holy men [*awliyā'*] (*'a*).

But the *sālik* must not despair of the inner kindness of Allah, because to despair of Allah's mercy is the beginning of all coldnesses and weaknesses, and it is one of the great sins. That which is possible for the common people, too, is the delight of eyes of "the people of knowledge" [*ahl-i ma'rifat*].

So, it is a must for the *sālik* on the road to the other world to act very seriously to rid his knowledge [*ma'rif*] and rites [*manāsik*] of the intrusion of Satan and the commanding soul [*nafs-i ammārah*], and to go deep into his doings, quests and desires, with strictness and examination, so as to find out the ultimate objective of his journey, learning the principles of his inner activities and spiritual nutrition.

He is not to neglect the tricks of the soul and Satan, as well as the snares of the commanding soul and *iblis*. He is always to distrust his self in all his doings and activities, and never to let it go willfully. It is quite possible that, with a little negligence, it may overcome man, knock him down and drive him to perdition and annihilation. If the spiritual foods were not free from Satan's intrusion, and if he shared in preparing them, the souls and hearts would not be educated with them nor can they reach their becoming perfection, let alone the irreparable insufficiency that would befall them.

Such foods may probably cause man to join the group of Satans or the quadruped and beasts of prey. Then whatever is the capital of happiness, the source of the human perfection and the means of attaining to high ranks, results in the opposite, and drives man to the dark abyss of misfortune. Actually we did come across some of the so called gnostics who had been led astray because of their deep indulgence in the gnostic terminology, such that their hearts became inverted and their interiors were darkened.

Their gnostic practices strengthened their selfishness and Oneness, and they uttered improper allegations and abnormal expressions. Similarly, among the ascetics and the devotees there were persons who practiced asceticism and self-purification, yet their exercises only aggravated their hearts' impurity and their interiors' darkness. This is because they did not keep on their divine spiritual journey and migration to Allah, and their scholarly and ascetic *sulūk* (journey) was subject to the intrusion of Satan and the self's desire, and so, it was to Satan and self.

We also noted that among the students of religious sciences there were some who had badly been affected by their studies, which increased their moral corruption; and knowledge, which should have guided them to success and salvation, had driven them to annihilation and led them to ignorance, hypocrisy, arrogance and deception.

Likewise, it is seen that among the people of worship and ceremonies, who persist in observing disciplines and traditions, there were those whose worship and sacrifices which are the source of reforming the conditions and souls had affected their hearts with impurity and darkness, causing them to

be conceited, egotistic, arrogant, pampered, slanderous, ill-tempered and distrusting the servants of Allah. These are also caused by neglecting to observe those divine mixtures [*ma'jūn*].

Naturally, the mixture [*ma'jūn*] prepared by Satan's filthy hand and the meddling of the obstinate self can give birth to nothing but Satanic character, and since the heart gets its nourishment from them, in any case, and they become the inner image of the soul, after a while of man's continuing so, he becomes an offspring of Satan, and will be brought up under his patronage. And when the visible eye of such a man is closed and his invisible eye is opened, he will see himself among the Satans. Thus, the result will be nothing but a loss, and his regret and repent will avail him to nothing.

Consequently, the traveler on the road to the Hereafter, notwithstanding his religious branch or divine method, has, firstly to be on the alert, like a kind doctor or a compassionate nurse, to take full care of his moods, looking for the faults of his conduct with strictness, and secondly, as he does so, he is not to neglect seeking refuge in the Sacred Essence of Allah, the Glorified and Most High, in his privacy, and supplicating in the presence of His Sanctity and Majesty.

O Lord! You do know our weakness and helplessness. You do know that without your helping hand we cannot find our way out of the hands of such a powerful enemy who covets the great prophets and the perfect and high holy men. Without Your spark of kindness and mercy, this strong-handed enemy will knock us down on the ground of annihilation and hurl us into the pit of darkness and wretchedness.

We adjure you by your distinguished favorites and intimate confidants to extend Your helping hand to us, the bewildered in the valley of error and the fallen down in the desert of seduction. Purge our hearts of rancor, deceit, polytheism and doubt. Surely you are the Patron of Guidance!

1. Sūrah al-Ma'rij 70:34; Sūrah al-Mu'minīn 23:9.

2. Mullā Sadrī and his disciples used this expression to define philosophy, to which some added the phrase: "in its image and perfection."

Chapter 6: On Vivacity and Cheerfulness

Of other cordial disciplines of the *Salat* and other worships, one, which has good results, or rather it opens some doors and uncovers some secrets of worships, is that the *sūlik* is to try to worship with vivacity, cheerfulness of heart and gaiety of mind, and to avoid laziness and reluctance in performing worships. He is to choose for worship a time in which he is quite prepared to perform it with animation and freshness, feeling no tiredness or lassitude.

Should one force oneself to worship in times of laziness and tiredness, it would probably bring about bad consequences, such as feeling tired of worshipping and of taking the trouble and bearing difficulty. Then, gradually, one may feel disgusted with worshipping. Furthermore, it may possibly turn man completely away from remembering Allah, and give pains to the spirit from the state of servitude, which is the source of all happiness.

Such worship will bring no luminosity to the heart, and the inside of the soul will not have any reaction, and the image of servitude will not become the image of the inner heart. It has already been said that the aim of worship is that the inner soul should become the image of servitude.

We now say that one of the secrets and results of worships and austerities is that the will of the soul becomes operative on the realm of the body, and its authority is overcome by the majesty of the soul and is annihilated, and the forces and soldiers spread in the kingdom of the body can no longer revolt, disobey and be obstinate and selfish. They actually surrender to the inner kingdom of the heart, or rather those forces gradually dissolve in the invisible heavenly domain, and its command is effective on the visible dominion.

The will of the soul gets stronger and takes the reins of the kingdom from Satan and the commanding soul, and the soldiers of the soul are driven to submission, from submission to contentment, and from contentment to annihilation. In this situation the soul will get to discover some secrets of worship and some actual manifestations will appear.

But all these cannot be implemented unless the worships are performed cheerfully and actively, away from every sort of laziness and carelessness, so that a mood of affection and love towards remembering Allah, the Exalted, and the state of servitude, with familiarity and consistency, happen. Loving Allah and remembering Him is one of the great affairs, which is very much cared for by the people of knowledge, and is a subject of competition among the people of *sulṭān*.

Physicians believe that if food is eaten with cheerfulness and gaiety, it will be digested much easier. Similarly, psychiatrists stress that if the spiritual nutrition is taken cheerfully and enthusiastically, and with avoiding laziness and affectedness, its effect will appear very quickly in the heart and the inner heart will be purified more quickly, too.

This discipline is referred to in the Glorious Divine Book, the upright Lordly pages, as it, in defiance of the disbelievers and the hypocrites, says:

“...And they do not come to the Salat unless they are sluggish, and they do not spend unless they are reluctant...”¹

And the noble *ṣayyid*:

“O you who believe! Do not approach the Salat when you are drunk...”²

The word “drunkenness” is explained in a *hadīth* to mean “sluggishness”. Some narratives refer to this discipline. By relating some of them we shall give pride to these papers.

Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb quoted Abū 'Abdullāh (Imām as-Sādiq) ('a) to have said: “Do not force yourselves to worship.” 3

Abū 'Abdullāh (as-Sādiq) ('a) is (also) quoted to have said: “The Messenger of Allah (s) said: “O 'Alī, this religion is firm, get into it mildly, and do not cause yourself to hate worshipping your Lord.” 4

Imām al-'Askar ('a) is quoted to have said: “When the hearts are active, confide in them, and when they are reluctant, bid them farewell.”5 This is a general instruction to deposit in your hearts any information you may when they are lively and gay, and leave them alone when they are restive. So, in acquiring knowledge [*ma'rif*] and sciences this discipline must also be applied, and the hearts must not be forced when they are irresponsive.

