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Chapter 1: The Secret Of The Purity Of Clothing

Know that the *Salat* is the state of ascension to the state of Proximity and being present in “the Presence of Intimacy” [*mahdar-i uns*], and the *sālik* has to observe the disciplines of being present in the Holy Presence of the King of kings.

As from the lowest of the degrees and stages of the appearance of the soul which is most superficial (the crust of the crust) and is its formal and visible body to the highest of its stages and realities which is the innermost and the secret state of the heart all are present in the Sacred Presence of Allah, likewise the *sālik* must prepare himself to display all the internal and external soldiers of the overt and covert kingdoms in the Presence of Allah, the Exalted and Most High, and to return back to His Holy Presence all the trusts which His Sanctified Essence has bestowed upon him with complete purity, clarity, without the intrusion of any being, and with His hand of Power, Beauty and Majesty. He has to return the deposits as they have been given to him out of Kindness.

Therefore, there are many dangers in the discipline [*adab*] of the Presence, which the *sālik* must take care not to neglect. He is to take the purity of the clothes which cover the crust, or rather, the crust of the crust as a means for the purity of the internal clothes, and to know that as these formal clothes cover the visible body, the body itself covers the isthmus body, which is actually existent, but is hidden within the curtains of the corporeal body which covers it.

The isthmus body is the cover, the clothes and the veil of the soul, which covers the heart, and the heart is the cover of spirit, and the spirit is the cover of the secret, which covers the hidden *latīfah* (the real essence), and other stages. Each low stage is the cover of its higher stage, and though all these stages exist in the most pure people of Allah, and the others are void of them, yet only some of these stages are mentioned because all people have them.

So, it must be noted that as the external form of the *Salat* is not proved to be correct without the purity of the clothes and the body, and as impurities which are of Satan's vile acts and cause repulsion from the Presence of the Beneficent [*ar-rahmān*] block the way of attending the Presence, the *musallī* with

clothes and body polluted with Satan's vileness is expelled from the divine Presence and prevented from attending the station of familiarity [*maqam-i uns*].

Similar is the vileness of disobeying Allah, which is also of Satan's practices and of the filths of that foul creature. It also prevents one from entering the Presence [*mahdar*]. So, the red-handed disobedient one, with an impure cover of the isthmus body, cannot be admitted to Allah's Presence [*mahdar*]. Purifying this cover is among the conditions for the realization and correctness of the internal *Salat*. As long as man is in the veil of this world, he cannot know about the invisible body, the purity and filth of its clothes and the condition of its being pure and without filth.

The day he comes out of this veil, and the sovereignty of the interior and of the day of gathering [*yawm al-jam'*] twists aside the extensive disunion of the exterior, and the sun of truth rises out of the dark mundane veils, and the eye of the invisible interior opens, and the eye of the visible animality closes, thereupon, with the eye of insight, he will understand that his *Salat*, had been, till the end of life, void of purity and surrounded by thousands of obstacles, each one of which was an independent cause for expelling one from the Holy Presence of Allah.

Alas! A thousand alas! For on that day there will be no way for indemnity and there will be no cure. There will be nothing but regret and remorse endless regrets and continuous remorse:

“And warn them of the day of anguish when the matter shall have been decided...” 1

After that the clothes of the interior body became pure, it would be necessary for the very invisible body to be purified from Satan's filths, that is, purification from the filths of the dispraised characters, as each one of them is apt to pollute the interior and to expel man from the Presence [*mahdar*] and prevent him from the Proximity. Such characters are of the filths of Satan who is deprived of (Allah's) mercy. The origins of all the dispraised acts are self-conceit, selfishness, ostentation, and obstinacy, each of which is the origin of many dispraised characters, and is at the head of many sins.

Having completed this purification, and purified the clothes of *taqwā* with the water of sincere repentance and lawful austerity, the *sālik* will have to busy himself with the purification of the heart, which is the real concealer [*sātir*] and into which Satan's intrusion is greater, and its impurities spread to other clothes and concealers. So, without purifying the heart other purifications will not be easy. The purification of the heart passes through several stages, some of which will be referred to in these pages.

