

Home > Adab as-Salat: The Disciplines of the Prayer Second Revised Edition > Discourse Two > Objective Five: On Some Disciplines Concerning Orientation > Chapter 2: On Some Of The Cordial Disciplines Of Orientation > Connection

Objective Five: On Some Disciplines Concerning Orientation

Discussed in Two Chapters

Chapter 1: On The General Secret Of Orientation

The appearance of orientation consists of two aspects:

One is (turning to) the forefront, which is turning the face from all dispersed sides.

The other is psychological, and it is the orientation of the face towards the *Ka'bah*, which is the *umm ul-qur'* (the Mother of the Towns) and the center of the extension of the earth.

This appearance has an inside, and the inside has a secret, or rather, secrets. The people of the invisible secrets distract the interior or the spirit from dispersed directions [*jih*] of the multiplicities of the invisible and visible, and direct the secret of the spirit towards being attached to the One. They regard all the multiplicities as vanished in the secret of the "Collective Oneness" [*ahadiyyat-i jam*].

When this spiritual secret settles in the heart, the *Haqq* (Allah) appears in the heart as the Greatest Name, which is the state of "the Union of the Names" [*jam'-i asm*], and the multiplicities of the Names are vanished and disappear in the Greatest Name, and the heart is directed, in this instance, to the Greatest Name. And when it comes out from inside the heart to the outer visibility, the plan for annihilating [*ifn*] (all) other (than Allah) is to turn away from the east and west of the visible world, and the plan of the orientation towards the Union [*hadrat-i jam*] is the orientation towards the center of the extended earth, which is Allah's hand in the earth.

As regards the traveler to Allah, who travels from the outside to the inside, and advances from the overt to the covert, he is to use this formal orientation towards the center of the earthly blessings, and

discarding other diverse orientations, as a means for the cordial moods, and never to be satisfied with the meaningless appearance.

He is to divert the heart which is the focus of Allah's attention from the different and diverse directions, which are real idols, directing it towards the *qiblah* of the truth, which is the origin of the origins of the blessings of the heavens and the earth, and doing away with the custom of other [*ghayr*] and otherness [*ghayriyyat*] so as to get the secret of

“I have turned my face toward Him Who originated the heavens and the earth”¹

to some extent, and to have in his heart an example of the manifestations and gleams of the invisible world of the (Divine) Names, so that the diverse directions and the different multiplicities may be burnt away by the divine gleam. Allah, the Exalted, would help him, and the small and big idols in the inmost corner of the heart may be destroyed by the hand of (His) guardianship. However, this is an endless story, so let me drop it and go by.

Chapter 2: On Some Of The Cordial Disciplines Of Orientation

O you traveler to Allah, know that by turning the outer side of your appearance away from the dispersed points of the world of nature, and turning it to a single point, you have claimed two of the inborn divine dispositions, which the hand of the Invisible has hidden in your essential nature [*khamra-i dhāt*], and Allah, with the hand of Beauty and Majesty, has mixed your nature [*ṭīnat*] with them, and you have shown these two inborn states in mundane and visible displays.

And, in order not to be deprived of the light of these two divine dispositions, you have proven that you have apparently turned away from all directions, and you solely faced the *qiblah*, which is the place of the appearance of Allah's hand and power. The two divine dispositions are, first, repugnance to imperfection and the imperfect, and, second, loving perfection and the perfect. These two, of which one is original and autogenic, and the other is subordinate and a shadow, are of the dispositions, which are mixed with the nature of the family of mankind without exception.

They are in the whole human species disregarding their differences in beliefs, characters, habits, temperaments, places, traditions, and whether nomads or urbans, uncivilized or civilized, learned or ignorant, godly or naturalists. In all of these the two innate dispositions are concocted, even if they themselves do not recognize them in themselves, and differ in distinguishing perfection and imperfection, and the perfect and the imperfect.

One who is brutal, bloodthirsty and murderer takes perfection in his victory in assaulting the lives and the honors of the people. He thinks blood-shedding and homicide are perfection, and he spends his life on that, while the ambitious who is in quest of rank, position and wealth in this world thinks that in these he will find perfection, and so, he adores them.

In short, everybody with an objective thinks that objective to be perfection, and the one who attains his objective is the perfect; so he loves it and is repugnant to any other thing. The prophets (‘a), the knowers of Allah, and the people of knowledge have come in order to take the people out of the veil and to save the light of their inborn dispositions from the darkness of ignorance, and to teach them the meaning of perfect and perfection. And, after distinguishing the perfect and perfection, there would remain no need to invite them to attend to that and neglect the others, for the light of the inborn disposition is, in itself, the greatest of the divine guidances, present in all the human species.

In this divine mixture [*ma’jūn*], that is, the *Salat*, which is the ascension to the Proximity of Allah, facing the *qiblah* and the central point, and giving up and turning away from other diverse directions, denote the wakefulness of the innate disposition, and the emission of the light of the disposition out of the veils.