It can be deduced from this and other *Hadiths* that there is another discipline, which is also an important chapter of asceticism. This discipline is “considerateness” [*murū'at*]; that is, the *sālik*, in whatever stage he is, in scholarly or in spiritual and practical austerities and strivings, must consider his conditions, treat his soul with kindness and care, and avoid burdening himself with more than it can bear, especially the young people and the inexperienced, to whom this discipline is quite important.

If the young people do not treat themselves considerately and kindly, and if they do not meet the needs of (their) nature through lawful ways, they will be subject to a great danger, which cannot be compensated. The danger is that when one is too severe with his self and pulls the reins too hard, they will break off, and then the will gets out of control, and the accumulated natural needs and the sharp fires of desire, under unlimited pressure of austerity, burn out the whole kingdom.

If a *sālik's* reins break off God forbid! Or an ascetic person becomes unable to control himself, he will fall so deep in a precipice that he can never see the face of rescue, nor can he ever return to the road of happiness and righteousness.

Thus, a *sālik*, like a clever physician, has to feel his own pulse during his progress on the journey and to treat his self according to the requirements of the conditions of the journey. When the flames of desire, which are the vanity of youthfulness, blaze high, one is not to completely prevent his nature from getting satisfaction, but one has to resort to lawful ways to put out the flames of his desire, as gratifying the desire, according to the divine command, is a complete help along the journey to Allah.

So, he is to marry, as it is one of the great divine laws, which, besides being the base of the survival of the species, has a great effect on the journey to the Hereafter, too. For this reason, the Messenger of Allah (s) said: “He who marries will keep half of his religion.” 6 Another *hadīth* says: “He who desires to meet Allah pure, let him meet Him with a wife.” 7 The Messenger of Allah (s) is quoted to have said: “Most of the people of Hell are singles.” 8

A *hadīth* from Amr al-Mu'minīn ('Alī) ('a) says: "A group of the companions abstained from women (their wives), and from eating in daytime and sleeping at night. The Messenger of Allah (s) was informed about them by Umm us-Salāmah (his wife). He came to them and asked them: "Do you reject women (your wives)? I do go into women (my wives), eat in daytime and sleep at night. Whoever disregards my tradition is not of me."

Allah, the Exalted, has revealed:

"O you who believe! Do not forbid the good things which Allah has made lawful for you, and do not transgress. Surely Allah does not love the transgressors. And eat of what Allah has provided you as lawful and good, and fear Allah in whom you believe."⁹

Generally speaking, the traveler along the road to the Hereafter is to be considerate with respect to the ups and downs of the soul. And, while he is never to curb the needs (of his nature) which, otherwise, would cause big mischief, he is also not to be severe nor to exert pressure upon himself with respect to worship and practical austerities, especially during his youth and on starting the journey, as otherwise this will also cause the soul to feel exasperated and bolt away, and perhaps, lead him to abandoning remembering Allah.

This point is frequently referred to in the noble *Hadiths*. The noble *Al-Kāfī*, quoting Imām as-Sādiq ('a), says: "During my youth I was seriously and earnestly doing my worshipping. My father told me: "My son, act less on that, as when Allah, the Exalted, loves someone, He will accept his little." ¹⁰ Another *hadīth* goes almost the same. ¹¹

The same course relates another *hadīth* to the effect that Abū Ja'far (Imām al-Baqir) ('a), quoting the Messenger of Allah (s), said: "Surely this religion is firm, so go deep in it with mildness, and do not cause Allah's servants to hate worshipping Him; otherwise, you will be like the one whose mount was too tired to go on, so he neither finished the journey nor preserved the mount." ¹² Another *hadīth* says: "Do not cause yourselves to hate worshipping Allah." ¹³

However, the criterion for being "considerate" is that one should be observant of his soul's conditions and act according to its strength and weakness. When one's soul is strong and able to perform worships and bear hardship with good endurance, he should, then, try to perform the acts of worship.

As to those who have crossed the prime of life, and the fires of their desires have subsided to some extent, it is suitable for them to increase their ascetic austerity, and to set foot on the road of self-discipline with manly vigilance and industry. The more they accustom themselves to ascetic practices, the more doors will be opened to them, until the soul gradually overcomes the forces of (their) nature, which will be subjugated to them under the majesty of the soul.

Concerning the noble *Hadiths* which urge the people to strive earnestly in worshipping and praise the people who do so with reference to the worships and austerities of the Imāms of (the Islamic) guidance

(a), as well as the noble *Hadiths* which recommend economy in worshipping and praise it, both categories are based on the different people of *sulūk* and the ranks and conditions of the soul. The general criterion is the vivacity and the strength of the soul or its weakness and aversion.

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1. *Sūrah at-Tawbah* 9:54.
 2. *Sūrah an-Nisā'* 4:43.
 3. *Usūl al-Kḥf*, vol. 3, "Book of Belief and Disbelief," ch. on "Equality (moderateness) in Acting and its Persistence," hadīth 3, p. 129.
 4. *Ibid.*, ch. on "Economy in Worshipping," hadīth 6, p. 138.
 5. *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 75, "Book of ar-Rawdah," ch. 29, hadīth 3, p. 377.
 6. *Ibid.*, vol. 100, p. 220, "Book of al-'Uqūd wal-'Aqā'id (Contracts and Agreements)," sec. on "Marriage," ch. 1, hadīth 14, p. 220, as quoted from *Amālī* by Shaykh at-Tūsī, vol. 2, p. 132.
 7. *Ibid.*, hadīths 18 and 35, quoting *Rawdat ul-Wa'izīn*, p. 373, and *Nawādir ar-Ri'wand*, p. 12.
 8. *Was'īl ash-Shāh*, "Book of Marriage," ch. 2, hadīth 6, p. 15.
 9. *Sūrah al-M'īdah* 5:87-88; *Ibid.*, hadīth 8.
 10. *Usūl al-Kḥf*, vol. 3, "Book of Faith and Disbelief," ch. on "Economy in Worshipping," hadīth 5.
 11. *Ibid.*, hadīth 4.
 12. *Ibid.*, hadīth 1.
 13. *Ibid.*, hadīth 2.

Chapter 7: On Informing The Heart

A cordial discipline of worship, especially the invoking worship, is "informing" [*tafhīm*]. It is to take the heart, at the beginning, as a child not yet able to speak, and is wanted to be taught. So, each of the invocations, recitations, facts and secrets of worship is to be taught to the heart with strict accuracy and effort, and whatever the degree of perfection, one has to teach to the heart the facts which he has so far recognized.

Even if one was unable to understand the meanings of the Qur'an and the invocations, and had no share of the secrets of worship, he, nevertheless, would have to teach his heart the very general meanings, such as telling it that the Qur'an is the words of Allah, that the invocations are remembrance of Allah, and that worship is obeying the Creator. He has to teach his heart such general information.

Should he be of those who understand the apparent meanings of the Qur'an and the invocations, such as the promises, warnings, biddings and forbiddings, as well as the information about the Source [*mabda'*] and Resurrection [*ma'ād*], he must inform his heart of whatever has been understood from them by him. Should a fact of knowledge or a secret of worship be exposed to him, he is to inform it to his heart carefully and strictly.

The result of such information is that after a period of perseverance the tongue of the heart will open to speaking and will become an invoker and a reminder. At the beginning the heart is a learner and the tongue a teacher. Whenever the tongue invokes, the heart also becomes an invoker, and so the heart is a follower of the tongue.