One of them is purging the heart from loving this world, which is at the head of all sins and it is the origin of all corruptions. As long as man has this love in his heart, it will not be possible for him to be admitted to the Presence of Allah; and divine affection, which is the mother of purities, is not accomplished with this impurity. Perhaps in the Book of Allah and in the advices of the prophets and holy men (*'a*), particularly Amr al-Mu'minīn [*'Alī*] (*'a*), importance is the least given to other than abandoning this world, neglecting it and avoiding it, all of which are of the realities of *taqwā*.

This stage of purification is not achieved except by useful knowledge, strong cordial austerities, concentrating one's thoughts on the beginning [*mabda'*] and the return (to Allah) [*ma'ad*], engaging the heart in taking lessons from the decay and the destruction of the world, and the excellence and happiness of the invisible worlds: "May Allah have mercy upon the one who knows where he has come from, where he is and where he is going."²

Another purification is to be purged from dependence on the creatures, which is a concealed polytheism; yet, to the people of knowledge, it is a manifest polytheism. This purification is accomplished through (the belief in) Allah's Unity of Acts, which is the source of all cordial purifications. It must be noted that mere demonstrative knowledge and contemplative step concerning the Unity of Acts do not have the required result.

It sometimes happens that too much indulgence in the experimental sciences brings darkness and displeasure to the heart, and hinders man from attaining the higher objective. In this respect it is said: "Knowledge is the greatest veil." The writer believes that all sciences, even the science of *tawhīd* (monotheism), are functional [practical = '*amal*']. Perhaps the grammatical etymology of the word *tawhīd*, which is *tafīd*, proves that, as according to its etymological function it means advancing from multiplicity to oneness, and annihilating and abolishing the aspects of the multiplicity in "the Essence of Union" [*'ayn-i jam'*].

This idea cannot be proved with evidence, as with cordial austerity and instinctive inclination towards the Owner of the hearts, the heart is to be informed about what proofs say, so that the truth of *tawhīd* can be understood. Yes, proof tells us: "There is no effector [*mu'aththir*] in the (world of) existence except Allah,"³ which is one of the meanings of "There is no God but Allah."

By the blessing of this proof we cut short the intruding hands of beings from the realm of the Majesty of existence, and return the invisible and visible worlds to their Owner, and display the truth of

"His is what is in the heavens and the earth,"⁴

"And in His Hand is the Kingdom of everything,"⁵

and

"He it is who in the heaven and in the earth is God."⁶

But unless this proved subject reaches the heart and becomes an internal form [*sirat*] of the heart, we will not cross the limit [*hadd*] of knowledge to the limit of faith; and of the light of faith, which illuminates the kingdom of the interior and the exterior, we shall have no share and no profit. This is the reason that although we have the proof supporting this divine, lofty subject, we are still in multiplicity and know little of *tawhīd* which is the pleasure of the eyes of the people of Allah we do ring the bell of "There is no effector [*mu'aththir*] in the (world of) existence except Allah," yet we look with the eye of greed, and

extend the hand of demand to everybody:

The legs of the inferentialists are wooden,
Legs will be very much infirm, if wooden.⁷

This purification is of the great stations of the wayfarers to Allah. There are, however, further stations, which are beyond our limit, though probably we may refer to some of them within these papers, when the occasion arises, *inshā' Allāh* (Allah willing).

1. Surah Maryam 19:39.

2. Mullā Sadrī, *Mafātīh al-Ghayb*, ed. Khajawī, p. 50.

3. It is ascribed to the theologian philosophers, as is related by Mīrzā Abū 'I-Hasan Sha'rīnī in the Preface of his *The Secrets of the Maxims*, p. 32.

4. Surah an-Nahl 16:52.

5. Surah Yūn 36:83.

6. Surah az-Zukhruf 43:84

7. A poem by Mawlawī

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