This is a reality for the perfect ones and the people of knowledge. As to us, the people of the veil, the relevant discipline is to tell the heart that in the entire House of Realization [*dīr-i tahaqquq*] there is no perfection nor perfect except His Sanctified Essence, the Absolute Perfect, for that Sanctified Essence is a Perfection with no imperfection, a Beauty with no defect, an Actuality with no blemish of potentiality, a Goodness mixed with no evil and a Light with no blemish of darkness.

In the entire House of Realization whatever there are of perfection, beauty, goodness, dignity, greatness, illumination, actuality, and happiness, are emissions of the Light of the Beauty of that Sacred Essence, and nobody has any share of personal perfection of that Sacred Essence, and no being has beauty, perfection, light, and magnificence except through His Beauty, Perfection, Light and Magnificence. In short, the splendor of the light of His Sacred Beauty illuminates the world, bestowing upon it life, knowledge and power, as otherwise, the whole House of Realization would have been in complete darkness of non-being, in the latency of non-existence and in the inside of nullity.

The one, whose heart is lighted with the light of knowledge, sees everything, other than the light of the Beauty of the Beautiful, as void, worthless and non-existing, eternally and forever. It is narrated that when the Messenger of Allah (s) heard this poem of Labīd,

“Oh, indeed, everything, save Allah, is *būtil*, And every pleasure [*na‘īm*] is, inevitably, transient!” he said: “This is the truest piece of poetry recited by the Arabs.”²

Having informed your heart about the falsity of all that is in the House of Realization, and about the perfection of the Sacred Essence, there would be no need for the heart to premeditate for turning to the real *qiblah* and loving the Beauty of the Absolute Beautiful, and detesting the entire House of Realization, except the manifestation of the Sacred Essence, as in fact, the very divine disposition in man naturally invites to that, and

“I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth”³

Becomes the motto of man's soul, heart and situation, and **“I do not love the setting ones”**⁴ becomes his natural motto.

Thus, O poor know that the world, excepting Allah, is transient, perishing, vanishing, and *b^htil*. None of the beings has anything by itself, and none of them in itself has any beauty, glory, light, or splendor. Beauty and splendor exclusively belong to the Essence of Allah. As the Sacred Essence is unique in Divinity and in being Necessary Existent, He is also unique in Beauty, Glory, Perfection, and particularly He is unique in existence, while the humility of essential non-existence [*adam-i dh^hft^h*] and nullity are engraved on the foreheads of the others.

So, turn the heart, which is the center of the light on the divine innate disposition, away from the different aspects of falsities, nullities and shortcomings, and direct it toward the Center of Beauty and Perfection and in your pure conscience let the motto of your disposition be what the gnostic of Shiraz says:

Our conscience accommodates none but the Beloved,

Give up both worlds to the foe, suffices us to have the Beloved.

Connection

Im^{am} as-S^{adiq} (*'a*) is quoted to have said: “When you face the *qiblah*, despair of the world and of what is in it, and of the creatures and of what they are busy with. Empty your heart of whatever takes your attention from Allah, the Exalted. Discern with your heart the Greatness of Allah, the Glorified.

Remember your standing before Him on the day when

“Every soul shall become acquainted with what it sent before, and they shall be brought back to Allah, their true Guardian”⁵

And stand on the foot of fear and hope.”⁶

These noble instructions are for the like of us, the veiled, who are unable to keep the states of our hearts constant, join between Oneness and multiplicity and attend to both Allah and creation. Such being the case, we should despair of the world and what is in it when we turn to Allah and face the *qiblah*. We should also sever our expectancy from the creatures and empty our heart and spirit of whatever takes our attention from Allah, so as to be worthy of His Presence and let a manifestation of majesty appear in the secret of our spirit.

And when we gain the light of majesty according to our capacity, we are to remember our return to Allah and our standing in His Sacred Presence on the day when

“Every soul shall be acquainted with what it sent before and they shall be brought back to Allah, their true Guardian” (S^{urah} Y^{unus} 10:30),

And they shall cross out all the whims of the soul and the false deities.

Thus, in the Presence of such a Great One, of whose manifestations of Act is this House of Realization, someone like you and a poor man like me, must walk and stand on the foot of hesitation, fear and hope.

When we see our weakness, laziness, helplessness, poverty and humility, and discern Allah's Greatness, Haughtiness, Majesty and Might, we are to feel fear and awe from the danger of eminence; and when we understand His unlimited mercy, kindness, leniency, and boundless generousities, we are to be hopeful.

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1. Sūrah al-An'ām 6:79
 2. 'Ilm al-Yaqīn, vol. 1, p. 106.
 3. Sūrah al-An'ām 6:79.
 4. Ibid., 6:76.
 5. Sūrah Yūnus 10:30.
 6. Misbūh ash-Sharīh, ch. 13, on "Opening the Salat"; Mustadrak al-Wasīl, "Book of as-Salat," sec. on "The Acts of the Salat," ch. 2, hadīth 9.

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