But after that the heart's tongue learns to speak, the contrary happens: the heart becomes invoker and the tongue follows it in invocation and in movement. Rather, sometimes it happens that even when man is sleeping, his tongue starts invoking in pursuit of his heart's invocation, as the heart's invocation is not confined to the state of wakefulness, and when the heart remembers, the tongue, having become its follower, starts invoking after it, and it leaks out from the dominion of the heart:

“Say: Every one acts according to his own manner...”¹

In short, at the beginning man must observe this discipline, that is, “informing,” so that the tongue of the heart starts speaking, which is the real objective. The sign denoting that the heart's tongue has been released is that the tiredness and the hardship of the invocation are removed and replaced by animation and pleasure.

It is like a baby, who has not yet started talking, its tutor feels tired and bored before it speaks. No sooner the baby starts prattling than his tutor's fatigue goes away and the teacher follows up the child's utterances without tiredness or trouble. Similar is the heart. It is a mere infant at the start, knowing not how to speak. It is to be taught, and the invocations and the recitations are to be placed on its tongue. Then, as it begins talking, man begins to be its follower, and there will remain neither pain of teaching nor any tiredness of invoking. This discipline is quite necessary for the beginners.

It must be noted that one of the secrets of repeating the invocations and benedictions and continuing the remembrance and worshipping is that the heart's tongue gets untied, and the heart becomes an invoking devotee. Without observing this discipline the tongue of the heart would remain tied up.

Some noble *Hadiths* refer to this. The noble *al-Kāfi*, quoting Imām as-Sādiq (‘a), who quoted Imām ‘Alī (‘a) who, referring to some disciplines of recitation, said: “...But strike with it (the Qur’an) your hardened hearts, and do not be eager to get to the end of the *sūrah*.”²

In another *hadīth* in *al-Kāfi*, Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) told Abū Usamah: “O Abū Usamah, call your hearts [*qulūb*] to remember Allah, and avoid what displeases Him.”³

Even the most perfect godly men (‘a) used to observe this discipline. A *hadīth* relates that Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) (once) was subject to a fit during the *Salat* and fainted. When he came to his senses and he was asked about the reason, he said: “I kept repeating this *ayyah* to my heart until I heard it from the one who spoke it, and so, my body could not bear to see His power.”⁴

Abū Dharr is quoted to have said that the Messenger of Allah (s) was one night repeating this Qur’anic verse:

“If you should torment them, then they are, indeed, your servants, and if you should forgive them, then you are, indeed, the Mighty, the Wise.”⁵

In short, the reality of invocation and remembrance is the invocation of the heart, without which the invocation of the tongue will be futile and worthless. This is referred to in a number of *Hadiths*. The Messenger of Allah (s) informed Abū Dharr: “O Abū Dharr, two *rak'ats* of *Salat* in contemplation are better than spending the whole night with an inattentive (or forgetful) heart.”⁶

The Messenger of Allah (s) is also quoted to have said: “Allah, the Exalted, would not look at your faces, but at your hearts.”⁷

In the *Hadiths* concerning the presence of heart it is stated that the more the presence of heart in the *Salat*, the better it is accepted, and the more the negligence of the heart, the less it is acceptable. As long as the said discipline is not observed, no cordial invocation will happen, and the heart will not come out of its being inattentive and negligent.

It is narrated that Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) said: “Make your heart a *qiblah* to your tongue and do not move it except by a sign from the heart.”⁸ But the heart would not become a *qiblah* nor would the tongue and the other organs follow it unless the said discipline was observed. Should it happen without the observance of this discipline, it would be a rarity, and one must not take pride in it.

1. Sūrah al-Isrā’ 17:84.

2. Usūl al-Kāfī, vol. 4, Book on “The Merit of the Qur’an,” ch. on “Reciting the Qur’an in a Melodious Voice,” hadīth 1, p. 418.

3. Al-Kāfī, (Rawdah), vol. 8, p. 167; Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 67, Book on “Faith and Disbelief,” ch. 44, hadīth, 38, p. 59.

4. Al-Mahajjat ul-Baydī, vol. 1, Book on “The Secrets of the Salat,” ch. on “The Merit of Submission and its Meaning,” p. 352.

5. Sūrah al-Mā'idah 4:118. Rih ul-Ma'āni fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān by 'Allamah al-Qāsi vol. 7, p. 70, quoted from the Sunans of an-Nasā'i and al-Bayhaqī.

6. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 74, Book of “Ar-Rawdah” ch. on “The Prophet’s Admonitions,” hadīth 2, p. 82, quoted from Makrīm al-Akhlaq, p. 465.

7. Ibid.; Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 67, p. 248, quoted from Jāmi' al-Akhdar, p. 117 (with a slight addition).

8. Refer to footnote 34.

Chapter 8: On The Presence Of Heart

One of the important cordial disciplines, which many other disciplines may be its preliminaries, and worship without it would be lifeless, and it is the key to the lock of perfections and the door of the doors

of felicities, and the noble *Hadiths* seldom attach so much importance to a discipline other than that, is the “presence of heart.” Although we have sufficiently explained this topic, together with its ranks and degrees in the thesis *The Secret of the Salat*¹ and in *Forty Hadiths*,² nevertheless, we shall allude to it once again, to complete the benefit, and to avoid reference.

It has already been explained that worships, ceremonies, invocations and benedictions can have their results only when they become the inner image of the heart, and the interior of the essence of man is mixed with them, and his heart takes the form of servitude, renouncing disobedience and obstinacy. It has also been noted that one of the secrets and advantages of worship is that one's will gets stronger, the soul overcomes (one's) nature, the forces of nature become subjugated by the soul's power and sovereignty, and the will of the invisible soul overrules the visible body, such that the forces turn like the angels with regard to Allah, the Exalted, i.e.

***“...they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and do as they are commanded.”*³**

Now we add that one of the important secrets and advantages of worship, to which everything is a preliminary, is that the entire inside and outside kingdom becomes subservient to Allah's will and moves at Allah's command, and the soul's visible and invisible forces become Allah's soldiers, and all of them get the post of being Allah's angels. This is regarded as one of the low degrees of the annihilation of the forces and wills in Allah's will.

Then, gradually, big consequences appear, the physical man becomes divine, and the soul practices servitude to Allah. The soldiers of *Iblīs* will totally be defeated and abolished, and the heart and its powers surrender to Allah and in it appear some inner stages of Islam. The result of this submitting of the will to Allah in the Hereafter will be that Allah, the Exalted, will enforce (make effective) the will of such a servant in the invisible worlds and make him His “sublime similitude” [*mathal-i a'īn*].

And, like His Sacred Self when at His mere Will everything He wants is created, He makes this servant's will like His; as some of the people of knowledge, quoting the Messenger of Allah (s), concerning the people of Paradise, say that an angel comes to them, and, after asking permission from them, he enters and after conveying Allah's greeting to them he delivers a letter from Allah, the Exalted.

The letter says to whomsoever it is addressed:

“From the Ever-Living, the Everlasting, Who never dies, to the ever-living, everlasting, who never dies. Now then, I tell a thing: Be! And it is. I made you tell a thing: Be! And it is.” The Messenger of Allah (s) said: “Hence, no one of the people of Paradise says to something: “Be!” unless it will be.”⁴

This is the divine sovereignty bestowed upon the servant, because of his forsaking his own will and his desires' sovereignty, and because of his disobeying *Iblīs* and his soldiers. None of the said results may take place except with the complete “presence of heart.” If the heart were negligent and forgetful during the *Salat*, his worship would not be real, but more like a play and sporting. Such worship, as a matter of fact, will have no effect whatsoever on the soul and the worship will never sublime from its outer form to

the inside and the invisible world [*malakūt*].

