

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 [*‘ilm*], which is such that it proves, by scientific conduct [*sulūk*] 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 [*dār-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 [*shuhūd*], and the result of suffering and *sulūk*, 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 *sālik* on the road of the truth, the traveler in the way of servitude, covers this distance with the steps of scientific *sulūk* 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 *sālik* 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 *istidrāj* (being engaged in

other than the *Haqq*).

Istidrāj 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 [*burhān*] and its branches. The more these branches are, the thicker the veil and the greater the distance from the truth. The *sālik*, 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” [*khalīf*] *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 *nifāhs*: (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 *Jāmi' al-Asrār wa Manba' al-Anwār* by Sayyid Haydar ḥmulī, pp. 8, 95 and

121. Also in the Lāhijī's Commentary on Gulshān-i Rīz, p. 153; Naqd an-Nusūs, p. 185; Minhāj at-Talībīn, p. 221; Al-Usūl al-'Asharah, p. 31.
2. In 'Awāliyy ul-La'ālī, 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-Rīzī, vol. 6, p. 26, and in Mirsād 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

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/adab-as-salat-disciplines-of-prayer-second-revised-edition-imam-khomeini/chapter-2-stages-stations>