This fact is referred to by many narratives. The powers of the soul would not surrender, through such worship, to the soul itself, nor can the sovereignty of the soul be seen on them. Similarly, the outward and inward powers will not surrender to Allah's will, and the kingdom will not be subdued to Allah's Majesty, as is quite clear. That is why you can see no effect from forty or fifty years of worship on us.

On the contrary, the darkness of the heart and the obstinacy of the powers increase day after day, since our longing for nature, our obedience to our desires and to the satanic whispers, increase, too. These mean nothing but that our worships are empty and their interior and exterior disciplines are not observed. Otherwise, the Qur'anic text denotes that:

"...the Salat forbids lewdness and vice."⁵

Naturally, this forbidding is not something superficial. A torch should be lighted in the heart, and a light must shine in one's interior so as to guide him to the invisible world, and there appears a divine preventer, which prevents man from disobedience.

We do regard ourselves among the *musallīn*, and we have been engaged in this great worship for decades, without seeing such a light, nor discerning such a preventer in our interior. So, woe to us on the day when the images of our deeds and the list of our acts are handed to us in that world and we are told to check our own accounts.⁶

See if such deeds can be accepted by His Majesty, and whether such a *Salat*, in such a deformed and darkened form, can bring one nearer to His Presence. Is it right to treat this great divine trust and the advice of the prophets and *awsiyā'* (executors of the prophets' wills) in such a way, and to let the treacherous hand of the accursed Satan, the enemy of Allah, meddle in it?

The *Salat*, which is the *mi'rāj* of the believer and the means of proximity of the pious⁷, why should it keep you away from the sacred proximity to the Divine Presence? What would be our share on that day except regret, remorse, helplessness, wretchedness, shame and disgrace regret and a remorse which have no equal in this world, and a shame and disgrace which cannot be imagined? This world's regrets are, at any rate, mixed with a thousand kinds of hope, and the shamelessness here is transitory, while there is nothing there except regret and remorse day after day.

Allah, the Exalted, says:

"And warn them of the day of regret, when the matter shall have been decided."⁸

What has passed cannot be returned and the life which has been wasted cannot be restored.

"O woe to me! For what I fell short of my duty to Allah..."⁹

My dear, this day is the day of opportunities and the grace period for actions. The prophets came and brought Books, and they proclaimed their calls, with a lot of celebrities, enduring pains and hardships, in order to wake us up from the sleep of negligence and to sober us from the nature's intoxication, and to take us to the world of light and the source of joy and pleasure, and to introduce us to the eternal life, the everlasting bliss and the unlimited delights, and to deliver us from annihilation, misery, fire, darkness, regret and remorse.

All these are for our own benefit, without there being any profit for them, as those sacred personalities are in no need of our faith and deeds. Despite all that, they had not the least effect on us, as Satan was so firmly closing the ears of our heart, and exerted such a strong control over our inside and outside that none of their admonitions could ever have an effect on us, nor could any of the *Qur'āns* and *Hadiths* pierce the ears of our hearts, going to no farther than our outer animal ears.

In short, O respected reader who read these papers; do not be, like the writer, void of all lights, and empty-handed of all good deeds, entangled in the sensual desires. Have mercy on yourself, and get a fruit from your life. Carefully look into the lives of the prophets and the perfect godly men [*awliyā*], and cast away the false desires and Satan's promises. Do not be deceived by Satan's fraud, nor by the deceptions of the commanding soul, as their trickery is very clever, and they are able to dress every wrong as right in the eyes of man in order to deceive him.

Sometimes they fool man by making him think that he will repent at the end of his life, and thus, drag him into wretchedness, despite the fact that repenting at the end of life, after the accumulation of the darkness of sins, and the numerous acts of injustice against the people and against Allah's right, is a very difficult task.

Now, when man is still strong and in the prime of life, and the tree of sin is still frail and the influence of Satan has not yet become widespread in the soul, and the soul is still new to the invisible world and very near the God-given disposition, and the conditions for an acceptable repentance are easy, they do not let man repent and uproot this frail tree and overthrow the dependent kingdom.

They suggest old age, when, on the contrary, the will is weak, the powers have given way, the trees of different sins are strong and deep rooted, the kingdom of *iblis*, inwardly and outwardly, is independent and firm, the familiarity with nature is strong, the distance from the invisible world is great, the light of innate disposition is extinguished, and the situation for repentance is difficult and bitter. This is nothing but delusion.

In another instance the promise of the intercession of the intercessors (*'a*) drives man out of their sacred realm and deprives him of their intercession, because indulgence in disobedience gradually darkens and upsets the heart and drags man to a bad end. Satan's aim is to rob man's faith, and he makes committing sins a preliminary step to that aim so as to attain it.

If a man covetously thinks of intercession, he must try hard in this world to keep his connection with his

intercessors, and think of the status of those who will intercede on the Day of Resurrection to see how their state of worship and devotion was. Suppose that you died a faithful man, but if the load of the sins and injustices was heavy, it is possible that concerning the different pains and tortures in the *barzakh* there would be no intercession for you, as Imam as-Sadiq was quoted to have said: “Your *barzakh* is with yourselves.”¹⁰

The tortures of the *barzakh* cannot be compared with the tortures of this world, and the length of the period of the *barzakh* is unknown except to Allah. It will probably last for millions and millions of years. It is possible that in the Hereafter and after long periods of diverse and unbearable kinds of torture, we get the intercession, as it is also related in the *Hadiths*.¹¹

Thus, the satanic deception stops man from good deeds, and causes him to leave this world either faithless or loaded with heavy burdens, afflicting him with wretchedness and misfortune. In some instances, Satan, by giving man hope in the vast mercy of the Most Merciful, cuts his hand off the skirt of mercy, while he is careless of the fact that raising up so many prophets, revealing the Books, descending the angels, and the revelations and inspirations to the prophets, and their showing the right path, are all of the mercy of the Most Merciful. The whole world is enveloped in the vast mercy of Allah, while we, at the fringe of the spring of life, die of thirst.

The greatest of the divine mercies is the Qur'an. If you are looking greedily for the mercy of the Most Merciful, hoping for His vast mercy, do benefit from the Qur'an, the vast mercy. It has opened to you the way to happiness, and has distinguished for you the pit from the paved road. But you fall over into the pit by yourself, because you deviate from the right path. So, what has mercy to do with that?

Had it been possible to show the road of good and happiness to the people in a different way, it would have been done, according to the vastness of the mercy. Had it been possible to force the people into happiness, it would have been done. But alas! How far it is! The road to the Hereafter is a road, which cannot be trodden except at one's free will. Happiness cannot be attained forcibly. Piety and righteous deeds are not so if not done voluntarily. This is probably the very meaning of the noble *ayah*:

“There is no compulsion in religion” (*Surah al-Baqarah, 2:256*).

Yes, what can be made compulsory and forcible is the appearance of the divine religion, not its reality. The prophets (*'a*) were enjoined to impose the appearance, in any possible way, on the people, so that the appearance of the world might become the appearance of the divine justice, and to guide the people to the interior, so that they themselves might march on their own feet towards happiness.

In short, this is also a satanic delusion, which cuts, by coveting mercy, man's hand short from mercy.

1. Refer to footnote 6.

2. Forty *Hadiths* is one of Imam Khomein's works, which he finished in the month of Muharram 1358 L.H. In its preface,

after praising, blessing and invocation, he says: "...I, a poor and weak servant, have, for sometime, been thinking to collect forty hadiths of the hadiths of the infallible and pure Ahl al-Bayt ('a) out of the reliable books of the Companions and 'Ulamā' (may Allah be pleased with them), and to explain each in a way suitable for the common people. I, thus, wrote it in Persian so that the Persian-speaking people may benefit from it, and, inshā' Allāh (Allah willing), I may be covered by the noble hadith of the Seal of the Prophets (s) who said: "Whoever preserved for my Ummah forty hadiths that may benefit them, Allah would resurrect him on the Day of Resurrection as a learned jurist." I was, thanks to God, successful, with Allah's good help, in starting it. I ask Allah, the Exalted, to help me in finishing it. Surely He is the Giver of success!"

3. Sūrah at-Tahrīm 66:6.

4. 'Ilm ul-Yaqīn, vol. 2, p. 1061 (with a slight difference).

5. Sūrah al-'Ankabūt 69:45.

6. It refers to the āyah: "Read your book; your soul suffices as a reckoner against you this day." Sūrah al-Isrā' 17:14.

7. 'Iqā'idat, p. 29. by the late Majlisī; Furū' al-Karīf, vol. 3, "Book of as-Salat," ch. on "The Merit of as-Salat," hadith 6, p. 265.

8. Sūrah Maryam 19:39.

9. Sūrah az-Zumar 39:56.

10. This concept is understood from the narrative of 'Amr ibn Yazīd in Furū' al-Karīf, vol. 3, p. 242, and in 'Ilm ul-Yaqīn, vol. 2, p. 1051.

11. As in Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 8, "Book of Justice and Resurrection," ch. 12, hadiths 35 and 36, p. 362.

Chapter 9: Hadiths Concerning The Presence Of Heart

There are many *Hadiths* from the infallible and pure *Ahl al-Bayt* ('a) concerning urging the "presence of heart". It suffices to translate some texts of those narratives:

The Messenger of Allah (s) is quoted to have said: "Worship Allah as if you see Him. If you do not see Him, He does see you." 1

From this noble *hadith* two of the degrees of the presence of heart can be realized:

The first is that the *sālik* discerns the Beauty of the Beautiful, and is absorbed in the manifestations of the Beloved [*hadrat-i mahbūb*] such that all the ears of his heart will be closed to all other creatures, while the eye of his insight opens to the pure Beauty of the Lord of Majesty, discerning nothing else. That is, he is engaged in the Present [*hādīr*], neglecting the presence [*hudūr*] and company [*mahdar*].

The second degree, which is lower in rank, is that the *sālik* sees himself present in His Presence [*mahdar*] and observes the discipline of the Presence [*hudūr*] and Company [*mahdar*]. The Messenger of Allah (s) says: "If you can be of those who are in the first degree, then worship Allah accordingly, or else, do not neglect the fact that you are in the Presence [*mahdar*] of the Lord." Naturally, there is a discipline for being in the Presence [*mahdar*] of Allah, which should not be neglected in respect of the

state of servitude.

In a *hadīth*, Abū Hamzah ath-Thamālī narrates: “I saw 'Alī ibn al-Husayn (‘a) performing his *Salat*. His cloak slipped off his shoulders, but he did not try to rearrange it until he finished the *Salat*. When I asked him about that, he said: “Woe unto you! Do you know at whose service I was?” 2

The Messenger of Allah (s) was quoted to have said: “Two of my *Ummah* stand for the *Salat*, and, although their *rukū‘* and *sujūd* are the same, the difference between the two *Salats* is like that which is between the earth and the sky.” 3

He also said: “Is the person who turns his face in the *Salat* not afraid that it may turn into the face of an ass?” 4

He further said: “Whoever performs a two-*rak‘at* *Salat* without paying attention to any worldly matter, Allah, the Exalted, will forgive him his sins. 5

In another *hadīth* he said: “A *Salat*, half of it may be accepted, or one-third, or a quarter, or one-fifth, or even one-tenth. Another *Salat* may be folded, like an old dress, and be thrown back at the face of its owner.”

“No part of the *Salat* is yours except that part which you perform with an attentive heart.” 6

Imām al-Bāqir (‘a) has quoted the Messenger of Allah (s) as saying: “When a believing servant stands for the *Salat*, Allah, the Exalted, looks at him (or he said: He turns to him) until he finishes, and mercy shadows over his head, the angels surround him from all sides up to the horizon of the heaven, and Allah assigns an angel to stand at his head, saying: “O *musallī*, if you know who is looking at you, and to whom you are supplicating, you will look to nowhere, nor will you leave your position.” 7

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) is quoted to have said: “Eagerness and fear will not get together in a heart unless Paradise is his. So, when you perform your *Salat*, turn with your heart to Allah, the Glorified, the Almighty, because there would be no believing servant who would turn with his heart to Allah, the Exalted, during the *Salat* and invocation, unless Allah would turn to him the hearts of the believers, and with their love He would back him and lead him to Paradise.” 8

It is narrated that Imāms al-Bāqir and as-Sādiq (‘a) said: “Nothing of your *Salat* is yours except that which you did with an attentive heart. So, if one performed it completely mistaken, or neglected its disciplines, it would be folded and thrown back at its owner's face.” 9

Imām Bāqir al-'Ulām (the cleaver of knowledge) (‘a) is quoted to have said: “Of a servant's *Salat* ascends half, one-third, one-fourth or one-fifth to his account. That is, of his *Salat* will not ascend except that part which is performed with an attentive heart. We have been commanded to perform the *nafilah* so as to make up for the shortcomings of the obligatory *Salats*.” 10

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) is quoted to have said: “When you wear the *ihram* for the *Salat* (i.e., when you prepared for the *Salat*), pay attention to it, because when you pay attention to it, Allah will pay attention to you. If you do not care for it, Allah will not care for you. So, sometimes, does not ascend of the *Salat* except one-third, one-fourth or one-sixth, according to the amount of attention the *musallī* pays to it. Allah grants nothing to the negligent.”¹¹

The Messenger of Allah (s) is quoted to have said to Abū Dharr: “Two moderate *rak’ats* of *Salat* with contemplation are better than worshipping a whole night with a negligent heart.”¹² The *Hadiths* on this are many, but those which have been related are enough for those whose hearts are awake and attentive.

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1. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 74, “Book of ar-Rawdah, ch. 4, hadīth 3, p. 74; Makrīm al-Akhlaq, p. 459.
 2. Wasīl ash-Shāh, vol. 4, “Book of as-Salat,” sec. on “The Acts of as-Salat,” ch. 3, hadīth 6, p. 688.
 3. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 81, “Book of as-Salat,” ch. 16, hadīth 41, p. 249.
 4. Mustadrak al-Wasīl, “Book of as-Salat,” sec. on “The Acts of the Salat,” ch. 2, hadīth 20.
 5. Ibid., hadīth 13.
 6. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 81, “Book of as-Salat,” ch. 16, hadīth 59, p. 260.
 7. Mustadrak al-Wasīl, “Book of as-Salat,” sec. on “The Acts of the Salat,” ch. 2, hadīth 22.
 8. Wasīl ash-Shāh, vol. 4, “Book of as-Salat,” sec. on “The Acts of the Salat,” ch. 3, hadīth 3, p. 678.
 9. Ibid., hadīth 1.
 10. ‘Ilal ash-Sharī‘, vol. 2, ch. 22, hadīth 2, p. 327.
 11. Mustadrak al-Wasīl, “Book of as-Salat,” sec. on “The Acts of the Salat,” ch. 3, hadīth 7.
 12. Refer to footnote 59.

Chapter 10: On Calling To Acquiring The Presence Of Heart

Now that you have understood the rational and traditional merits and characteristics of the presence of heart, as well as the disadvantages of neglecting it, (you should know that) understanding alone is not enough, though it strengthens the evidence. So, use all your endeavors and try to acquire what you have understood, and turn your understanding into practice in order to be benefited by it and get its advantage.

Think a little, as, according to narratives from the infallible *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) who are the sources of revelation, and all their knowledge and utterances are of divine inspirations and Muhammadan intuition [*kashf*] the acceptance of the *Salat* (by Allah) is the condition for the acceptance of other acts of worship. If the *Salat* is rejected, they will not pay attention to the other acts at all.¹ The acceptance of the *Salat* is

conditioned by the presence of heart.

Without the presence of heart in the *Salat* it would be worthless and not becoming of being in the Presence of Allah and cannot be accepted, as had been explained by formerly mentioned *Hadiths*. Thus, the key to the treasury [*ganjīnah*] of deeds and the entrance to the doors of all kinds of happiness is the presence of heart, with which the door of happiness is opened to man, and without it all worships are degraded and worthless.

Now, with a look of regard, contemplate a little, and with the eye of insight look at the importance and the greatness of the situation, and carry it out with complete seriousness. The key to the door of happiness and the doors of Paradise, as well as the key to the door of wretchedness and the doors of Hell are in this world, in your own pocket. You can open the doors of Paradise and happiness to yourself and you can do the contrary.

The reigns are in your hands. Allah, the Exalted, has completed the evidence for you, showed you the roads to happiness and wretchedness, and has offered you the outward and the inward successes. What was needed on the part of Allah and His friends [*awliyā*], has been done. Now it is our turn for action. They are the guides and we are the treaders. They did their work as best as possible without the least negligence, such that there remained no excuse whatsoever.

So, you, too, wake up from your sleep of negligence and tread upon the road to happiness and make use of your years and powers, since, if you waste your cash of years and youth, and your treasure of power and ability, no compensation can make up for them. If you are young, do not let yourself reach old age, because old age has its particular shortcomings, which are known to the elderly people, and you do not know.

To reform oneself in old age and in weakness is quite difficult. If you are old, do not let the rest of your years be waste, because, at any rate, as long as you are alive, you still have a way to happiness, and a door of happiness is open to you God forbid its being closed and the road being blocked, as in that case you lose your free will and there remains nothing but regret, remorse and repentance of the past, of which you have no portion.

So, my dear, if you believe in what has been said, which is the sayings of the prophets (*ʿa*), and if you prepare yourself for attaining happiness and for the journey to the Hereafter, and find it necessary to obtain the presence of heart, which is the key to the treasure of happiness, the way to obtain it is to remove, first, the obstacles which prevent the presence of heart and to uproot the thorns from the road of the journey, and then to practice it.

The obstacles, which prevent the presence of heart in worship, are the dispersion of the mind and too many engagements of the heart. They happen most frequently from outside and through the outer senses, such as the ear hearing some sound during worship and the mind is, thus, distracted, stirring the imagination and inner thoughts, which fall under the effect of fancy, flying from one branch to another. Or

a person's eye may see something, which disturbs the mind and distracts the thoughts. Likewise, other senses may be attracted, causing imaginative transitions.

Regarding the doing away with these obstacles, they have said that it is done by removing the causes, such as standing in a dark place, or in a privacy, when performing the *Salat*, and closing the eyes during the *Salat*, and refraining from performing it in places causing mental distraction. The late prosperous martyr (the Second Martyr) (may Allah be pleased with him), quotes some devotees to have said that they used to worship and perform their *Salats* in a small dark room barely large enough for worshipping.²

Yet, it is obvious that this would not remove the obstacle, nor would it uproot the cause, because the principal hindrance is the imagination, which, with even a little motive, does its job. It may sometimes happen that in a very small, dark and private room, the activities of imagination and fancy become greater, and they cause more (mental) plays, and jests. So, uprooting the whole matter is done by reforming one's imagination and fancy.

Later on we shall return to this point. However, this type of treatment is sometimes effective and helpful in some souls, but we are looking for a decisive cure and uprooting the real cause, and it cannot be done that way.

Sometimes the disturbance of mind and absence of heart are caused by inner matters, which, generally speaking, are originated by two big causes to which return most of the matters:

One is the dissoluteness and volatility of the bird of imagination. Imagination is, indeed, an extremely slippery power. It flies from one branch to another and from one peak to another. This is not connected to loving the world or paying attention to worldly matters, wealth or position. Actually, the volatility of imagination is, in itself, a calamity that afflicts even the ascetics. Acquiring calmness of mind, peace of soul and repose of imagination are of the important affairs, which, if acquired, can bring about the final remedy. This shall be referred to later on.

The other cause is the love of the world and the attraction of mind to mundane matters. This cause is at the top of the sins and it is the mother of the inner diseases, the thorn of the road of the people of *sulūk* and the source of disasters. As long as the heart loves this world and is indulged in it, the way to reforming the heart is closed and the door of all happiness is shut in the face of man. We shall, within two chapters, refer to these two big origins and strong obstacles, if Allah wills.

1. Refer to footnote 17.

2. At-Tanbihāt ul-ʿIlīyyah 'alā Wazʿif is-Salat il-Qalbiyyah, p. 110 (printed within a collection of the statements of the Second Martyr, lithographed in 1313 L.H. by the handwriting of Muhammad Hasan Jarfī daqānī).

Chapter 11: On Curing The Wandering Imagination

Concerning Showing an Effective Cure for the Treatment of the Wandering and Escaping Imagination that Brings about the Presence of Heart

Know that each one of the inner and outer powers of the soul can be educated and taught by way of practicing a particular austerity. For example, human eye is unable to gaze at a point or at an intense light, such as the disk of the sun, for a long time, without blinking. But if a man educates his eye, such as that which is done by some of the people of false asceticism for certain purposes, he can look into the sun for several hours without blinking or getting tired.

Similarly, he can gaze at a certain point for hours without any movement. This is also true of the other faculties, like stopping breathing, which, as they say, is seen among the people of false asceticism, as there are some who can stop breathing for an extraordinary period.

Of the faculties that can be educated are the faculties of imagination and fancy. Before educating them, they are like two ever-jumpy and restless birds flying from a branch to another, and from one thing to another. If one tries to watch them for a single minute, he will see their many successive movements of very slight and far-fetched connections.

Many think that to control the bird of imagination and tame it is out of the limits of possibilities, and falls within the realm of the common impossibilities. But, as a matter of fact, it is not so. With hardship, practice and time-taking education, it can be tamed, and the bird of imagination can be put under one's control and will be such that it can be confined for several hours and for a certain purpose, according to one's will.

The principal way of taming it is to act to its contrary. That is, at the time of the *Salat* one is to prepare himself to control the imagination during the *Salat* and confine it to action, and, as soon as it tries to slip out of his hand, to recapture it. One should carefully watch it in all the actions, recitations, invocations, etc. of the *Salat*, observing it so as not to be obstinate. At the beginning, this seems to be a difficult task.

But after a while of strict practice and treatment, it will certainly become tame and obedient. You should not, of course, expect yourself, at the beginning, to be able to control the bird of imagination along the *Salat* completely. Actually, this is impossible. Perhaps those who stressed this impossibility had such expectations. The situation requires deliberateness, careful patience and gradual training.

It is possible that you can first control your imagination during only one-tenth of the *Salat* or even less than that, in which you can have the presence of heart. Then, if one pays more attention, and if he feels

himself in need of that, he can attain a better result, and can gradually overcome the Satan of fancy and the bird of imagination, such that they come under his control in most of the *Salat*. However, you should never despair, as despair is the origin of all weaknesses and inabilities, whereas the flash of hope guides man to his complete happiness.

The important thing in this respect, however, is to feel being in need a mood that is little felt by us. Our heart does not believe that the source of the happiness in the Hereafter, and the means of a long-lasting life, is the *Salat*. We take the *Salat* to be an additional burden on our lives. We think it an imposition and an obligation. The love of a thing is seen from understanding its consequences. We understood its consequence and the heart believes in it, and, therefore, we are not in need of any advice or admonition in acquiring it.

Those who think that the message of the Seal of the Prophets, the H^ushimite Messenger (s), has two dimensions: one belonging to this world and the other to the Hereafter, and take this to be a pride of the bringer of the *Shar^hah* and the perfection of prophethood, know nothing of the religion and are unaware of the message and far from understanding the purpose of the prophethood.

Inviting to worldly things is quite alien to the objectives of the great prophets, since desire, sense of anger and the interior and exterior Satans are sufficient for such an invitation and it does not need the sending of messengers. The administration of desire and anger is in no need of a Qur'an or a prophet. The prophets, actually, have come to keep people back from this world to curb the release of the desire and anger, and to limit the sources of worldly interests.

An ignorant person thinks that they invited the people to this world. They say: "Do not acquire wealth by whatever means. Do not satisfy your desire in whatever way available there should be marriage, and there should be (lawful) trade, industry and agriculture though the door of the center of desire and anger is opened by letting them free."

So, the prophets demand them to be chained, not to be set free, and they do not invite to worldly things. They ask for a lawful business so as to prohibit the unlawful ones. They call to marriage in order to curb the nature and prevent debauchery and releasing the power of desire [*shahwat*]. As a matter of fact, they are not absolutely against them, because it would be against the perfect system.

In short, as we feel we need this world, regarding it to be the capital of life and the source of pleasure, we get ready to attend to it and to acquire it. But if we believe in the Hereafter-life and feel we are in need of that life, and regard worship, especially the *Salat*, to be the capital for living there, and the source of happiness in that world, we, naturally, will try to do our best to acquire it, and we will not feel any difficulty and fatigue in ourselves; or rather, we will hurry to acquire it with complete eagerness and craving, and endure every hardship and undergo all circumstances for that purpose.

Now, this coldness and weakness, which are manifest in us, are caused by the coldness of the radiance of our faith and the weakness of its foundation. Had all the news of the prophets and holy men [*awliy^u*]

(‘a) and the arguments of the elite and learned men (may Allah be pleased with them) created “sufferance” [ihtimāḥ] in us, we could have done better in our attempts and acquisitions.

So, we have to regret a thousand times for letting Satan overcome our inside and conquer the whole of our heart and the hearings of our interior, preventing us from hearing the sayings of Allah and His Messengers, and those of the scholars, as well as the admonitions of the divine Books. Such being the case, our ears are changed to those of worldly animals, and the divine admonitions would not go beyond the apparent and the animal ear to the inside

“Most surely there is a reminder in this for him who has a heart or he gives ear and is a witness.”
(*Surah al-Qaaf, 50:37*)

One of the great duties of the traveler to Allah and the striver for the sake of Allah is to completely give up self-reliance during the striving and *suḥḥ*, and, by nature, to pay attention to the Cause of the causes, and by disposition, to belong to the Origin of the origins, asking from His Sacred Existence protection and immunity from sin, and depending on the help of His Sacred Essence. In his privacy he is to implore Him and very seriously request Him to improve his condition, for there is no refuge save Him. And praise be to Allah!

Chapter 12: Explaining That Loving This World Causes Distraction Of The Mind

A Reference to that Loving this World is the Origin of the Distraction of the Imagination and Prevents the Presence of Heart, and Explaining its Remedy as Much as Possible

It must be noted that the heart, according to its nature and disposition, looks at what it loves and is inclined to that beloved to have it as its *qiblah*. If an affair distracted the heart from thinking of the beauty of its cherished beloved, no sooner the engagement slackens and the distraction stops than the heart flies towards its beloved and clings to his skirt.

Should the people of knowledge and the divinely attracted enjoy strength of heart and be firm in absorption and love, they would recognize the Beauty of the Beloved in every mirror, and would discern the wanted perfection in every being: “I discerned nothing unless I recognized Allah in it and with it,”¹ and if their leader [the Prophet (s)] says: “Sometimes my heart is enveloped by a cover of dust, and I ask Allah's forgiveness seventy times every day,”² it is because to see the Beauty of the Beloved especially in an impure mirror like the Abu Jahl mirror is in itself a sort of impurity with respect to the perfect ones.

If their hearts are not strong enough, and their engagement in multiplicity prevents the presence (of heart), no sooner the engagement lessens than their hearts' birds fly back to their sacred nests and cling to the Beauty of the Beautiful.

As to those who look for other than Allah who, in the eyes of the people of knowledge, all seek for this world they are also attracted to their want and cling to it. If they, too, are extremely in love with their quest, and the love of this world has completely possessed their hearts, they will never relax in their attraction towards it, and, whatever the situation, they remain beside the beauty of their beloved.

Should their love be less, their hearts would return, in their leisure time, to their beloved. Those who cherish in their hearts the love of wealth, rule and position, dream of them in their sleep, too, and, in their wakefulness, they live thinking of their beloved. As long as they are engaged in worldly matters, they live hugging their beloved, and when the time of the *Salat* arrives, the heart feels a kind of vacancy and sticks to its beloved, as if the *takbīrat ul-īhrām* (the first *Allāhu akbar* uttered aloud at the start of the *Salat*) is the key to the shop, or the remover of the curtain between it and its beloved.

So, he comes to himself only when he has just uttered the *taslīm* (the finishing words of the *Salat*), whereas he had paid no attention to the *Salat* itself, and during it he had been engaged in thinking of this world. That is why our *Salats* for forty or fifty years have no result whatsoever in our hearts except darkness and impurity, and what should have been a cause for ascension to the proximity of Allah's presence and a means of becoming familiar with His sanctity, has, on the contrary, driven us out of His proximity and taken us miles away from ascending to be familiar with His presence.

Had our *Salat* a smell of servitude, its result would have been modesty and humility, not self-conceitedness, ostentation, arrogance and pride, each one of which can possibly be a separate cause of man's misfortune and perdition.

In short, when one's heart becomes mixed with the love of this world, with no objective or aim except building it up and developing it, this love will inevitably prevent the heart from being vacant and present in the presence of Allah. This deadly disease and ruinous corruption can be cured by useful knowledge and good deed.

The useful knowledge suitable for this ailment is to think of the fruits and outcomes of curing it, and compare them with the harmful and destructive consequences resulting from it. In my commentaries on the *Forty Hadiths* in this respect I have explained this topic in details as was possible. Here I will suffice myself with explaining some *Hadiths* of the infallible *Ahl al-Bayt* ('a):

In *Al-Kāfī*, Abū 'Abdullāh (as-Sādiq) ('a) is quoted to have said: "The origin of every sin is the love of this world."³ Other *Hadiths* on this subject, though in different wordings, are plenty.⁴

Yet, this noble *hadīth* is quite enough for the wakeful man, and it is enough for this big and pernicious sin to be the source of all sins and the root and basement of all corruptions. By a little contemplation it can be realized that almost all moral and practical corruptions are the fruits of this vile tree. No false

religion was established in the world, and no corruption has ever happened, unless it stemmed from this grave sin.

Murders, plunders, injustice and transgressions are of the offspring of this sin. Debauchery, atrocities, theft and other crimes are the outcomes of this germ of corruption. The man who is afflicted with this love is void of all moral virtues. Courage, chastity, generosity and equity, which are the origin of all the spiritual virtues, are not compatible with the love of this world. Divine knowledge [*ma'rif*], unity of Names, Attributes, Actions and Essence, truth-seeking and truth-discerning are contrary to the love of this world.

Tranquility of the soul, calmness of the mind and repose of the heart, which are the spirit of happiness in both worlds, cannot come along with loving this world. Richness of the heart, greatness, self-respect, freedom, and manliness are of the requisites of ignoring this world, whereas poverty, humility, covetousness, greed, servitude and flattery are of the requisites of loving this world. Kindness, mercy, observing kinship relations, affection and amity are not in harmony with the love of this world. Hatred, rancor, despotism, severing kinship relations, hypocrisy and other evil characters are of the progeny of this “mother of diseases”.

As-S^{adiq} (^a), as stated in *Misb^{ah} ash-Shar^{ah}*, said: “This world is like a portrait: its head is arrogance, its eye is greed, its ear is covetousness, its tongue is pretence, its hand is desire, its leg is conceit, its heart is negligence, its being is perishing and its destiny is decline. Whoever loves it, it gives him arrogance, whoever approves of it, it grants him greed, whoever demands it, it drives him to covetousness, whoever praises it, it clothes him with pretence, whoever wants it, it offers him conceit, whoever trusts it, it neglects him, whoever admires its properties, it ruins him, and whoever accumulates it and does not spend it, it turns him down to its dwelling place, the Fire.”⁵

Daylam^ī, in *Irsh^{ād} al-Qul^{ūb}*, quoting Am^{ir} al-Mu'min^{īn} (Al^ī) (^a), says that the Messenger of Allah (s) said: “On the night of the *mi'r^{aj}*, Allah, the Exalted, said: “O Ahmad, if a servant performs the *Salat* as much as that of the people of the earth and the heaven, and fasts as much as that of the people of the earth and the heaven, and refrains, like the angels, from food, and wears the apparel of a devotee, then I see in his heart a bit of love for this world or for worldly reputation, leadership, celebrity and ornaments, he will not be in an abode in My neighborhood and I will drive My love out of his heart and make it dark until he forgets Me. I will not let him taste the sweetness of my love.”⁶

It is quite clear that loving this world and loving Allah cannot meet together. In this respect there are too many *Hadiths* to be contained in these pages.

Now as it has become clear that the love of this world is the origin of all evils, it becomes incumbent on a man of reason, who cherishes his happiness, to uproot this tree from his heart. The practical way to treat it is to do the contrary, i.e., if he has a longing for wealth and position, he can get rid of it by way of being open-handed and spending obligatory and recommended alms and charities.

By the way, one of the characteristics of alms-giving is lessening the love of this world. That is why it is recommended to give charity out of what you love most, as stated in the Glorious Qur'an:

“You shall not attain goodness until you spend out of what you love” (Surah aal-Imraan, 3:92).

If he desires pride, priority, authority and power, he is to act against that, to turn the nose of the evil-commanding soul into the dust to reform it.

Man should know that the world is such that the more one is attached to it and in pursuit of it, the more his affection to it and the more his regret for parting company with it. It seems as if one is in quest of something, which is not in his possession. Man thinks he is in need of a certain portion of the world, which he pursues, no matter what difficulties and risks he will have to endure to attain his goal, and, as soon as he obtains it, it loses its attraction and becomes an ordinary matter, and his love and attachment turn into something else more sublime than the previous one, and he starts his toil and endeavors anew.

In this way his anxiety will never be subdued. Actually, his love gets ever stronger, and his hardships ever increase. This natural disposition never stops. The people of knowledge use this inborn nature to prove a lot of disciplines, which are out of the scope of these papers to explain. This subject is referred to by some noble *Hadiths*, such as that which is stated in the noble *al-Kāfi*, quoting. Imām al-Bāqir (‘a) who said: “The parable of a man greedy of this world is the parable of the silk worm: the more it winds the thread round itself the farther it becomes from salvation, until it dies of grief.”⁷

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) is quoted to have said: “This world is like sea-water; the more a thirsty man drinks from it the thirstier he gets, until it kills him.”⁸

1. A quotation from Amr al-Mu'minin [‘Alī] (‘a) in 'Ilm al-Yaqin, vol. 1, p. 49.

2. Mustadrak al-Wasail, “Book of as-Salat,” sec. on “Invocations,” ch. 22, hadith 1.

3. Usul al-Kāfi, “Book of Faith and Infidelity,” ch. on “Loving this World and Being Attached to it,” hadith 1.

4. Ibid., hadiths 1-17.

5. Misbāh ash-Sharāh, ch. 32 “On This World's Attribute(s)”.

6. Irshād al-Qulūb, vol. 1, p. 206

7. Usul al-Kāfi, vol. 3, “Book of Faith and Infidelity,” ch. on “Dispraising this World and Neglecting it,” hadith 20, and ch. on “Loving this World and being Greedy of it,” hadith 7, p. 202.

8. Ibid, hadith 24.

Completion: On Turning The Soul Away From

The World

So, O seeker of the truth and traveler to Allah, as you have tamed the bird of imagination, chained the Satan of fancy, given up the love of wife, children and other worldly affairs, got familiar with the attraction of the fire of the natural divine love and said: “Lo! I see a fire [afar off],”¹ seen yourself with no barriers in the way and prepared the requirements of the journey, get up, then, leave this dark room of nature and the narrow passage of the world, break off the chains of time, save yourself from this prison and let the bird of sanctity fly to “the meeting place of intimacy.” [*mahfil-i 'uns*].

A whistle is calling you from the turret of the 'Arsh, I wonder what keeps you into this place of traps!²

So, be resolute and strengthen your will, since the first condition of *sulūk* is resolution [*'azm*], without which no distance can be covered and no perfection can be reached. The great Shaykh, Shāhābādī 3 (may my soul be his ransom) called it as the core of humanity. It can also be said that one of the great points of fearing Allah, avoiding the desires of the appetitive soul, the lawful austerities, and the divine worship and rituals, is strengthening the resolution and defying the worldly powers under the sovereignty of the soul, as has already been mentioned.

We now close this discourse with praising and glorifying the Sacred Essence of Allah, the Exalted, and with praising the attributes of the Chosen Master, the elected Prophet, and his pure offspring ('a). We ask the help of the holy souls of those sacred personalities in our spiritual journey and faithful ascension.

1. A part of Moses' conversation with his people. “When he saw a fire, he said to his people: “Stay here! Lo! I see a fire [afar off].” ” Sūrah Tā-Hā 20: 10 and Sūrah an-Naml 27: 7.

2. A poem by Hāfiz Shīrāzī.

3. The late ʿayyātullāh Mūrziyyī Muhammad-ʿAlī Isfahānī Shāhābādī, a jurist, methodist, gnostic and prominent philosopher, son of the late ʿayyātullāh Mūrziyyī Muhammad Jawād Husaynī Isfahānī, was born in Isfahan in 1292 L.H. After finishing his preliminary learning in Isfahan and Tehran, he traveled to study in the theological circles of Najaf al-Ashraf and Ṣūmirrī (in Iraq). There his tutors were great scholars, such as the late writer of Al-Jawāhir, ʿakhd Khurāsānī and Sharʿat Isfahānī. He soon attained the degree of ijtihād. He reached a high position in fiqh, philosophy and gnosticism, and he taught these branches of knowledge. His class was one of the most powerful scholarly circles in Ṣūmirrī. After returning from Iraq, he settled first in Tehran, and then he moved to the sacred town of Qum, where he dwelt for seven years. During his stay in Qum, Imām Khomeinī (may Allah be pleased with him and send peace upon him) benefited so much from his lessons on ethics and gnosticism. The Imām of the nation, in many places in this book and in his other books and writings, refers to his great teacher with utmost respect and esteem, and relates his scholarly emissions. Besides teaching different branches of knowledge and educating his distinguished disciples, the late Shāhābādī wrote many books in different fields. At the age of seventy-seven, that man of knowledge and action died in 1369 L.H. in Tehran, and was buried in the neighborhood of the shrine of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīm al-Hasanī, in the graveyard of the late Shaykh Abī ʿlī-Futūḥ ar-Rīzī. May Allah resurrect him together with the Prophet Muhammad and his pure progeny.

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